

costa palmas

A woman in a yellow swimsuit is swimming in a pool of water. The water is dark green and has ripples. In the background, there is a large, layered rock formation with some white mineral deposits. The scene is lit with natural light, creating a serene atmosphere.

STORIES FROM THE EAST CAPE



Founder's Letter

✦ THE EAST CAPE is an extraordinary destination, blessed with spectacular natural beauty, unparalleled opportunities for adventure, and an easy-to-access location. There's truly nowhere else like it in Baja—and beyond!

Over the last six years, we've watched our members and guests discover—and fall in love with—the East Cape. We're proud that Costa Palmas has introduced this incredible place and everything it has to offer to so many people. We're also proud of what we've built at Costa Palmas, and we're excited about what's next: new opportunities and amenities at the Beach & Yacht Club and a significant focus on elevating and expanding our Marina Village. In 2022, the village will begin to realize its potential as a lively place where our community comes together.

We can't wait to share these new developments and many other future plans with you. In the meantime, we hope this premiere issue of *Costa Palmas* magazine inspires you to discover even more of what the East Cape—and the incredible Sea of Cortez—has to offer.

Here's to another year of making beautiful memories and building a lasting legacy together at Costa Palmas! 🍷

Jason Grosfeld
Chairman and CEO, Irongate

Seaside Splendor

Residences at Costa Palmas bring home the best of Baja living.

➔ ACCORDING TO MICHAEL RADOVAN, managing director of Costa Palmas, there's a simple explanation for why the community is the ultimate base for yacht owners in Baja California. "You can own a villa on the sand with unobstructed Sea of Cortez views and a 100-foot dock at your front door with a boat sitting right there," he says. "That's hard to beat."

The new Four Seasons Marina Villas (see "On the Waterfront," page 56) are especially alluring for boaters, but Costa Palmas offers a range of residential options for every lover of the East Cape. Four Seasons residences begin at \$2.9 million and include everything from two- to four-bedroom condos to beachfront villas. The new Aman resort, Amanvari, features 46 lots that start at \$6 million and are located on the beach, golf course, or a ridge 50 feet above the water. "Amanvari is an opportunity to create your dream home from the ground up and have the Aman brand behind it," says Radovan.

Behind every residence, of course, is the Costa Palmas community, which is home to an oceanfront Robert Trent Jones II golf course, a family sports complex, a beach club, and the new heart of the resort: Marina Village. The village itself will soon see the debut of yet another can't-be-beat amenity for boaters: the Costa Palmas Yacht Club, scheduled to open in 2024 with multiple restaurants, bars, and activities for seafarers of all ages. —SHIVANI VORA

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Harsha L'Acqua

The Saira Hospitality founder on the importance of a community-first philosophy.

➔ AS A GIRL, Harsha L'Acqua was immersed in her father's philanthropic work alongside Mother Teresa. So it was only natural that L'Acqua, a graduate of Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration, would set out to make a difference. Her nonprofit, Saira Hospitality (sairahospitality.com), combines her passions for philanthropy and travel by offering hospitality training in underserved communities. Based in Todos Santos, Saira has placed more than 250 graduates at top resorts and developments, including several staff members at Costa Palmas. Here she shares her thoughts on community development and the Costa Palmas Foundation (comunidadcostapalmas.com), the newly launched nonprofit focused on environmental, social, and economic programs in La Ribera, surrounding villages, and the Sea of Cortez.





Your company, Saira Hospitality, was recently nominated for “best new concept” by the Awards for Hospitality, Experience, and Design (AHEAD). What’s new about your concept and why is it important now?

Saira Hospitality is a nonprofit transforming the way hotels engage with local communities through education. We target the unemployed and underemployed workforce that hasn't had access to hospitality-skills training, and launch pop-up and permanent schools globally, giving them the knowledge, skills, and education they need to build careers in the hotel industry. I don't know that what we do is, or even should be, considered “new”—why is it a “new concept” for the hospitality industry to build relationships with local communities, to give education, and to offer opportunities? This talent is the heart, soul, and lifeline of our industry, and we need to start thinking out of the box to source and celebrate this talent.

How has this approach worked at Costa Palmas?

In 2017, we produced a seven-week program to educate and train locals from the La Ribera community for positions at Costa Palmas. We interviewed over 100 locals for 70 spaces in the program, which translated into 60 jobs for graduates overall. In addition to equipping students with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in their roles, we also organized excursions to luxury hotels and restaurants where students could experience high-level service firsthand.

What impact do you hope to see from the Costa Palmas Foundation?

We believe that the Costa Palmas Foundation—which focuses on the needs of the community first, whether it be education, agriculture, or infrastructure—will be able to elevate and celebrate its local community and lead the way for other hospitality organizations to do the same. We feel it will send a message to local communities that our industry can do so much more than put heads in beds—that we genuinely care about our neighborhoods and the people in them. I see the foundation as a force for good, something to inspire hope, excitement, and a sense of relief that change is coming, but this time it's positive change.

You recently moved to Baja. Of all the places to base Saira Hospitality, why here?

Saira Hospitality officially started in Baja, when we did our first school in Todos Santos in 2016. There's a lot of potential for Saira in Mexico, and we are currently fundraising for our first permanent school in San José del Cabo. Ironically, on a personal note, there was one week, toward the end of our first school in Todos Santos, where I fainted at dinner, stepped on a blowfish, and got stung by a wasp. One of my students, Teresa, said to me, “You know what this means, Harsha? Todos Santos has decided you will not leave this place. This is your home.” Five years later, it pulled me back to where it all began.

What’s your personal favorite thing about living in Baja?

The energy resonates with me; it is an intense energy where you're thrown into the natural elements—the sun, the dust, the wind, and the storms. Yet the beauty of the landscape, the mountains under the stars, the turquoise of the seas, and the precious sunrises and sunsets are hard to find anywhere else. Each day, as the sun sets, it feels as though the entire town stops to watch, to take a minute, to celebrate another day, and to say thank you for the magic that we are so lucky to have on our doorsteps.

The Costa Palmas Foundation focuses on environmental, social, and economic programs in local communities.

comunidadcostapalmas.com





GROUNDING IN COMMUNITY

Projects that put local communities first—through infrastructure, agriculture, and the like—are the focus of Harsha L'Acqua's Saira Hospitality and Costa Palmas' own nonprofit, the recently launched Costa Palmas Foundation.