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ART & Architecture
From Cowboy to Contemporary

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Lois Conner: In Search of Connection
Jivan Lee's Celebration of the Land



plus:

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A Modern Ranch House in Redmond, Oregon
Comfort and Character on Montana's Madison River
Perspective: Albert Bierstadt at the Buffalo Bill Center



TODOS SANTOS, MEXICO

Filled with artists and the ocean breeze, 'el Pueblo Mágico' awaits exploration in Baja California Sur



WRITTEN BY Rosemary Carstens
PHOTOGRAPHY BY Dana Aaberg

South of the U.S. border looms large in winter with dreams of warm weather, azure seas and miles of white beaches, along with the siren's call of exotic cultures, handsome *mariachis* and haunting *boleros*. Year after year, Mexico has been ranked by the National Travel and Tourism Office as the top destination of choice for American travelers, with more than 31 million recorded U.S. visitors in 2016.

Mexico's Secretariat of Tourism has designated Todos Santos (a lesser-known but enchanting coastal oasis on the Pacific side of the Baja California Sur peninsula) a *Pueblo Mágico* (magic town) because of its unique and historically significant characteristics. About an hour north of upscale and tourist-packed Cabo San Lucas and about an hour south of La Paz, from mid-November through May, Todos Santos' high season hums with creativity, culture and fun. For those who like a quieter scene, consider visiting in June and July (shoulder season), when temperatures can range from



Map: © Daphne Gillam



Guaycura Boutique Hotel, Beach Club & Spa



Guaycura Boutique Hotel, Beach Club & Spa



Marascha Lee

Marascha Lee

Opposite page: Inspired by the Aztec calendar, this sun monument, located in the theatre plaza of Manuel Márquez de León, was created by local artists with community support. **This page, clockwise from top left:** A hospitable corridor in the Guaycura Hotel. | El Mirador Restaurant at the Guaycura offers fine dining amid ocean views. | Galería Gabo presents the bold work of Gabo and his son, with paintings and sculptures also on view at the California Hotel. | This colorful mural depicts Todos Santos' history. | The Hierbabuena restaurant serves cuisine harvested from their organic gardens, plus fresh margaritas.





Galería Logan features artfully designed broken-tile murals, garden settings and contemporary paintings.

perfectly mild to hot due to Pacific Ocean breezes, but most restaurants, shops and galleries remain open. It's wise to give Baja a pass from August through October, as it is hurricane season and weather can be unpredictable.

Todos Santos was established around 1724 when the Jesuits founded a mission there to convert the native peoples to Catholicism. The church's efforts failed, but the site's

abundant water and fertile soil in the midst of a drought-ridden desert led to a vibrant sugar cane and agricultural industry. It wasn't until 1984, when the road from Todos Santos to Cabo San Lucas was paved, that artists and other creative people looking for a tranquil lifestyle in an authentic Mexican village began to migrate here. Today a stream of international travelers are drawn to the rich cultural life of the town, many returning annually and some staying on full time.

Most visitors fly in on one of the daily international flights to the airport at San Jose del Cabo. Upon arrival you have two options: Rent a car or arrange for a shuttle in advance. A rental car gives you more flexibility during your stay, but be sure when booking to include insurance. There is plenty to do and see in Todos Santos without a car, so it also works well to reserve a shuttle. **Ecobaja Tours** regularly provides transportation between the airport and Todos Santos, but an advance online reservation is a must. The shuttle drops off at the town

America's Horse in Art
AQHA Hall of Fame
and Museum
8/18/2018

Cheyenne Frontier Days
Western Art Show
7/20/2018

Paint Brush Cowboys
Three Man Show
Wilcox Gallery
7/27/2018

Hold Your Horses
Phippen Museum
8/4/2018

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bus station and from there you can hail one of the many taxis across the street. Depending on the exchange rate when you go, shuttle fare is about \$40 round trip, per person.

For a town of 6,000 residents, there is an amazing array of accommodations in Todos Santos — boutique hotels, historic haciendas and bed and breakfasts — each with a unique personality. You can stay in the heart of the historic district or further out, but still within walking distance to the town and the beach. The town is not located directly on the beach, although it's only a short walk away, and does not echo the all-inclusive resort-after-resort scene of some of Mexico's coastal destinations. That is a major part of its charm, and there is so much to do and all of the ocean's beauty and adventure is there when you want it. (But do check with your hotel about where it is safe to swim.)

"Wanderings" assignment photographer and avid traveler, Dana Aaberg chose the **Vibe Bed & Breakfast** for his stay. Its eight urban-designed spacious suites, four on the first floor (with private patios and hammocks) and four on the second floor (with small balconies) are brightly decorated, clean and comfortable. Air conditioning, kitchenettes and vintage bikes

are included in its reasonable rates. "My mornings began with a cappuccino or espresso and their complementary continental breakfast," he reports. "The Vibe's unique location is perfect for walking and discovering the town's unique galleries, shops, historic architecture and restaurants."

A beach-side option is the **Rancho Pescadero**, located on a secluded stretch of sand 6 miles south of downtown. And for an artistic escape, the **Guaycura Boutique Hotel Beach Club and Spa** offers painting classes with recognized international artists in a historic, 19th-century brick building.

Throughout the year, music, art, film, food, wine and other festivals enliven the warm days and star-studded, breezy nights, along with an almost unlimited number of other attractions: surfing, swimming with whale sharks, dancing, hiking, day trips on the water and a range of dining options.

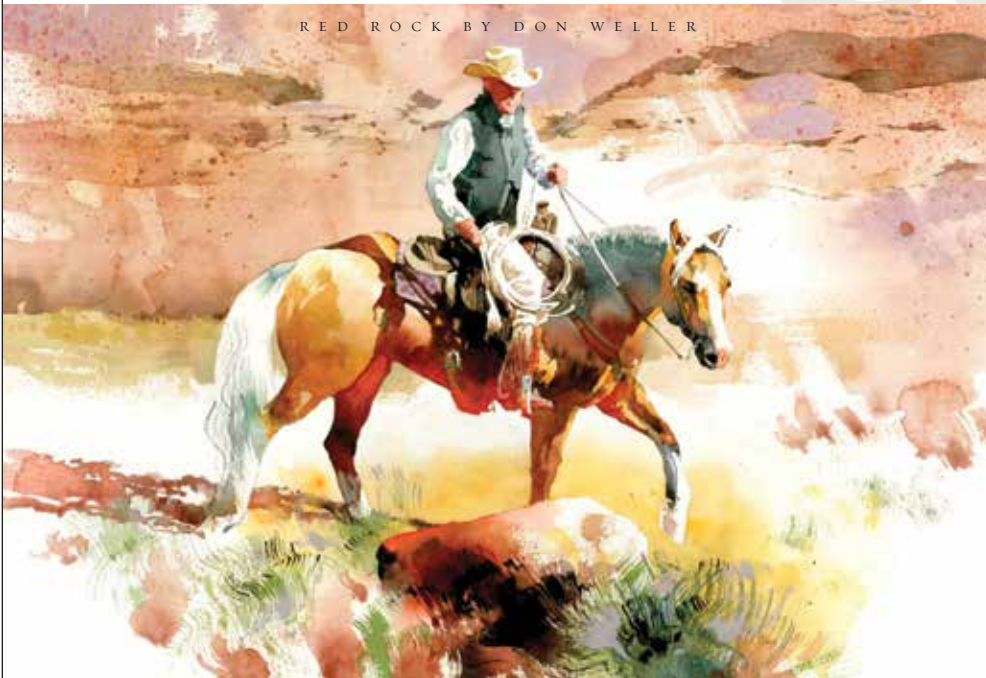
Seeking enlightenment, meditation, healing or yoga? There are many programs to choose from, including the popular classes and workshops at **Cuatro Vientos**, which has been designed deliberately in alignment with the four directions. Or try **Ecoadventures** for a host of day trips, including water sports, visits to the Sea of Cortez, bird and whale watching,

art show & sale

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a Program of the American Quarter Horse Foundation

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For more information about proxy
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artshow@aqha.org.

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ACCOMMODATIONS

Hotel Casa Tota
23300 Calle Alvaro Obregon
619.400.3089; hotelcasatora.com

Hotel Guaycura Boutique Hotel
Calle Legaspi esq. Topete
877.448.2928; guaycura.com/es

Hotel San Cristobal
Playa Punta Lobos; 855.227.1535
sancristobalbaja.com

Hotelito Bed & Breakfast
Rancho de la Cachora
+52.612.145.0099; thehotelito.com

Todos Santos Inn
Calle Legaspi 33; +52.612.145.0040
todossantosinn.com

Vibe Bed & Breakfast
Calle de Pilar esq. Hidalgo
+52.612.145.0482; thevibebb.com

La Bohemia Hotel Pequeño
Calle Rangel 108
Entre Hidalgo y Obregon
805.430.5260; labohemiabaja.com

GALLERIES

Galería de Todos Santos
Huerta Las Palmas, Cañada del Diablo
+52.612.145.0500
galeriatodossantos.com

Galería Logan
Calle Juárez y Morelos
+52.612.145.0151; jilllogan.com

La Sonrisa de la Muerte
Colegio Militar esq. Hidalgo
+52.556.114.9836
lasonrisadelamuerte.wordpress.com

ATTRACTIONS and EVENTS

Cuatro Vientos
Calle Topete and Horizonte en Camino a Las Playitas; cuatrovientosbaja.com

Todos Santos Eco Adventures
619.446.6827; tosea.net/todos-santos

Mario Surf School
Los Cerritos Beach; +52.612.130.3319
mariosurfschool.com

Nomad Chic
Juarez y Hidalgo; 415.381.9087
nomadchic.mx

El Faro Beach Club and Spa
Camino al Faro; +52.612.175.0800
guaycura.com

RESTAURANTS

Café Santa Fe
Calle Centenario #4
+52.612.145.0340
cafesantafetodossantos.com

Chez Laura
Calle Hidalgo entre Rangel y Cuauhtémoc; +52.612.145.0847
chezlaura.com.mx

Hierbabuena
La Paz; 707.738.2157
hierbabuenarestaurante.com

Pacifica Fish Market
Calle Horizonte, Brisas del Pacífico
facebook.com/pacificafishmarket

La Casita Tapas & Wine Bar
Calle Juárez; +52.612.145.0192
lacasitatapaswinebar.com

El Mirador Ocean View Restaurant
(10 minutes from downtown, accessible via Pedrajo Street)
+52.612.175.0800; guaycura.com/en/restaurants/elmirador

Sky Lounge Oasis View Tapas Bar: Calle Legaspi esq. Topete; +52.612.175.0800; guaycura.com/en/restaurants/skylounge

Restaurante Jazamango
Calle Naranjos; +52.612.688.1501
facebook.com/jazamango

La Esquina
Calle Horizonte; +52.612.145.0851
laesquinats.com



Clockwise from top left: Sculpture by Benito Ortega Vargas | Internationally known American artist Doug West, a full time resident of Todos Santos. | Café La Esquina's open-air restaurant, away from the main plaza, is a favorite of locals and visitors alike.



hiking, cooking and fishing. Visitors to Todos Santos can be as active as they wish or simply end a relaxing day at a spa with cocktails and a stunning sunset at **Guaycura's Sky Bar** or **El Faro's El Mirador** ocean-view restaurant.

With such an inviting menu of experiences available, it is no wonder that artists such as Doug West, a well-known painter, formerly of Santa Fe, New Mexico, chose to build a home here and make it his full-time residence. "First of all, there are so many serious artists here who create through various mediums and styles, and many others who dabble but are interested in leading creative lives," West says. "We have clean air, fresh organic veggies and seafood, plus a variety of excellent restaurants. I love Todos Santos because it is small, quaint and there's a wonderful, everchanging view of desert, mountains and ocean — all of which I find inspiring."

Additional artistic highlights include **Galería de Todos Santos**, a long-established showcase for local talent, and **Galería Logan**, the studio and gallery of painter Jill Logan. And **La Sonrisa de la Muerte** features work by Mexican and international artists, many of whom specialize in graphic design and screen printing.

Time to start planning your next cultural beach-side vacation! ■

Rosemary Carstens is a freelance writer, copy editor and writing coach. She has traveled widely in Latin America, lived three years in Mexico and enjoys icy margaritas, Mexican cuisine and a rousing *mariachi* serenade; wordsandpaint.com.