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DATE: TUESDAY APRIL 17TH
4:00 PM - 7:00 PM

LOCATION:
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1650 MARINE DR. WEST VANCOUVER

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FRESH ST. MARKET
1650 MARINE DR WEST VANCOUVER



Two-star Michelin chef Sidney Schutte leads the kitchen at Cocina de Autor, a restaurant at the Grand Velas Los Cabos. PHOTO SUPPLIED

MEXICO: CABO SAN LUCAS

Grand Velas Los Cabos raises the bar in Baja

**JANICE AND GEORGE
MUCALOV**
Contributing writers

“Has anyone ordered the \$25,000 tacos?” we ask upon arriving.

Opened just over a year ago, the Grand Velas Los Cabos has upped the wow factor in Los Cabos – that sunny desert-meets-the sea destination where Hollywood celebs jet in for their regular dose of Vitamin D and luxury hotels glitter like diamonds on the finger of Mexico’s Baja Peninsula. You can book a \$2-million birthday party for your pampered teen (complete with private jet flights and a concert by pop musicians Pitbull or Maroon 5). And if

you get married at the resort, you can have your first dance personally choreographed by a celebrity dancer from the hit TV show *Dancing With the Stars* or *So You Think You Can Dance*.

So maybe a guest has chowed down on the world’s most expensive taco? Perhaps Juliette Lewis, one of the first stars to check in? Or Motley Crue drummer Tommy Lee? (He recently celebrated his 55th birthday here.) After all, the lobster and beluga caviar creation is served in no less than a gold-flaked tortilla.

“Oh yes, we’ve sold two,” came the answer.

Eye-popping extras are just a small part of satisfying guests’ high-end tastes, we

discover during our three-night stay at the Grand Velas.

Most guests are content with what’s included though. Because like its sister Mexican properties in the Grand Velas collection, the Los Cabos resort is all-inclusive. But don’t cringe. The Grand Velas Los Cabos is nothing like your ordinary all-inclusive resort. Picture instead an ultra-luxury resort, where the bill has been taken care of. Indeed, just in case you’ve forgotten how much your stay costs, you even sign a bill at the end of each meal detailing what the charges would otherwise be.

After happily submitting to a complimentary three-minute

See Resort page 37



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The
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Resort features prime views of turquoise sea

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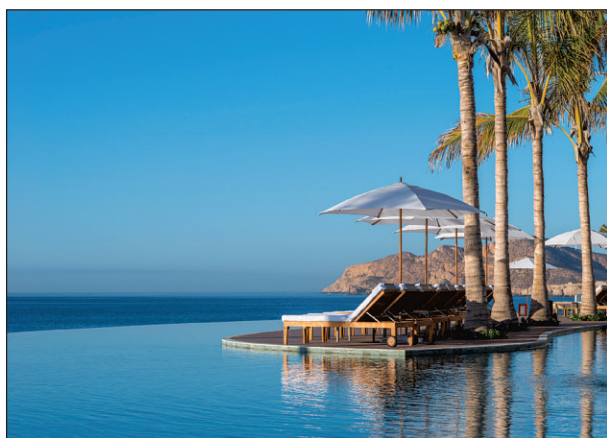
shoulder massage at check-in, the next hint our Grand Velas sojourn is going to be quite different from the Club Meds, Couples and other all-inclusives we've stayed at is our modernist suite. We usually think of a suite as having a bedroom closed off from a living room. But all 304 Grand Velas rooms are huge (at 110 square metres or more), and each has a separate lounging area (with the largest flat-screen TV we've ever seen). So even though all one space, in our books, these can aptly be called "suites."

Goose down comforter and pillow menu? Check. Ocean view from the bathtub and L'Occitane products? Check. Welcome gold-chocolate dipped strawberries and big cut-glass bottle of Grand Velas brand tequila? Check. And what's this? There's even a flat-iron styling device in the bathroom as well as a hair dryer.

Eager to catch some rays after weeks of soggy West Coast weather, we dawdle no more and dash down to the three tiers of pools. With the holidays over, the resort isn't busy and we snag deck chairs on a palm island in the front of the adult infinity pool – with prime views of the sparkling turquoise sea in front of us.

The gold sand beach below also beckons. But ocean swimming at the resort is a no-no because of the deadly undertow. We decide to walk the beach later and succumb instead to the ministrations of the pool butler. He's laid out our towels, delivered fresh mint mojitos along with an ice bucket of bottled water, and is now moving our umbrella to allow just the right amount of sun to warm our pasty bodies.

We're coddled some more the next day at the spa. We're booked for a seven-step



Grand Velas Los Cabos, in Cabo San Lucas, has 304 suites overlooking the conversion zone where the Pacific Ocean meets the Sea of Cortez. PHOTOS SUPPLIED

"water journey" – a guided, hot-and-cold, hydrotherapy experience.

Led by a "spa valet," we begin by soaking in the warm pools and trying different water jets for massaging the back, shoulders, calves and other parts of the body. The metal underwater bubble beds are the most fun; we have to hang on or we'll float away. A cold plunge pool then sets us up for the sauna, where we're given cucumber slices for the eyes and an iced face cloth for our brows. Next, in the tiled ice room, we spread aloe vera on our skin, before stepping underneath a mist shower. By the time we enter the dark eucalyptus-scented steam cave, we're ready to nod

off underneath its starry lights. Good thing the last stage is devoted to reclining on heated stone loungers, reviving on watermelon popsicles – or we might not make it to dinner.

And that would be a shame. Because the food is where the Grand Velas really shines.

The resort has eight restaurants, offering a choice of 51 complimentary wines, including several fine wines from northern Baja California like Casa Magoni and Casa Madero. For lunch, we go light at the raw seafood bar serving fresh sashimi, oysters and ceviche; at dinner, we let loose.

The first two nights are

See *Mixologists* page 38

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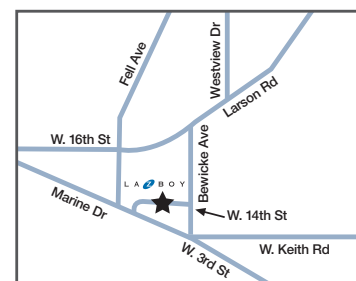
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For more information, please contact: info@furrycreekgolf.com

When: April 22nd and 23rd 2018 • From 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Where: Furry Creek Golf & Country Club, Pacific Banquet Room



FURRY CREEK
Golf and Country Club

Highway 1 – Lower Lynn Improvements

Public Information Sessions –
Saturday April 14, and Tuesday April 17, 2018



The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, the Government of Canada and the District of North Vancouver are partnering in the design and construction of new and improved interchanges along the Lower Lynn portion of Highway 1. The Highway 1 – Lower Lynn Improvements will be completed in four phases to improve safety, reliability, and reduce congestion. These improvements will help improve travel times along Highway 1 to and from the Ironworkers Memorial Bridge, as well as within the surrounding municipal road network.

Since our public information sessions last year, construction of the new Mountain Highway Interchange has been underway. We've also revised our design plans for the following phases of interchange improvements based on your feedback.

At the upcoming information sessions, we'll provide design plans for the Lynn Creek Connectivity Improvements and the Keith Road/Seymour Parkway Interchange Projects. We'll also be showing concept refinements for the new Main Street/Dollarton Highway Interchange.

Public Information Session Schedule:

Saturday, April 14
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Lynnmour Elementary School
800 Forsman Avenue

Tuesday, April 17
5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Holiday Inn & Suites
700 Old Lillooet Road

For more information

Visit
gov.bc.ca/lowerlynninterchanges

Email
lowerlynn@gov.bc.ca

How Your Input Will Be Considered

Your input will be considered, along with technical and financial input, as the project team completes further design refinements. There will also be additional opportunities to provide input.

If you are unable to attend one of the information sessions, you can visit gov.bc.ca/lowerlynninterchanges to learn more about the Highway 1 – Lower Lynn Improvements.

tell your community about your upcoming events email editor@nsnews.com



Cocina de Autor was named one the best new restaurants in the world by CNN in 2017. PHOTO SUPPLIED

Mixologists create artisanal cocktails

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reserved for Frida (haute Mexican, where you can get that \$25,000 taco) and Piaf (where a glass of Kir Royale kicks off a French-themed menu featuring foie gras, escargots and white truffles).

Our last night is saved for Cocina de Autor, led by two-star Michelin chef Sidney Schutte of the Netherlands.

We're invited to start with a drink in the adjacent bar. Mixologists whip up cocktails unique to each bar. We won't find the "Germain's Garden" – the gin, sage, rosemary, chamomile, lime, ginger, agave syrup and St. Germain liquor concoction that we've ordered – at the toes-in-the-sand bar with firepit. And there are no little parasols topping these artisanal cocktails.

Upon moving to the contemporary-styled restaurant, our server explains the ten-course tasting menu at Cocina de Autor. We're offered sparkling or still water with our choice of garnish (orange, grapefruit or lime), and the sommelier pours the first of our wine pairings. Mini-bites of octopus with red cabbage and tuna with jalapeno then appear.

Over the next couple of hours, we "ooh and ahh" over Langoustine cooked in whiskey cream, Kobe beef with

black bean beetroot, avocado-and-cucumber yoghurt with Chartreuse, and more. Foams, sauces and edible flowers garnish the dishes, and we savor every bite.

With so many things the Grand Velas does right, it's hard to find any faults. We could point out the fellow guests whose exuberance one day meant we had to move from our pool chairs to a more peaceful perch. Or that there's a charge for the hydrotherapy experience (\$70) unless you book a massage or other spa treatment, in which case it's included.

Or we could just relish our time at this extraordinary all-inclusive, knowing that we'll be returning to our everyday lives all too soon.

If you go:

The Grand Velas Los Cabos welcomes couples, families and groups. (A free "baby concierge" package – cot with hanging mobiles, toddler potty, baby shampoo, etc. – makes holidaying with a wee one easier. There's a supervised kids club too. A popular "teen zone," with a karaoke stage and space-age pods for playing computer games, appeals to teenagers.)

Pretty well everything is included, except for spa treatments, premium wines (other than the 51 included wines) and obvious extras (like the \$25,000 taco). Grandvelas.com.

"IN THIS WORLD, NOTHING CAN BE CERTAIN, EXCEPT DEATH AND TAXES." (B. FRANKLIN)

Tax season does not have to be overwhelming or depressing. Here are a few steps you can take to ensure you are prepared:

- ✓ Find a fee-based advisor who will help you structure your investments to minimize taxes and reduce tax complexity.
- ✓ Work with an advisor who will introduce you to other professionals, such as accountants and lawyers, as necessary, and who will shepherd you through the process so that you don't feel abandoned.
- ✓ Take advantage of special accounts such as TFSAs and RRSPs.
- ✓ If you are a business owner, pay yourself through an optimal mix of salary and dividends. Set up a personal health services plan. Discuss with your tax advisor whether your current corporate structure is optimal for tax purposes.

Taxes should not come between you and your goals. *Dream It, Plan It, Live It!*



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