

# venu

Issue\_42

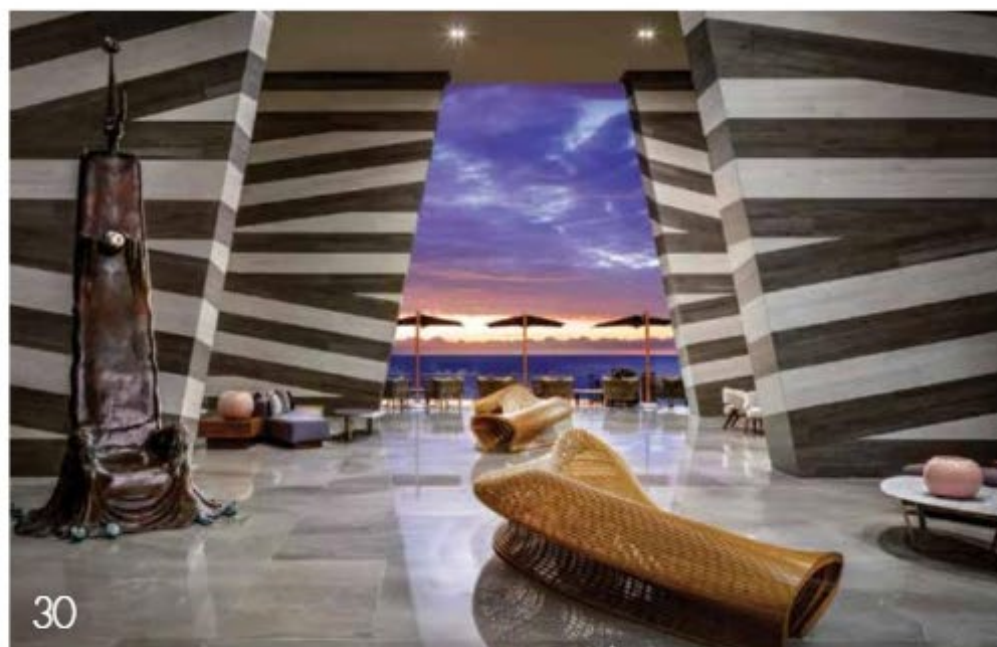




# CONTENTS

Summer Issue\_42

- 24 **Highlights** Robert's Club Celebrates its founding members
- 25 **Highlights** The Luxury Marketing Council of Connecticut-Hudson Valley's Fifth Annual Family Polo Day



## STYLE

- 26 **Guide** Chic Showroom and Extravagant Buys

## APPETITE

- 27 **The Golden Palate**  
The Best of Northern Michigan

- 28 **Venü Vines** The 12th Annual American Fine Wine Competition

- 30 **Destination** Art at the Heart of Grand Velas Los Cabos

## TRAVEL

- 64 Saratoga Springs: Behind the Iconic Blue Bottle

## WELLBEING

- 68 Shared Spaces and Sacred Womens-only Clubs: A Rising Wellness Trend

## PULSE

- 72 **Art** Emerging Spotlight: Arinze Stanley, Nigeria
- 76 **Stage** Tevye's Dream Job: One Actor's Road to the Stage

## DECORATIVE ARTS

- 78 **On the Block** Spring Selection

## VENÜGRAM

- 80 Featured Celine McDonald

## IN EVERY ISSUE

- 10 Publisher's Letter



# Curating Cabo

Art at the Heart of  
Grand Velas Los Cabos

Written by Cindy Clarke

THERE'S AN ART TO BEING NAMED AN AWARD-WINNING RESORT YEAR AFTER YEAR. Today's travelers are a savvy bunch, rating hotels on every aspect of a wide range of hospitality services, including how welcome guests feel from the first hello. Slight them and risk suffering the consequences of their wrath in full view of a global audience intent on protecting their vacation investment and then some. Please them and bask in their accolades online and in the form of personal referrals happily shared.

Velas Resorts in Mexico has the formula down pat. We had the luxury of over indulging in their all-inclusive hospitality on the Riviera Maya a few years ago, effusively awarding them our own 6-star review for their over-the-top amenities and destination décor. So when we made our way to their Cabo resort this summer for a four-day getaway, we admittedly raised the bar in our expectations.

Of course, the setting alone in Cabo San Lucas is beyond beautiful. Nature is nirvana here. Desert landscapes boast terra cotta accents



and cactus greens. White sand beaches flirt with sculpted rocks and arching cliffs posed in an artful design that belies the random order of their placement in a sea equally picture perfect and staged for myriad pleasures. The Sea of Cortez, corrugated silver on the surface, then quintessential navy blue that subtly fades into crystalline hues of turquoise and aquamarines the closer you get to shore, is an aquarium where even the marine life seems handpicked for the designer aesthetics at play. Think royal angelfish elegantly attired, gray-toned stingrays soft to the touch, whales finback and blue, starfish golden armed. Deep diving seals add a natural playfulness and porpoises pop up here and there in an unexpected flurry of whimsy and friendliness.

With those images in mind, it becomes incumbent on a resort looking to make the most of its location to leverage those nature-made elements into its property, bringing the outside in to create a seamless flow that not only soothes the senses but pampers them too. It's one





Left to right: Panoramic view of Grand Velas Los Cabos, Inside the hotel lobby, at the infinity pool, 2-star Michelin chef Sidney Schutte

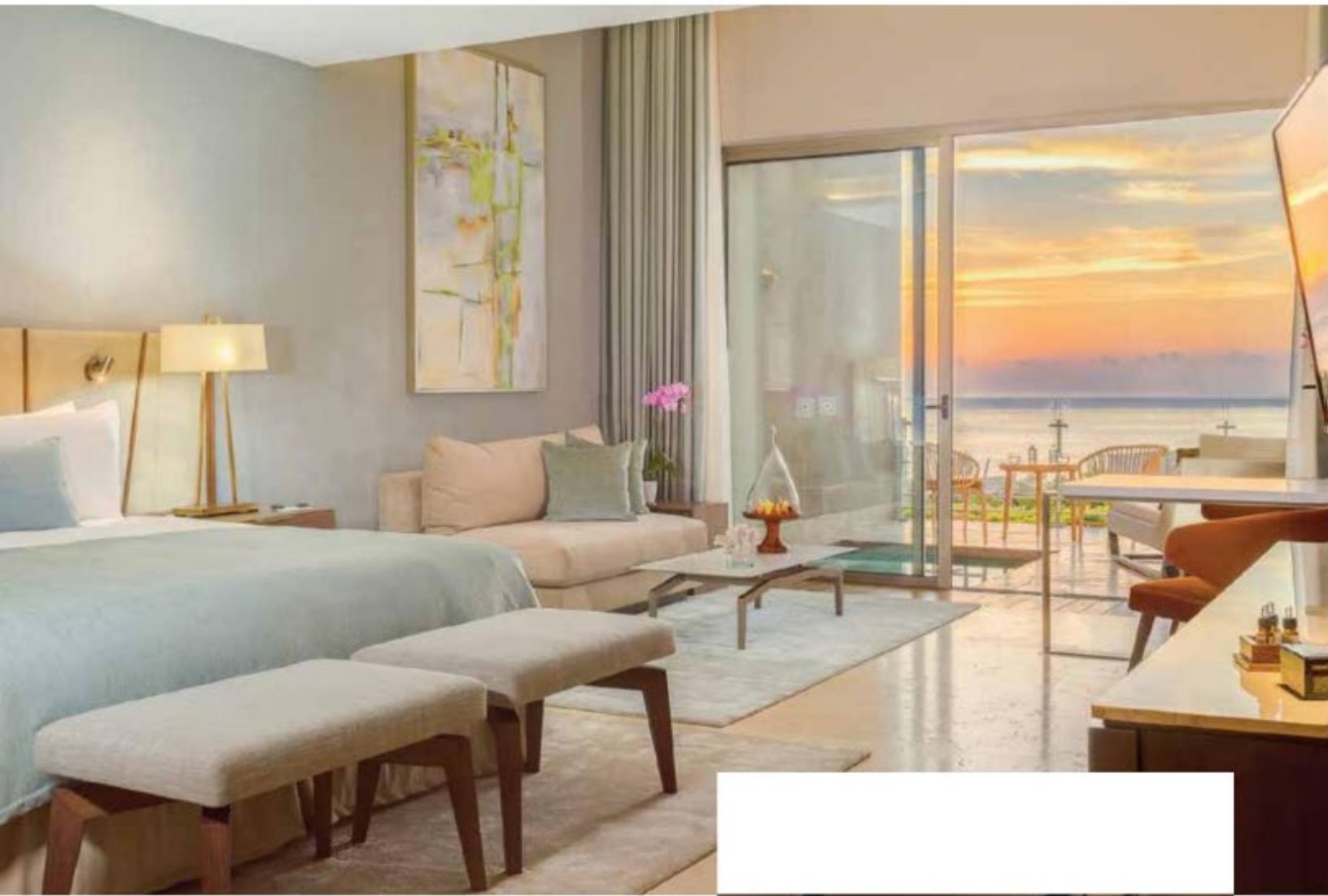
“

**Everything we do to make these hotels special is focused on one shared goal: to have the best of the best for our guests.”**

of those “authentic sense of place” requirements that differentiate a cookie cutter hotel chain from the thoughtful, ultimately intuitive luxury lodgings we aspire to stay at. It’s also a specialty of Velas Resorts’ interior designer Melin Castro, whose work on their behalf has netted several industry design awards, including its most recent recognition for Grand Velas Los Cabos as the Top Design Hotel in Latin America by II World Biennial of Interior Design and Landscaping 2018-2019 Latin America Chapter.

No stranger to industry accolades for her work, Melin has 20+ years of experience transforming Grand Velas properties into havens of hospitality that speak volumes about the local culture and guest comforts. At Los Cabos, her signature sensibilities welcome you to the lobby, a striking juxtaposition of wide-open spaces, artisan furnishings, Mexican sculpture, breathtaking views and a palette of colors that mimics its oceanfront setting. In the spa, Melin’s touch is palpable too, from the matchbook-cut marble wall and desert sand floor to the wood art that reflects the beauty of the region. That she’s passionate about her work is evidenced by her conscientious attention to details throughout. That she has a vision for all she does is corroborated by the hands-on execution of her master plan and the teamwork she ardently believes in.

“Everything we do to make these hotels special is focused on one shared goal: to have the best of the best for our guests,” she explained, noting that Velas Resorts have earned many awards,



including AAA's prestigious 5 Diamond designation for Grand Velas Riviera Nayarit upon opening in 2002, the first all-inclusive hotel in the world to earn it. "We are one team working together. It's a synergetic relationship that makes everyone feel proud to be here."

A waiter told me that Grand Velas is unlike any other place he's been, noting "People are passionate about what they do and everyone pitches in to hold each other up."

If that sounds like lip service, think again. Everywhere we turned, we were greeted with a smile and a heartfelt greeting. Grumbling is out of place here, by staff and guests alike.

Melin attributes it to the aesthetics, the ambiance and the local talent, chefs and artists included, each purposely curated to personify the Velas brand. There are five restaurants on site at Grand Velas Los Cabos, every one created by a different architect and interior designer, all from Mexico, to showcase the signature culinary theme, menu and wishes of its hand-selected chef. Cocina de Autor, named





“

**People are passionate about what they do and everyone pitches in to hold each other up.”**

one of the best new restaurants by CNN when it opened, is headed up by two star Michelin chef Sidney Schutte, who wowed us with a wine-paired eight-course tasting menu that reflected the resort's heavenly high standards and Mexican heritage in every inspired bite.

Melin's dedication to cultural authenticity, part of her DNA as a designer for Velas Resorts, is the guests' gain. Her handpicked artwork and "found" treasures are part of the amenities at Los Cabos, drawing you in with a privileged look at a million-dollar collection that graces its public spaces and 307 suites.

We were fortunate during our visit to attend the gala opening of the resort's on-site art gallery exclusively curated by San Jose del Cabo gallery owner Patricia Mendoza. Its first exhibition featured selected works from Luis Filcer, Eduardo Mejorada, Carlos Larracilla, Jorge Moedano, Max Sanz, Reynaldo Zesati, and J.A. Platas and included acrylics, oils, mixed media, watercolors and sculpture.

As a special VIP treat – one of many over-the-top experiences that the resort offers delighted guests – we sat down for a multi-sensory Art to Table dinner with artist Eduardo Mejorada whose exhibited works served as the inspiration for Chef Francisco Vargas' special menu and Sommelier Claudia Pacheco's wine choices. Matching colors complemented paintings and palates as we sipped and savored a parade of creatively exhibited dishes, proudly presented and explained by the chef and wine steward. They included a black shrimp aquachile, served with blue curacao, olive and citrus dust that plated the joyful brilliance of an abstract painting by Yandi Monardo. A pictorial duet of ballerinas dressed in red tutus danced off the wall into an edible transformation of sea bass almost too pretty to eat! Paying delectable homage to the expressive artwork of our dinner companion Eduardo Mejorada, a delicate soft-shell crab, dressed in yogurt, squid ink and potato paper and ringed with circles straight off the artist's canvas, was a personal favorite, especially after Eduardo shared intimate stories about his work. Topping off the main event, we finished with a dessert worthy of any gallery exhibition as we devoured a brownie extravaganza crowned with a sugared version of Eduardo's textured tribute to his father, a golden-hued mixed-media expression of tenderness and love that moved us all.

As we reluctantly got ready to leave the following morning, the resort staff lined up to see us off as if we were the most important guests of the hotel, exemplifying the heartfelt art of hospitality that's been perfected at Grand Velas Los Cabos Resort. □



Opposite page: (top to bottom) Wellness Suite; Cocina de Autor restaurant

This page: (top to bottom) Art to Table dinner: ballerinas dressed in red tutus; sea bass; brownie

