

SAN FRANCISCO | PENINSULA | SILICON VALLEY

GENTRY

GIVING NOW

*Silicon Valley's
Innovative Philanthropy*

BUILDING OPPORTUNITY

Lisa and Case Swenson Focus
on Empowerment + Education
for Children

EPACENTER RISES

Fostering the Arts in East Palo Alto

PARTNERSHIP FOR THE BAY'S FUTURE

Interviews with stakeholders including:

- San Francisco Foundation
- Chan Zuckerberg Initiative
- Local Initiatives Support Corporation
- The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
- Silicon Valley Community Foundation

JUNE 2019

WWW.GENTRYMAGAZINE.COM

\$4.99 US




GENTRY
DESTINATIONS

*Oahu, Italy, the O.C.,
Costa Rica, and more*

Case Swenson

GENTRY

DESTINATIONS

RESORTS | HOMES | TRAVEL | ADVENTURE



JUNE/JULY 2019

PENINSULA PERFECTION

Eco-ecstasy awaits at Costa Rica's crown jewel—Peninsula Papagayo.

BY CORRY COOK

Anchored by the award-winning Four Seasons Papagayo, Peninsula Papagayo now includes the Andaz Costa Rica Resort, an array of beautiful private residences, and such luxury amenities as an 18-hole Arnold Palmer-designed golf course and clubhouse, the 180-slip Marina Papagayo, and the 38,000-square-foot Prieta Beach Club.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF PENINSULA PAPAGAYO





Lush forests of vibrant green, exotic animals in every color of the rainbow, pristine beaches flanked by crystal clear water—think this demands many mind-numbing flights? Think again.

Wild, wonderful, and within reach, Costa Rica is one of Central America's most extraordinary destinations. The country is relatively small, covering only 0.03% of the surface of the globe, yet it shelters 5% of the existing biodiversity in the entire world. Considered one of the planet's most bio-diverse regions, it boasts 28 national parks, eight biological reserves, and a series of protected areas that continue to dazzle ecotourism enthusiasts worldwide.

Just a 25-minute drive from the new and improved Liberia International Airport, Costa Rica's Peninsula Papagayo commands 1,400 acres of lush landscape in the Guanacaste province on Costa Rica's north Pacific coast near Nicaragua. Meaning "Rich Coast" in Spanish, this fertile land offers a rare microcosm of Costa Rica, including 11 miles of dramatic coastline, seven sandy beaches, and one of the few tropical dry forests on the planet.

Needless to say, it takes a lot to "wow" in this spectacular wonderland, and the newly imagined Peninsula Papagayo does just that. The word is out—luxury travel aficionados and eco-adventurers alike are dazzled by the area's \$100-million transformation.

Anchored by the award-winning Four Seasons Papagayo, Peninsula Papagayo now includes the Andaz Costa Rica Resort, an array of beautiful private residences, and such luxury amenities as an 18-hole Arnold Palmer-designed golf course and clubhouse,

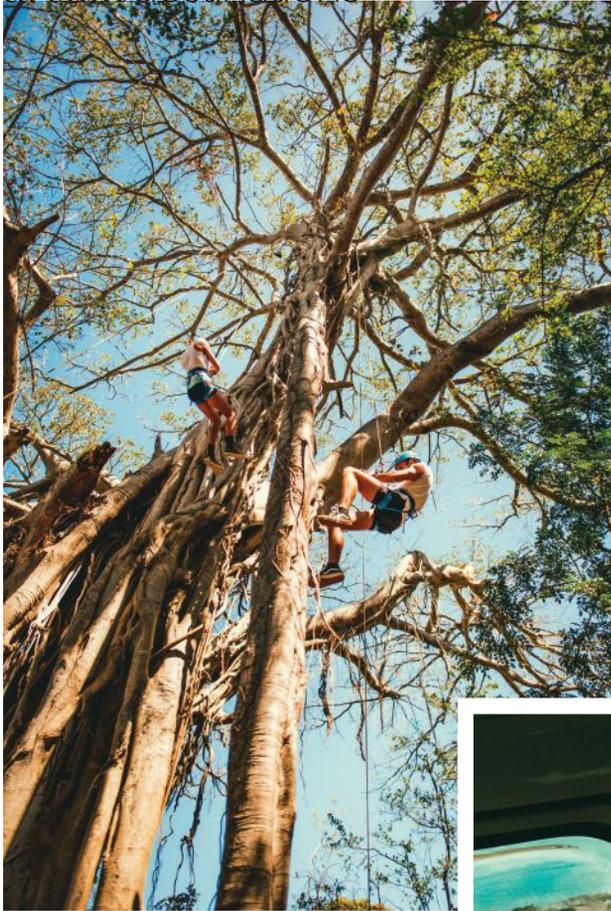
the 180-slip Marina Papagayo, and the 38,000-square-foot Prieta Beach Club—all of which deliver best-in-class service via the more than 700 employees.

Thus, when a visit to Peninsula Papagayo offers a rare glimpse into both resorts, one cannot refuse. As an honorary member of the travel elite, complete with my own fully loaded Four Seasons and Andaz suites, my husband and I had access to all the amenities available on both properties across the peninsula, including golf courses, pools, spas, restaurants, and much more.

The moment we arrived at the Andaz Peninsula Papagayo Resort, I swear my blood pressure dropped. Overlooking the sapphire blue waters of Culebra Bay, the property oozes authenticity. Thanks to renowned Costa Rican architect Ronald Zurcher, the first Latin American Andaz property is inspired by the organic forms of the native flora and fauna, using the shapes of cocoons and shells for the hotel's many venues.

The incredible team at the Andaz works to personalize each guest's stay, offering up an array of locally inspired experiences as wide-ranging as stand-up paddle boarding, zipline tours, horseback riding, and access to the Rincón de la Vieja Volcano National Park with its mud baths, hot springs, and adventure activities. On property, you can enjoy a unique history lesson in the form of a lively Costa Rican mixology program that explores the history behind the art of cocktail making in addition to hands-on lessons and lots of sampling. A dip in one of the Resort's four pools and/or three beaches offers plenty of room to spread out and unwind. Or bliss out at the 11,000-square-foot Onda Spa, which is nestled in the jungle near the back of the resort.





Or maybe you're simply looking for the best ceviche in Costa Rica? Then head to Ostra, one of three restaurants at the Andaz, where diners may choose between a curated ceviche menu and designing a dish of their own. The resort features 153 guest rooms, of which 21 are luxury suites, and all are sumptuous and welcoming at the end of an action-packed day.

Feeling rested and refreshed the next morning, we were happily "overserved" at the Rio Bhongo's massive breakfast buffet, and then it was time to burn it off with a full day of eco-activity. The Papagayo Explorers Club, the destination's program of exclusive land, ocean, aerial, and cultural immersion adventures, debuted in 2018 and is now available to all homeowners and guests of the peninsula.

Led by local expert guides, biologists, naturalists, and translators, Papagayo Explorers Club now offers more than 25 only-here adventures. New experiences include a Cacao Volcano Expedition that grants rare access via 4x4 vehicles to a protected crater of an inactive volcano that houses Costa Rica's lowest-

altitude cloud forest, and a guided naturalist hike to an active research station on the rim of the crater. After an exclusive tour of the Nature Center, we set out on a guided nature walk where wildlife sightings dazzled in every direction, followed by fresh fish tacos and frothy cocktails served while in a shared hammock at the Andaz Beach House.

After the eco-ecstasy, don't miss a festive night scene at the Añejo Restaurant, which at night becomes the heart of the hotel, with a DJ spinning, creative aperitifs flowing, and tasty tapas to be shared.

Parting was indeed bittersweet, but it was time to move on to our second home-away-from-home for this excursion. The Four Seasons Papagayo, ranked as the only Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star Resort in Central and South America, stuns from the moment you arrive at the striking open-air lobby, with walls featuring works by local Costa Rican artists and other Latin American artists.



All of the hotel's structures, including 182 enhanced guest rooms, suites, and villas, are sustainably built and meant to blend into the exotic landscape. Our luxury hilltop villa allowed full immersion into the laid-back Peninsula Papagayo lifestyle as we swam in our private pool with its panoramic views of the glittering Pacific Ocean and tropical forest. Over one of the most memorable dinners of a lifetime at the Four Season's Nemare →



PHOTOS COURTESY OF PENINSULA PAPAGAYO



Overlooking the sapphire blue waters of Culebra Bay, the Andaz Costa Rica Resort is inspired by the organic forms of the native flora and fauna. Creating an elegant treehouse feel, all 132 rooms and 21 suites face Culebra Bay from a hillside perch. Daytime excursions may include a helicopter ride or a daring tree-climb in the Peninsula Papagayo's 1,400-acre natural playground.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF PENINSULA PAPAGAYO

Sun-dappled and breezy, your days in the Four Seasons Costa Rica's three-bedroom Miramar suite will be spent lazing by the private pool or hosting intimate dinners—when you're not sleeping undisturbed in your personal jungle paradise. After a day of world-class gold, surfing or hiking a volcano, return for a refreshing swim in one of four swimming pools or a relaxing spa treatment.

Restaurant, we began to map out the rest of our itinerary, opting to divide and conquer a host of land and water activities.

Beckoned by the serene ocean before us, we headed to the beach to try water-biking—a unique and nature-friendly way to explore the **Golfo de Papagayo**. With our expert guide leading the way, we spied myriad rays, sea turtles, and fascinating fish, and we learned that Costa Rica shelters more than 6,700 marine species, 90 of which are unique to the area. The country is best known to the world for its rainforests, not for its rich marine life, which still remains quite unknown and unexplored. For those of you looking to work up a bit more of a sweat, this experience delivers, but it was also an unexpected moment of

Zen. As we navigated the water, it was so quiet we could hear the howler monkeys in the trees.

Of course, I felt it was my journalistic “duty” to experience the **Four Seasons Spa**, and there were many delights in store, including a pre-treatment relaxation lounge complete with gem-infused water said to improve pH and oxygen levels. Serene wellness and a neutral palette of natural stone and wood envelop you in the newly renovated facility, which features 18 spa treatment rooms; a hammam room for unique Turkish bath experiences; and

new Ayurvedic and sound-healing spa treatments.

Our final day was all about adrenaline, with a private **Electric Mountain Biking Tour**. Peninsula Papagayo's new bike-share program was launched in August 2018 and features a fleet of 60 electric-assist bikes that make it easier and more fun to explore the peninsula from end to end.

Super fit, strong, and determined, my husband and our guide seemed like twins separated at birth as they rode up and down the wild hills, flying off on solo adventures on off-road trails as my own heart rate accelerated. Deciding to leave the pedaling to the experts, I began to relish the extra “push” this fancy electric mountain bike delivered.

As we rode, the phrase “Pura Vida” could be heard echoing in my mind as we raced past others out enjoying the incredible landscape. Used as a greeting or expression of happiness, the phrase literally translates to “pure life”; however, its truer meaning is “full of life,” which accurately describes the adventure and wonder that await visitors. Costa Ricans are proud to live amongst and protect their country's rich environment, and to share it with visitors.

In this spirit, I decided to kick my ride up a notch, dropping my electric mountain bike into “turbo mode.” Amazingly, I was able to race up an ominous hill, right past my two male companions. A look of shock came across my husband's face as he relished my feat almost as much as I did. Looking back in triumph, I bellowed freely, “Pura Vida, baby! Anything is possible at Papagayo!” ♦