

September 2013

Nuevo Vallarta

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## TRAVEL & NEWSLETTER - GrandMayan.net & GrandLuxeResidence.com

I hope that you will allow us to occasionally update you on the Grupo Vidanta Resort Properties, construction news and places we think you may enjoy on your travels.

Having just returned from a wonderful week at the **Grand Luxxe Resort** in **Nuevo Vallarta**, that is just 10 minutes north of the Puerto Vallarta International Airport, I wanted to take the opportunity to reconnect with you.

This was our second time staying in the Luxxe, even though we upgraded many months ago. It was truly awesome. The sunset and ocean views were spectacular from our balcony in Tower 1.

**Tips and Lists** – Please email [diane@grandmayan.net](mailto:diane@grandmayan.net) to request any of our lists: 1) Things To Take With You When Traveling to Mexico; 2) Tips For Enjoying Mexico; 3) Services if You are Sick or Injured in Mexico.



*Seafood The Fat Boy – we always eat here...at least twice every trip. You will be loved here!*

Our first off property destination in Vallarta is the town of Bucerias, just north on the highway (take a left at the Centro sign). We make a beeline to Seafood The Fat Boy – great seafood right on the beach and the staff always makes you feel right at home. The restaurant is just to the south of the Main Plaza. There are also plenty of friendly store keepers in case you need to buy some Mexican handicrafts. The best deserts to be found are in Bucerias at The Pie In the Sky. Shhhhhh...they are opening a new store in the Marina.

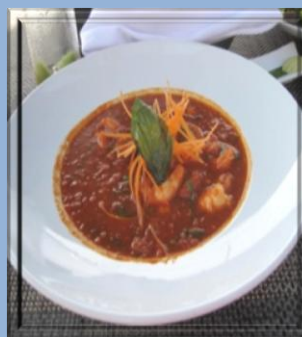
### Your Safety and Travel in Mexico

Despite growing concern over recent reports of violence and crime in México's northern border towns, travel destinations such as Los Cabos, Nuevo Vallarta, and Riviera Maya remain sound choices when planning a family vacation or romantic getaway. Located thousands of miles away from Northern Mexico, where many of the reported incidents have taken place, Nuevo Vallarta offers a safe secluded retreat, where travelers can indulge in delicious and diverse cuisine, explore a myriad of beaches and neighboring towns, and take part in a number of exhilarating activities.

We will soon be offering Mexico Medivac Insurance with all reservations. The basic plan will be included for every guest within each reservation, with 2 upgrade packages available for those wanting coverage with a lower deductible. The policy will provide medical care and evacuation back to your choice of hospital, in your country of origin.

### Restaurants - On and Off Property

*Punta Arena, On the Beach, In front of the Presidential Tower!* Our first night we decided to stay on property and try the Punta Arena Restaurant. We were not disappointed. An excellent beach front location with a great view, sea breezes, excellent service and the food was very good. I had the sausage and shrimp casserole (really a soup) and my wife dined on the Lobster salad, both pictured below. Open for dinner only!



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**Nuevo Vallarta** – We love going into town and this trip was no different. We met some friends at the Marina and were pleasantly surprised to find that the entrance area has been totally remodeled. The new construction includes a Starbucks and the previously mentioned Pie in the Sky Bakery, where we feast on the cookies, individual chocolate cakes and Tartas de Coco. We always eat at La Malinara which is located at the other end of the Marina walk-way and we highly recommended it. It is a local hangout with seating out into the water, so you can see the boats and activities. We even saw a 10 foot crocodile swimming over for a snack. The Marina is full of small shops, fishing charters and massage/body work businesses. We have availed ourselves of the mani/pedi/massage/facial combination offered at the day spa in the corner and we were not disappointed. When we drive into the city, we often take a cab to where ever we want to go from there. Just remember where you park, by a landmark or business, so the taxista can bring you back.

**San Francisco (San Pancho)** – we have a friend who owns a home in San Pancho so we decided to visit the small town to see what it's all about. The drive is north along the Bucerias/Tepic highway. Just follow the signs to this little beach side community. We ate at the La Perla on the beach which was nothing to write about. We must have missed something as there was not much here, unless you like complete quiet and solitude. Sayulita is a much more inviting place, to us, with more action and restaurant offerings.

**Punta Mita** – Drove out to Punta Mita, where the Four Season Resort is located. It is that point of land you can see to the north along the coast. Again, nothing much going on here either. The village is a series of beach restaurants with the “representatives” trying very hard to get you to stop and eat. The beaches are great and sparsely populated and you can also return via Salyulita, which is a plus. We never did find the Four Seasons as there are no signs. It is a Nice drive though – very scenic.

## GRAND LUXXE - Nuevo Vallarta, Nayarit, Mexico



**Resort Construction** – What a destination this is going to be, not that it isn't something special now. More construction news at the end of the newsletter.

We arrived at the “travel hub”, finally finding the correct spot to drop our rental car after 3 tries. Lots of people directing traffic, but could have used some directional signs. Once you park in the appropriate area, the staff will load your bags onto a cart, which will be loaded onto another cart, while you walk

through the “Santuario” (see below & no it’s not a bathroom), to be loaded onto another cart, which takes you to your appropriate Tower for check-in. It may sound like a lot of trouble but it is quite nice because it gives you a lot of time and the opportunity to look around and leave the driving to them. Are we being conditioned for a Disney like resort experience? Yes!

Check-in is painless and quick, as was receipt of the wrist band. A quick swipe of your wrist band allows you keyless entry to your suite, which is wonderful.

**Santuario** – this is a really cool place. The train station is in here, as well as food and nightly entertainment. The wooden walkways between all the buildings are easy to navigate and well lit for night travel. Even the directional signs are lit at night. All roads lead to the Santuario.

Loft Tower – Tower 4a & 4b with 2 & 3 bedroom units, is under construction.

Spa Tower – Tower 3a & 3b with 3 bedroom units is under construction, with 3a opening November 15, 2013. Pictured second from left below.

Mayan Palace – is under construction and will be fabulous when completed, with a new restaurant called “Rattatouille”, large retail space and a “food court” with outside dining. Pictured third from left below.



**Presidential Pool** – The views and layout of the accessible pool and deck areas are awesome and now available to Grand Luxxe guests. The pools sit right along the river, with views of downtown to the south and Punta Mita to the north. The best!

**PICTURES - Many More of the latest Pictures at these links:**

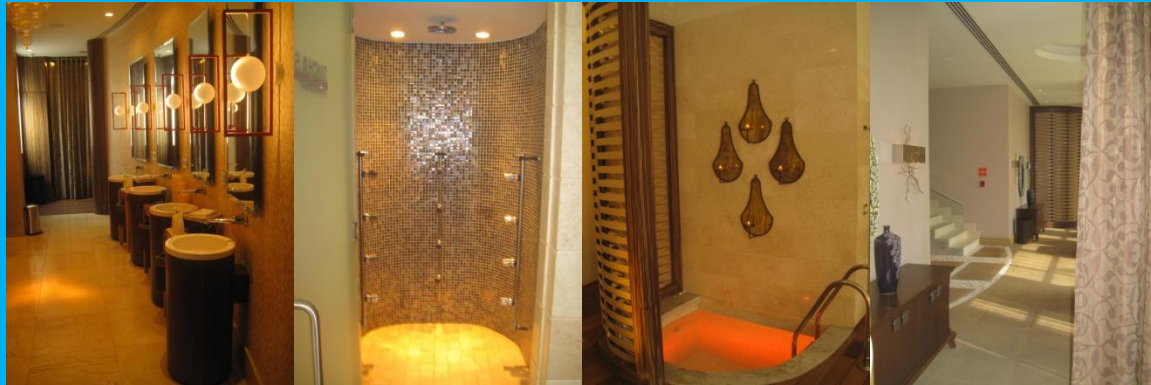
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**Spatium (pictured below)** – This is the newest in the spa offerings from the resort, a wonderful place to have a treatment or other body work offering. Unfortunately, this spa is only to be used for guests having a treatment. The Brio Spa in the Grand Mayan is available for the usual spa offerings such as steam, sauna, tubs and showers. The exercise room for the Grand Luxxe is now open in tower 2, with state of the art equipment, many classes offered including yoga and personal training.

We each had a massage at the Spatium and both the service and the services were excellent. We found exceptional pampering and a great massage to be had.





## GRAND LUXXE & RESORT RESTAURANTS

**Epazote** - Located in the Lobby of the Grand Luxxe Tower 1.

We each had the sea bass which was beautifully prepared and delicious, with flan for dessert. The food is excellent and recommended for both convenience and top notch service.

**Blue Fish Cevicheria** - We strolled out to the Grand Luxxe pool area where the Blue Fish Restaurant is located. The Blue Fish has great burgers, fries and exquisitely prepared ceviche, using the freshest ingredients. They serve cocktails, fish tacos, lobster tacos and a variety of refreshing ceviche, each made with fresh fish marinated in lime juice with different spices and vegetables. "Mexican Sushi".



**Buffet Restaurants - Café Del Lago and Havana Moon** - We had not eaten breakfast in the buffet style restaurants for years, which all changed on this trip. We indulged 5 times. Both restaurants offered excellent food choices, especially the brunch on the weekends. Excellent service, while overindulging on mucho pancakes, resulting in mucho pesos (pounds not money). Café Del Lago pictured above.

**Burger Restaurant** – Located in the first floor of the Presidential building, the burger to bun ratio was way out of proportion. Sometimes simpler is better. Nice place and they have other food offerings which we did not try.



**GOLF** - The Nicklaus-Design®, Nayar Golf Course is located along the Ameca River bordering Jalisco and Nayarit. It features winding river views, and is surrounded by a lush jungle. Views encompass the Sierra Madre mountain range in the distance and the pristine Pacific Ocean in the foreground. Being that the course is a wildlife refuge, spotting iguanas will be part of the fun while you keep an eye on the crocodiles that sunbathe in the neighboring sanctuary. Don't feed the crocs, frogs or caddies.

This new course is destined to become one of the most spectacular in the world, fully equipped, and featuring optimal conditions, fit for the amateur and pro golfer alike. 3 more golf courses are planned.

The newly renovated Pro Shop promises something for everyone. The staff is always smiling and friendly, led by Managing Director of Vidanta Golf and former Tour Professional, Jesus Torres. The Nayar Golf Course is clearly the stand out among neighboring courses.

#### **The Jack Nicklaus Golf Academy is one of only 2 in Latin America**

Course Description - Nicklaus-Design 18 hole-golf course, PAR 70, 6,736 Yards, Fairways BERMUDA 419, Greens CHAMPIONS.

We played it twice during our last stay at the Grand Luxxe. We played early a.m. because it was the hot and wet season. The course was awesome with plenty of tee options for the not-so-long "knocker hackistas". Nice rolling fairways and soft greens. Bring your own sticks or rent for \$45 USD per round. If renting, bring your own balls (mucho), tees, and gloves. As you can see pictured above, there are lots of jungles to lose those balls in. We recommend Thomas as your caddy request. If you have never played with a caddy before you are in for a score lowering treat.

Word has it that **Lorena Ochoa** will have a golf course built here which will only complement the Jack Nicklaus & Greg Norman designs. The contract has been signed!

**FISHING** - Plenty of boats to take you out and don't be afraid to negotiate, but please keep in mind the price of fuel is also very high in Mexico. So keep the "pangas" in business by allowing them to profit as they work very hard and deserve it. We hired our boat out of the little marina just to the north of the Sea Garden\*, a walk-able distance.

\*PS - "Do not go out fishing without live bait or your fishing trip might turn into a boat ride," El Husbando.

**BEACH** - It seems as if all the hotels along the beach have gotten together to keep the beaches free from trash and tidal debris. Excellent idea because there are few things more distracting than walking along the beach and having to avoid the trash.

**GRAND LUXXE CONCIERGE** - They are awesome, making all our exercise, spa and restaurant reservations. They even did a load of laundry for us.

**REFERRALS** - Ocean View requests are subject to availability at the time of check-in. You will receive a discount of 10% on food, merchandise and services if you choose to take a tour while visiting any Grand Mayan, Grand Bliss or Grand Luxxe resort. If you do decide to take one of the property tours, we would greatly appreciate your mentioning Diane Miller and [GrandMayan.net](http://GrandMayan.net) and/or [GrandLuxxeResidence.com](http://GrandLuxxeResidence.com) to your sales agent and on any paperwork related to your tour. We will send you \$100 if you purchase and placed our name on the final paperwork. We remember how important you are and thank you for your business. As always please send us your reservation referrals, as we are still the number one staff-recommended agent for these vacation rentals.

**NEWS** - Destinations Travel Magazine chose Vida Vacations and Grupo Vidanta resorts as the cover story for their January issue! The spread is beautiful and we are so pleased they chose to feature our resorts. This is really cool! Read it [HERE](#).

"Every luxury and amenity is brought together to create a heightened sense of decadence: Platinum Patron margaritas by the infinity pool; a private butler for every floor; only a few resort rooms on each floor. It feels more like a private residential building with all of the services of the finest resorts in the world."

New in room video. Watch it [HERE](#).

New Grupo Vidanta video. Watch it [HERE](#).



**CONSTRUCTION** - Transportation around the construction is provided by a continuous flow of limo golf carts driven by happy and knowledgeable uniformed staffers.

The construction of "Celebrate" is on schedule. Celebrate will be 900 acres of fun, consisting of 4 movie theatres, a Cirque du Soleil theatre, a water park, a six flags type amusement park, casino, 3 golf courses (including a Greg Norman) and a cultural museum on five different islands.

The **Grand Luxxe Residence Club** is still expanding. Tower 1 and 2 are now completed. The new Luxxe state-of-the-art gym takes up the entire ground floor of Tower 2, with the latest Precor, Star Trac and FreeMotion Vertex machines. Outstanding service, complimentary bottled water and towels.

Tower 3A, the **Luxxe Spa Tower** is opening November 15, with some construction continuing. The Spa Tower will have 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units, with the area between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors, housing the new lobby and a promenade type area with shops, restaurants, and services.

Tower 4 will be the Grand Luxxe Residences, now under construction.

The train has been restored (very cute people mover) as well as the boats, which will run throughout the property. The rail has been laid almost up to the airport, which is where all guests will eventually enter the property and register upon arrival. The train will eventually run between the airport and the train station to allow faster access to the property. You and your luggage will be placed in a waiting shuttle and taken to your room for check-in.

Thanks for letting us into your world. We would love to hear of your own travel adventures, and as always, please know how much we appreciate you and your business. Do not hesitate to let us know how we can help make your vacation dreams come true.

Diane G. Miller - Vacation Specialist

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