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Los Cabos Fly High

New developments are taking Baja California to the next level **BY GEORGE FULLER**

Thirty years ago, the far southern tip of Baja California was a remote, largely undiscovered region. There was no paved road to the sleepy fishing villages of Cabo San Lucas and San Jose del Cabo. Visitors had to fly into La Paz, 150 miles north, and make the rest of the trip in a small prop plane. In those days, you would touch down on a dirt runway and bump to a thatched-roof palapa that served as the terminal.

A couple of hotels—Hotel Twin Dolphin and Hotel Cabo San Lucas—were headquarters for the ardent game fishermen who, having heard the stories that Bing Crosby, John Wayne, Dwight D. Eisenhower and other enthusiasts came here for the “really big fish,” sought their own extreme adventures. Cabo’s reputation grew as the marlin

capital of the world, and 1,000-pound black and blue marlin—“granders,” the fishermen call them—were not uncommon. But getting there was no walk in the park.

All that has changed. Over the past 15 years, Los Cabos has gone from remote to remarkable. The landscape—rough-hewn desert tumbling down to the sparkling ocean—has been described as “Scottsdale meets the sea,” but now there is a sprinkle of the French Riviera mixed in. A world-class collection of hotels—led by One&Only Palmilla, Esperanza and Las Ventanas al Paraíso—has taken relaxed luxury to new heights, and real estate developments have followed suit.

“Cabo is going to continue to boom,” says Ron Hatfield, whose Villas Del Mar development within Palmilla Resort is one of the most successful residential developments in Mexico. “There’s no end in sight.”

The success of Hatfield’s Villas Del Mar can be attributed to its exceptional location on a hillside overlooking the Sea of Cortez, the first-rate design and craftsmanship of the spacious, fully furnished homes, and service levels that match and exceed the area’s best hotels. Two new enclaves within Villas Del Mar—Las Haciendas and Las Entradas, which will add 14 grand homes and 28 one-story residences, respectively—debuted earlier this year.

Other developers have been watching Hatfield’s success with a careful eye, and several new projects under construction and on the drawing boards along this 24-mile stretch of coastline are hoping for similar results with their ultra-luxury plans.

Land’s End Arch, a natural rock formation at the tip of Cabo San Lucas, is near the gated community of Pedregal.

