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DESTINATION FEATURE



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Seaside estate rents to groups (09/19/2005)

By Kenneth Kiesnoski

PUNTA MITA, Mexico -- Palmasola, an exclusive private beachfront estate near the Four Seasons resort here, is now available for booking by high-end groups of up to 20 guests.

The multimillion-dollar complex, completed in October 2004 but open to renters only as of Aug. 1, occupies two of four lush, seaside "Signature Estate" lots on the 1,500-acre Punta Mita peninsular development, which is composed of resort, residential, retail and recreational components.

"We have spent the past eight months developing the highest standards in service and amenities prior to making Palmasola available for rent," said property marketing manager Kimberly Darlington. (Palmasola's first renters were scheduled to arrive the last week of August.)

Lay of the land

Palmasola, or "Lone Palm," is the largest and perhaps most spectacular of the villas and homes available for rent at Punta Mita.

Owned by a couple from California, the seven-bedroom, 10-structure complex is serviced by a full-time staff of nine, including a chef, a residence manager, housekeepers and a caretaker who doubles (or triples, rather) as a driver and bartender.

Individual, enclosed structures house a three-bedroom master residence, a four-bedroom guest house, staff residence, a gym and business center and guest bath and kitchen. The seven bedrooms can sleep 20 guests comfortably -- 14 adults plus six children -- and one ground-floor bedroom and bath in the master residence is wheelchair-accessible.

Open-air, thatched palapas include a pool pavilion, a dining room, a

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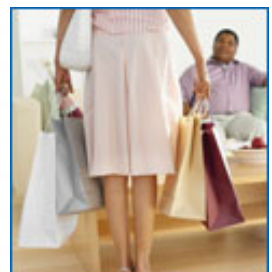
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family/ games room and media center and the large “civic center,” or living room.



Water features include a 200-foot infinity swimming pool, two outdoor hot tubs, fountains and a 300-foot stretch of beach -- which is home to the lone, solitary palm tree from which the resort takes its name.

In addition, guests staying

at Palmasola have the nonreciprocal right to use all facilities at the neighboring Four Seasons, including the spa and gym, golf course, tennis courts and water-sports equipment.

Other features include 24-hour, monitored and gated security; triple-filtered water purification; two roof terraces for dining; an outdoor brick pizza oven; a massage room; a beach fire pit; and propertywide WiFi Internet access.

The right stuff

Daily rental rates at Palmasola are \$9,000 in summer (July 16 to Sept. 30), \$10,000 in the fall and spring (Oct. 1 to Nov. 14; May 1 to July 15); \$11,000 in winter (Nov. 15 to Dec. 21; Jan. 1 to April 30) and \$12,000 during the holidays (Dec. 22 to Dec. 31). Fall, winter and holiday bookings must be for a minimum stay of seven nights.

Darlington’s target clientele are luxury travelers, planners of corporate retreats and meetings and high-end groups for intimate events, such as small weddings.

Larger events are of little interest to the owners, as “the property lends itself to small, intimate events of no more than 25 to 30 people,” said Darlington.

“It would be an excellent location to base a larger wedding party for housing and rehearsal dinners, provided the actual wedding event and party were held at a nearby facility that is geared to larger groups, such as the Four Seasons.”

As Palmasola is available for rent on a limited basis -- just 10 to 15 weeks each year -- Darlington is eschewing mass marketing in favor of promotion via an initial 10 partner travel agencies in the U.S.

Limited availability, combined with the economics of renting such a large and expensive property, led Palmasola to hand-pick a small group of high-end agents “so they may offer their clients an exclusive experience,” Darlington said, describing the travel trade response as “tremendous.”

However, Darlington said she is also open to dialogue with other U.S. travel agents who demonstrate a “complementary client base in search of an exclusive experience.”

Palmasola stays are commissionable to partner agents at privately negotiated rates. Inquiries should be directed to Darlington via e-mail at info@palmasola.net.

An official Palmasola Web site is under development at www.palmasola.net and set for a mid-September debut. The Web site will consist of one introductory page for public browsing, with log-in functionality for repeat visitors who have made earlier initial inquiries via e-mail and have been granted access to richer content.

To contact reporter Kenneth Kiesnoski, send e-mail to kkiesnoski@travelweekly.com.

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