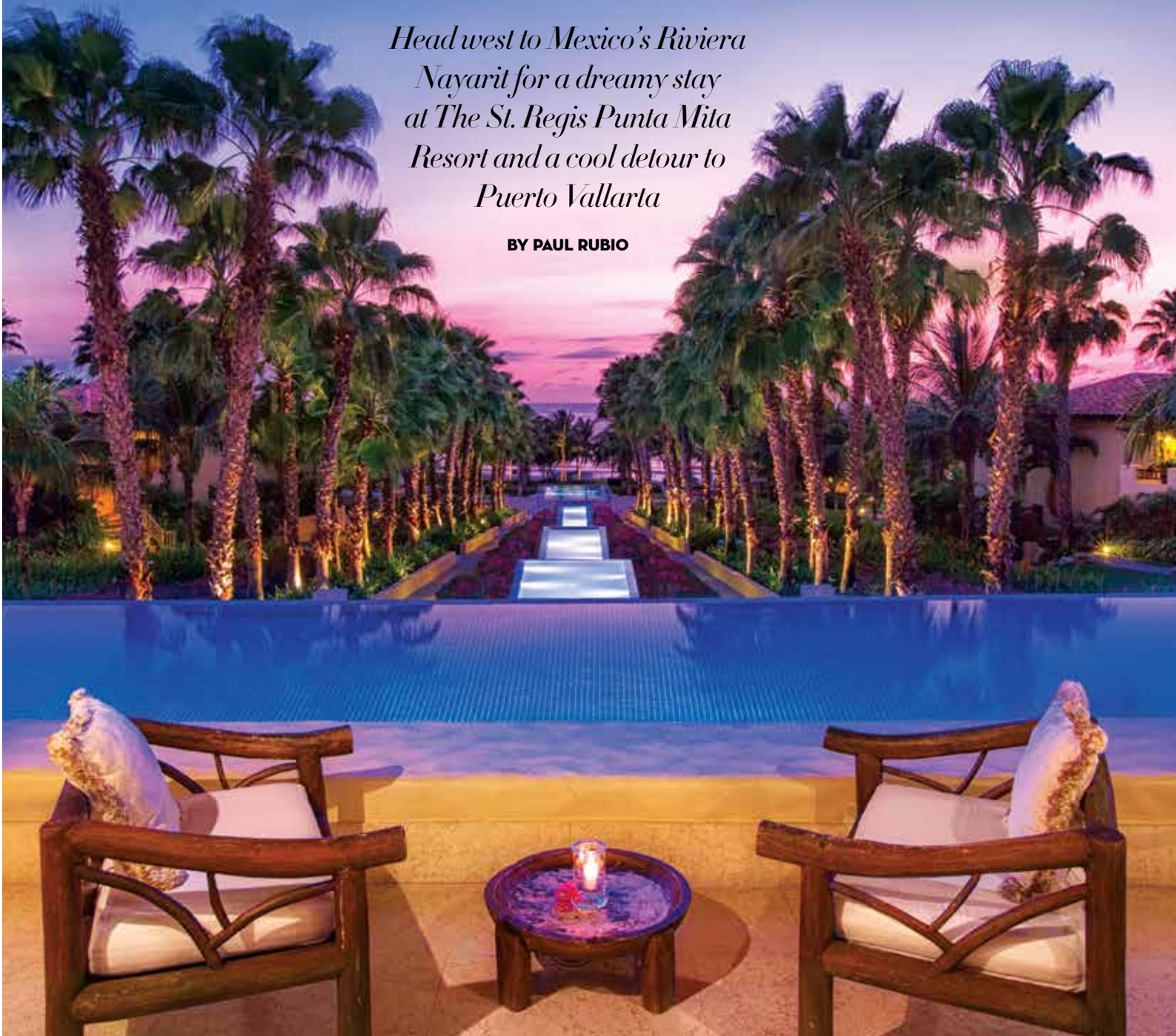


Escape

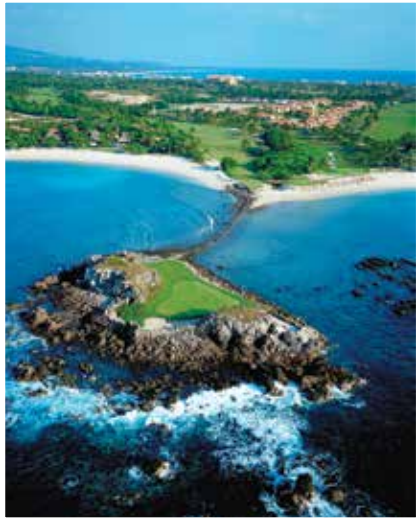
Pacific Paradise

*Head west to Mexico's Riviera
Nayarit for a dreamy stay
at The St. Regis Punta Mita
Resort and a cool detour to
Puerto Vallarta*

BY PAUL RUBIO



Escape



WHEN NOT VISITING OLD TOWN PUERTO VALLARTA, RETURN TO THE ST. REGIS TO PLAY THE “TAIL OF THE WHALE,” RELAX IN A DELUXE SUITE OR AT THE POOL, AND DINE AT CAROLINA (OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP LEFT).

Puerto Vallarta’s popularity may have peaked during the *Love Boat* era, but the 192-mile stretch of mountain-enveloped coastline north of it, the Riviera Nayarit, is having its moment right now.

The posh Punta Mita private resort community anchors this destination status. It comprises an entire peninsula, centrally located 35 minutes from the Puerto Vallarta airport, 20 minutes from the bohemian town of Sayulita, and just five minutes from the Punta de Mita pueblo. It’s also home to The St. Regis Punta Mita Resort, where amenities include three infinity pools and as many beach bars, as well as two Jack Nicklaus–designed golf courses and a Remède Spa.

The 120-room property delivers on the hallmarks of the St. Regis

brand—and then some. The rustic-chic accommodations are nestled within clusters of oceanfront, beachfront, and garden-view casitas, beginning at 600 square feet in Deluxe rooms and maxing out at 3,100 square feet in the three-bedroom Beachfront Presidential Villa. All categories are privy to St. Regis Butler Service and 24-hour private dining. A high staff-to-guest ratio ensures service consistently exceeds top-notch standards of excellence. And small touches like poolside popsicles and complimentary beachside foot massages make a big difference in completing the world-class resort experience.

The St. Regis Punta Mita Resort also takes pride in superb gastronomy. Award-winning chef Jesús Durón interprets modern Mexican cuisine at the signature Carolina Restaurant. At beachfront Mita Mary, feast on Durón’s iterations of classic ceviches and crudos, feet in the sand, seated around a repurposed wooden boat. And Mexico’s mouthwatering avocados headline creative dishes at the Avo Bar, as seen in Vietnamese spring rolls lined with avocado carpaccio, stuffed with black beans and corn, and topped with a charred jalapeño aioli. At all six

GUESTS AT THE ST. REGIS PUNTA MITA RESORT CAN UNWIND AT THE 10,000-SQUARE-FOOT REMÈDE SPA.

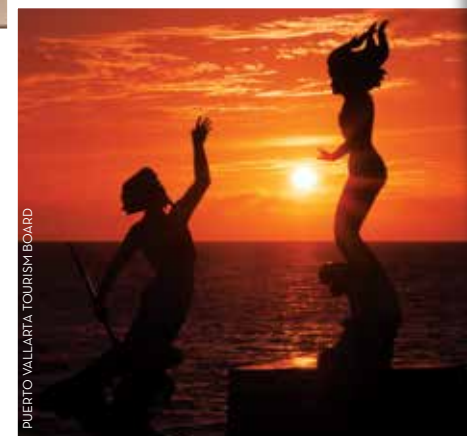


of the resort’s food-and-beverage outlets, Durón, a vegan himself, offers arguably the best vegan menu found at any top resort, using hyper-local ingredients from nearby farms to craft dishes like carrots sous vide atop plantain puree.

The property also caters to those searching beyond a vacation of “eat, relax, repeat.” Go for a round of golf on the landmark Jack Nicklaus links and take your best shot at the gotta-see-it-to-believe-it Pacifico Course, famous for the “Tail of the Whale” par-three hole that extends several hundred feet into the Pacific Ocean. Sign up for one or more of the complimentary daily activities, which range from margarita-making classes to bike tours of Punta Mita. Book a marine adventure with on-site outfitter Punta Mita Expeditions; its most popular option, the Marine Safari, explores Marieta Islands National Park, where you can find rare blue-footed boobies and a plethora of sea life, including humpback whales. For a private experience, hire the outfitter’s 45-foot catamaran for a full- or half-day scuba trip, whale watching outing, or island hopping excursion.

Over an extended weekend, consider renting a car and visiting nearby pueblos, like cobblestoned San Pancho—famous for the best *aguachile* in Mexico—and vibrant Sayulita, which explodes with colorful galleries and edgy boutiques found in striking spaces that channel both Miami’s Design District and New York’s Meatpacking District.

In addition, plan to spend some time in Puerto Vallarta proper, which, in the last decade, has worked tirelessly to regain its circa-1970s luster. The multi-mile, paved boardwalk along the city’s shoreline, El Malecón, has been completely renovated and reimagined, now strewn with iconic sculptures by Mexican artists like Alejandro Colunga Marín and Sergio Bustamante. Dilapidated storefronts have been reconstructed to house international coffee houses, diverse galleries featuring both



SEARCH FOR WHALES, EXPLORE MARIETA ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK, DISCOVER COLORFUL SAYULITA, AND SOAK IN ART AND BOARDWALK CULTURE IN PUERTO VALLARTA.

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