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TRAVELER

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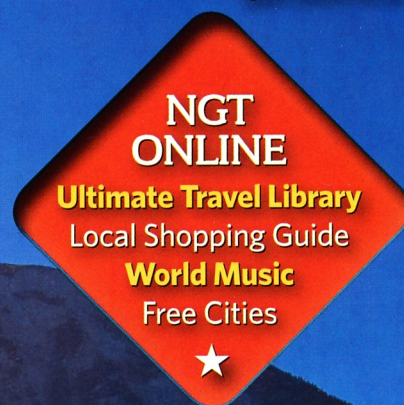
All Travel, All the Time
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129 HOTELS WE LOVE

Our 2nd Annual Stay List

AUTHENTIC, SUSTAINABLE, MEMORABLE ★ PAGE 85

- AUSTRIA'S
SECRETS
OF THE LAKES
- ECUADOR:
AVENUE
OF THE
VOLCANOES
- PENANG:
MALAYSIAN
MAGIC



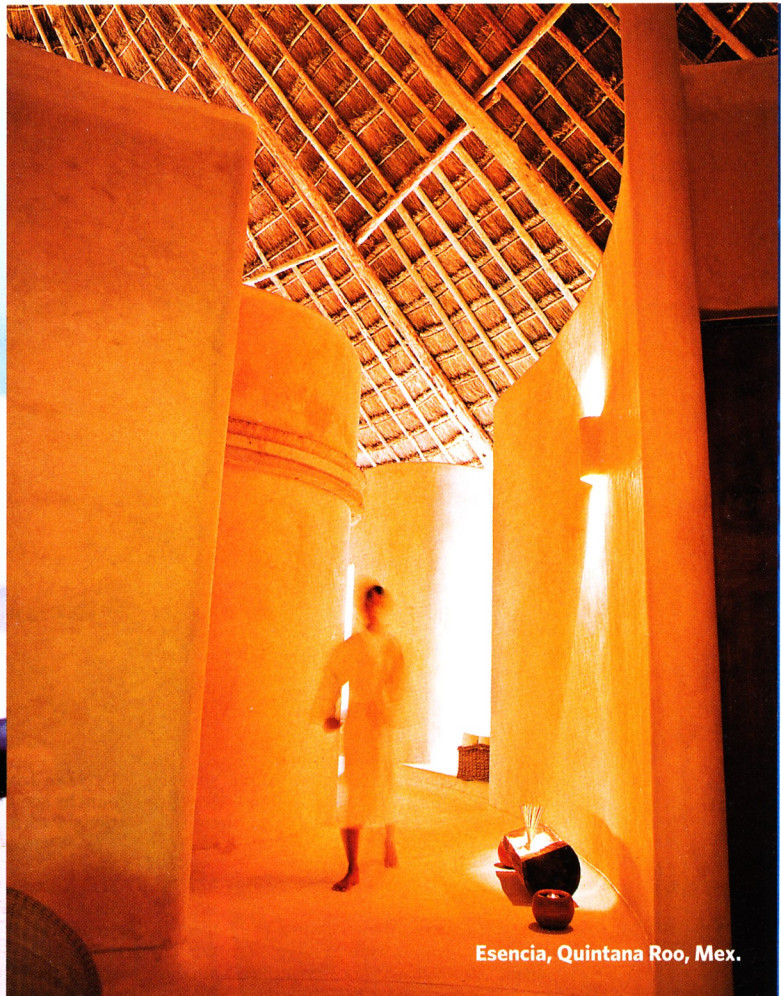
48 Hours in Chicago

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Clayoquot Wilderness Resort, B.C.



Esencia, Quintana Roo, Mex.



Jungle Bay, Dominica



"WE DONATE MONEY AND RESOURCES TO THE MEDICAL CLINIC AND SCHOOL, AND WE HELPED BUILD PATHS TO THE TOWN."

—HEINZ LEGLER, OWNER VERANA, JALISCO, MEXICO

stick while keeping an eye open for elk, moose, bison, and deer. Strictly monitored green policies, from sustainable cuisine and xeriscaping to interpretive programs and recycling. Gift shop for local art and recycled lariat rope baskets. Ask for the free historical book on the lodge. 31 cabins and 6 suites; from \$500, incl. breakfast and dinner; www.gtlc.com/lodgeJen.aspx.

MEXICO

CASA NATALIA San José del Cabo, Baja Intimate off-the-beach inn facing the plaza, across from 17th-century mission. Palm trees, waterfalls. Each room with a hammock-slung terrace, where breakfasts are served. Open-flame braziers enliven pool courtyard and alfresco restaurant. Nouvelle Euro-Mexican cuisine. Shuttle to private beach club. Better yet, canoe nearby nature preserve. 16 rooms; from \$250, incl. breakfast; www.casanatalia.com.

EL ENCANTO DE CABO PULMO Baja California Sur Art-centric inn with palm-thatch roofs, high-arching windows, and patios ushering the outside in; gardens boast native plants culled by owners—both with masters degrees in botany. Locally crafted furniture, whimsical sculptures. Close: Cabo Pulmo National Marine Park. 3 casitas; from \$90; www.encantopulmo.com.

HOTEL POSADA DE LAS MINAS Mineral de Pozos, Guanajuato Restored 19th-century mansion breathing energy into a mining village that went bust during the Mexican Revolution. Rooms showcase regional crafts. Village women cook *típico* meals in the rustic cantina. On premises: cactus garden. Off: historic mines, rapidly disappearing village life. 8 rooms; from \$48, incl. breakfast; www.posadadelasminas.com.

LA CASA QUE CANTA Zihuatanejo, Guerrero A reclusive cliff-dweller stair-stepping its way down to the swirling surf. Big romantic rooms (flower petal designs on bed) with terraces and balconies poised for views. No real beach (Playa La Ropa is 100 yards away). Languorous alternative resort: Infinity-edge pool mimics ocean horizon; walking the grounds is a folkloric tour of Mexico. 29 rooms; from \$392; www.lacasaquecanta.com.

LAS ALAMANDAS Costa Alegre, Jalisco Escapist beach fantasyland plopped down on 1,500 acres, far from madding crowd. Six radiantly painted villas ventilated by sea breeze. Additional drama comes from four-mile stretch of untouched coastline: four private beaches, bird island sanctuary, wetlands preserve. Celebrate mango-colored sunsets by releasing hatched turtles into the waves (more than 6,000 launched in 2008). 14 rooms; from \$371, incl. an hour horseback ride; www.lasalamandas.com.

VILLA GANZ Guadalajara, Jalisco Urban refuge celebrates Mexico's 1930s golden era on city's hip west side. Chill spots: garden terrace, small library. Breakfasts served anytime. Antiques and crafts filling large suites are all Mexican origin. Exception: duvets from Switzerland. A hundred flickering candles romance the night. 9 rooms; from \$200; www.villaganz.com.

HACIENDA SAN ANGEL Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco Richard Burton's former abode plus three more

villas, amid gardens and fountains in PV's colonial heart, overlooking cupolas of famous Guadalupe church. Tolling church bells and dreamy panoramas from rooftop whirlpool, alfresco restaurant. Rooms with regionally sourced antiques and colonial artifacts. Mariachis serenade at cocktail hour. Lots of private niches for romance; illuminated at night by hundreds of candles. 20 rooms; from \$285; www.haciendasanangel.com.

VERANA Yelapa, Jalisco Organic modernism in a Crusoe setting on Banderas Bay, an hour's journey south of Puerto Vallarta. Reached by boat, then 15-minute hike through jungle to your hillside roost destination. Design-conscious open-air bungalows, compost toilets, infinity pool hued to color of ocean. Candles provide most nighttime lighting. A tropical chill spot with drop-dead ocean vistas. 8 houses; from \$480 for two, incl. all meals; www.verana.com.

MESON SACRISTÍA DE LA COMPAÑÍA Puebla, Puebla Petite artisanal hotel in historic student district full of clubs and bars. A generations-old family of antiques traders stitched it together: 300-year-old bathroom doors from local jail, gold-leaf detailing, wrought-iron bedsteads. Garden courtyard sanctuary; cooking classes, Bar el Confesionario (two of their margaritas and you'll confess to anything). 8 rooms; from \$118; www.mesones-sacristia.com.

BALAMKU INN ON THE BEACH Mahahual, Quintana Roo Simplicity on the beach in gadget-free Mayan-style cabanas nestled among the palms and sea grapes. Textile art, built-in bancos (benches), windows louvered to catch the breeze. Solar and wind generation powers this low-wattage encampment: composting toilets, wetlands constructed for gray-water dispersal. Kayak offshore, then roll overboard to snorkel the reef. Lack of a dinner restaurant encourages in-town exploring. 9 rooms; from \$75; www.balamku.com.

COPAL Tulum, Quintana Roo Yoga-centric Maya-style thatch-hut resort, nestled among tropical flowers and coconut palm two miles from ancient Maya ruins. All natural: no phones, no electricity (except in restaurant and bar). Tip: Breezy sea-view cabanas much cooler than ones in jungle. Organic room amenities, antioxidant meals, holistic treatments in spa. Coral reef offshore. 47 cabanas; from \$30; www.ecotulum.com.

ESENCIA Xpu-Ha, Quintana Roo Former beachside retreat of an Italian duchess; 50-acre estate sitting on two sweet miles of empty beach. All-white rooms. Organic spa—the first in the area—with Maya-style domed steam rooms and traditional treatments using herbs grown right there. Complimentary yoga classes. 29 rooms; from \$459, incl. breakfast; www.hotelesencia.com.

CASA DE SIERRA NEVADA San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato Nine statuesque mansions evoke colonial past with traditional arts and crafts. Hand-painted tile baths, quarry-stone fireplaces in rooms. Bolero trio serenades diners at one of two restaurants; Sazon cooking school for do-it-yourselfers. In heart of expat enclave with cobblestone streets and pealing church bells. 37 rooms; from \$248; www.casadesierranevada.com.

HACIENDA CHICHEN RESORT & YAXKIN SPA Chichén Itzá, Yucatán A 16th-century corn-colored hacienda built by Spanish conquerors of

stone "recycled" from Maya temples. Functioned as archaeologist accommodations in 1920s. 200-acre jungle preserve and bird refuge; a 10-minute walk to archaeological park. Maya immersion: attend "sacred" rituals, sign up for cooking classes, submit to treatments at the holistic spa. Craft boutique donates profit to Maya Foundation. Environmental policies. All in all, as green as the jungle. 28 rooms; from \$120, incl. breakfast; www.haciendachichen.com.

CANADA

ISLAND LAKE LODGE Fernie, B.C. Wedged into the Kootenay Rockies, above a mountain lake and amid 800-year-old cedars, sit four log lodges. Spring-fed micro-hydro system powers pristine off-grid location. No TV or phones in rooms gleaming with wood. Raw nature tempered by hot-stone massages, extensive wine library, organic wild-sourced cuisine. Summer: canoeing, guided hiking. Winter? It's all about snowcat skiing through powder. 26 rooms; from \$189, incl. breakfast; www.islandlakeresorts.com.

HASTINGS HOUSE COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL Salt Spring Island, B.C. A former Hudson Bay trading post evolved into English Tudor-manoor complex guarding Ganges Harbour. In-room fireplaces, eiderdown duvets, heated slate floors. Regional dining on veranda overlooking harbor. House speciality? Salt Spring Island lamb. Commercial crab fisherman takes guests out for hands-on Dungeness crab session. Self-guided tour to artist studios, wineries, cheese-makers. 18 rooms; from \$242; www.hastingshouse.com.

SONORA RESORT Sonora Island, B.C. Fly in on seaplane to wilderness lodge amid old-growth rain forest on 145-square-mile island in Desolation Sound. Rooms in 10 themed lodges overlook yucultas: ocean rapids full of whirlpools and tide rips. Ocean-view botanical conservatory. Organic regional cuisine. Partners with local First Nations tribes for eco-tours and grizzly bear viewing. 88 rooms; from \$375; www.sonoraresort.com.

CLAYOQUOT WILDERNESS RESORT Tofino, B.C. A tented mid-May–Sept. camp where river meets sea. Opulently furnished prospector-style canvas tents linked by cedar boardwalk. Spa treatments, saunas, cedar hot tubs overlooking the water. No TV, no phones—only call you'll hear is the Call of the Wild. Local First Nations guides tutor guests in ways of the Northwest. About a dozen working dogs keep nosy bears out of camp. 20 tents; 3 nights, from \$3,897 per person, all-inclusive; www.wildretreat.com.

LAZY BEAR LODGE AND CAFÉ Churchill, Man. Built in the style of a Hudson Bay Company trading post with fire-killed timber; three miles above the tree line. Local greenhouse for produce, exotic wild meats from Inuit-owned cooperatives. Cabins are woody burrows of warmth. Up-close encounters with beluga whales and polar bears are the reason you're here. 33 rooms; from \$125; www.lazybearlodge.com.

FAIRMONT ALGONQUIN St. Andrews-by-the-Sea, N.B. Tudor-style spread with turreted red slate roof overlooking Passamaquoddy Bay. Grand public areas, rooms in period dress: two-poster beds, wicker armchairs, windows opening to briny breeze. Shuffleboard, croquet, 1894 golf