

7 *Secret* *FOODIE GEMS*

SYLVIA ALLEN'S *Greatest HITS*

\*ALL-STAR West *COAST RESORTS* \*<sup>86</sup>/<sub>38</sub>

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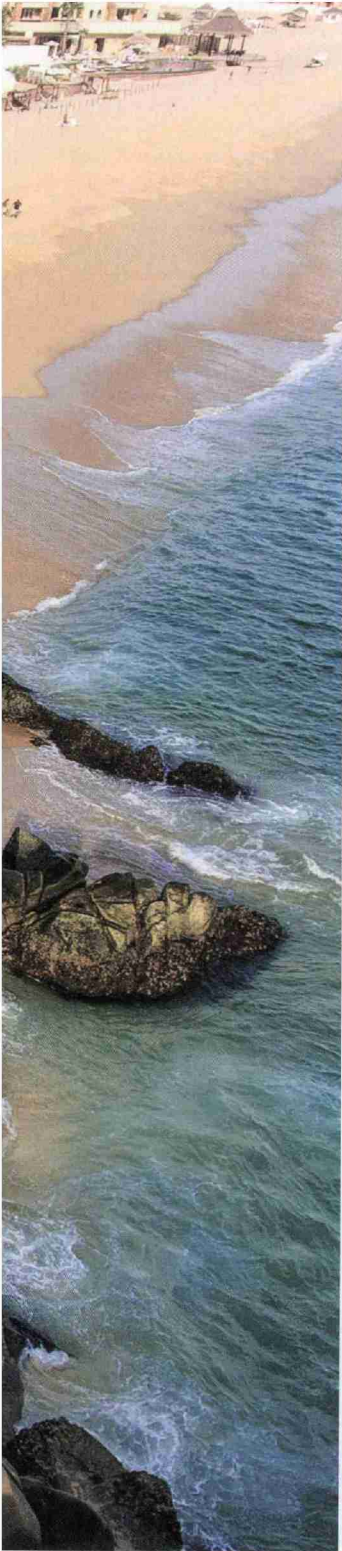
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**EXPLORE** ALL-STAR WEST COAST RESORTS

## All-Star West Coast Resorts

*Stay close to home, relatively speaking, with an autumn trip to one of five West Coast locales.*

**"FALL IS TOTALLY** a secret travel hack in Southern California," the public relations pro says slyly over her plate of avocado toast. "It's not high season with prices, but it still is weatherwise."

And that, in a nutshell, explains our present focus: a curated selection of top-flight resorts in Mexico and Southern California, where Arizonans can escape the September and October heat to find appealing off-season deals in slices of paradise still warm enough to beckon a dip in the Pacific Ocean, or a round of Frisbee on a breezy beach. "The industry still hasn't wised up," the publicist concludes.

But we have.

### Los Cabos Pedregal

#### CABO SAN

#### LUCAS, MEXICO

Though it's technically located in Cabo San Lucas, and barely a five-minute drive from the party-prone city's legendary bazaar of nightclubs and whistle-toting cantina hombres, this Waldorf Astoria property feels a world apart. It might have something to do with the tunnel its owners blasted through a small mountain to access the placid private cove where Pedregal was eventually built: Today, the 1,000-foot subterranean entry is the only way in or out of the property, and the psychological sense of occasion that visitors experience, emerging onto the resort's bright outdoor foyer and its stunning view of the sun-dappled Pacific, is profound.

Could be. The more likely reason Pedregal doesn't feel like typical Cabo: It's simply the nicest thing around. Named the No. 1 Resort Hotel in Mexico by *Travel + Leisure* in 2019, it ticks off all the boxes on your mental paradise-vacation checklist: spectacular swim-up bar where

you can camp out all day watching yachts taxi in and out of the nearby harbor; lovely rooms with universal ocean views, from the base-model king all the way to the 1,400-square-foot beachfront suite (\$1,250/night), with an attached private swimming pool perfect for late-night laps *para dos*; and an elite culinary program.

On that last point: Enjoy a dinner, or four, at flagship restaurant *El Farallon*, which translates loosely to "rock jutting out of the sea" and was so named for its perch along a sinuous, rocky ridgeline overlooking the ocean. The views are exalting, and so is the daily local seafood catch — red snapper, sea bass, dorado and more —

splayed on ice for your viewing pleasure, and roasted whole for your gustatory ecstasy.

El Farallon also boasts an accomplished Champagne program, and offers a curated tasting before dinner on a deck near the restaurant. (A recommended add-on, for sure.) Naturally, you can also order a tequila shot, if that's your bag. Whistle not included.

**IF YOU GO:** Camino Del Mar 1, 52-624-163-4300, [theresortatpedregal.com](http://theresortatpedregal.com)

**SEASONAL SPLURGE:** Book a class with the tennis pro, who excels at simple but meaningful tweaks. Before-backhand: horrible. After-backhand: Nadal-like.

**FALL SPECIAL:** Celebrate Pedregal's 10th anniversary with the **Decade of Luxury** package, featuring 10 components, from a complimentary one-night stay to daily breakfast and free airport transfers.

Fall rates start at \$325/night.

By **MADISON RUTHERFORD** and **CRAIG OUTHIER**

**EXPLORE** ALL-STAR WEST COAST RESORTS

Caramelized poblano pepper at Frida, below; infinity pool at Grand Velas Riviera Nayarit, right



**Grand Velas Riviera Nayarit**  
**PUERTO VALLARTA, MEXICO**

This all-inclusive Puerto Vallarta posada is aptly named. With the azure water and ivory sand of Banderas Bay and the stunning Sierra Madre mountain range as the backdrop, the Grand Velas is decidedly grand. Throw in a three-tiered, multi-temperature infinity pool, full-service spa, five award-winning gourmet restaurants and 267 ocean-view suites with private plunge pools and you've got your own personal paradise.

Choose between 30 different treatments at *Se Spa*, many of which are inspired by native Mexican traditions. Try the Water Journey, a tranquil tour of the senses that includes hydro-reflexology, eucalyptus inhalation and a multi-jet pressure shower. Challenge yourself with fitness classes like Aqua Forza, a mood-boosting water exercise that features low-impact routines on non-slip mats secured above the water.

A kaleidoscope of arts and culture exists just beyond the resort. Wander through the charming streets of downtown *Puerto Vallarta* – a 25-minute jaunt from Grand Velas – and experience vibrant nightlife, cafes, shops and art galleries. Take a peek at popular

landmarks like Los Arcos Amphitheater or enjoy live music and an open-air market at Plaza Principal. If golf is your gig, a slew of championship courses are just a stone's throw away, and the crystalline, cobalt-colored water at Banderas Bay is ideal for kayaking, snorkeling and swimming.

Dining at Grand Velas is also a distinctly grand experience. The resort's executive chef Guillaume Morancé handpicked each employee in all of the on-site restaurants. He must be doing something right – three of the resort's five restaurants boast AAA Four Diamond awards for pristine cuisine and presentation. At gourmet Mexican eatery *Frida*, a live harpist provides the soundtrack for a fresh meal – Morancé recommends the octopus tacos with pork shank and belly in salsa taquera redolent with chile de árbol. And for dessert: The poblano pepper caramelized in piloncillo sugar with sweet pineapple filling and a dollop of pistachio cream might be the grandest thing about Grand Velas.

**IF YOU GO:** Av. Cocoteros, 98 Sur, 877-418-2722, [vallarta.grandvelas.com](http://vallarta.grandvelas.com)

**SEASONAL SPLURGE:** Guests can opt to upgrade to a *Wellness Suite*, which comes with a personal training session and in-suite massage. Reset with a complimentary sleep kit that includes roll-on aromatherapy lotion, bath salts, handcrafted soaps and a silk eye pillow. Rates start at \$425/night.

**FALL SPECIAL:** From September 1 to October 31, guests can take advantage of the *Autumn Dream* package, which includes a \$50 spa or golf credit for adults and a free stay for kids.

Fall rates start at \$336/person for double occupancy.

PHOTOS BY ANGELINA ARAGON, GRAND VELAS RESORT RIVIERA NAYARIT