

go

BY KIM-MARIE GALLOWAY

Mystical Mexico

A LUXURY TRIP THAT WILL TAKE YOU ON AN **UNFORGETTABLE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY**



Dia de Muertos celebrations encourage visits from the souls of deceased relatives so that the living can share messages and prayers. Here, party hosts wear traditional Catrina face.

T rue luxury travel must be both exclusive and experiential. Later this month, a select group of VIP guests will join General Manager Frederic Vidal of Rosewood Resort's Las Ventanas on a once-in-an-afterlife getaway to celebrate the Mexican holiday Dia de Muertos. A handful of select guests will journey with Vidal to a Mexican town known for centuries for its Dia de Muertos celebrations. To add to

the mystery, the hotel location will remain undisclosed.

Vidal dreamed up this "Rosewood on the Road" experience a few years ago and has worked out every detail to ensure the experience is both luxurious and immersive. He did a buyout of a local hotel and will transform the property into a temporary Rosewood, complete with five-star service.

COURTESY OF LAS VENTANAS



The Signature Villa at Las Ventanas

THE EAGLE HAS LANDED

Looking for the late-night party? Slip through the nondescript door adjacent to the spa, pass the “Be as naughty as you want, just don’t get caught” sign and key the secret code into the vintage cash register (your butler will give you the code). La Botica is the hotel’s ’20s themed speakeasy complete with live music by artist in residence, Rosalia de Cuba and her band. The bar is soundproofed, so get as loud as you want.



An opulent welcome by Mariachi entertainers



ROSEWOOD ON THE ROAD

The Mexican holiday is celebrated on **November 1 & 2.**

This trip takes place from **October 31 - November 4**

The experience is limited to eight couples. All accommodations, food and beverage, tours and transportation are included for \$11,500 per couple plus tax and service charges. But as it’s invitation only, the experience is actually priceless.



Kim-Marie takes in the majesty of the evening

COURTESY OF LAS VENTANAS

Though the location is secret, guests will visit Pátzcuaro, a magical town in the center of the country. The town sits on a lake of the same name, and on the nights of November 1 and 2, the water is illuminated with candlelit canoes. As the sun sets on the first night, Vidal and guests will embark on a midnight sail to Janitzio, one of five islands on Lake Pátzcuaro where locals spend all night at the cemetery singing,

dancing and telling stories of the departed.

The two-day holiday is based on the traditional belief that the departed can cross the barrier between this life and the next during this brief period. Family members decorate ofrendas (altars) and bring offerings of food and drink, for both the living and the dead. Unlike Halloween, it’s not a night of fear or sadness, but a night filled with wild joy and celebration.



An ofrenda dedicated to famed guest Kobe Bryant

LIGHT UP THE NIGHT

Looking to impress that special someone? Have a gift-wrapped box delivered to your toes-in-the-sand dinner. When they lift the lid, they'll find an array of high-tech buttons. Push the large one and watch the fireworks explode, literally. You can book private fireworks for \$1,880 per minute (that includes taxes/fees). And no, you can't just keep pushing, the time is pre-allotted. We asked.



Kim-Marie enjoying her "floating breakfast"

Those not among the lucky few to decamp with Vidal for the spiritual exploration can celebrate at Las Ventanas in Cabo San Lucas. The hotel hosts a party of epic proportions on November 1. Hotel staff work for weeks to create elaborate ofrendas honoring deceased coworkers and beloved guests, like Kobe Bryant. Guests join in the festivities by wearing colorful outfits and painting their faces “Catrina” style. Don’t know how? Your butler can arrange for a professional to do your make-up en suite before the party. My favorite decoration was the altar made for the former housekeeping manager, a vignette decorated with miniature Bacardi bottles and Marlboro Lights.

Las Ventanas was the first luxury property built in Cabo San Lucas and continues to set a global standard for five-star service. The hotel only has suites, and every suite comes with butler service. Book one of the twelve villas, and you’ll have a personal butler whose service begins before you even arrive.

I like to think “my” butler Jose remembers my visit as fondly as I do. He escorted me to each reservation and commented on every outfit change. He was the only one to cook in my villa’s sprawling kitchen when he made breakfast to order each morning. Pro tip: Ask for your breakfast to be served “floating,” and it will be arranged on a buoyant wicker tray and drifted to you as you relax in your private infinity edge

pool or in your hot tub cleverly hidden just beneath the surface of the pool. Speaking of hidden, the hotel has extensive underground tunnels, so you never see room service or housekeeping carts. When you order something, it seems to appear out of nowhere. Because it does.

I celebrated Dia de Muertos on property last year. When I mentioned to Jose my idea of creating an ofrenda for my mom, who recently passed, he printed a photo of her and delivered it in an embroidered frame. She loved sweets, coffee and TV, so I left those items along with a remote control at my simple altar.

Like most hotels in Cabo, the sea off the beach is not swimmer-friendly. But not to worry, there are pools aplenty. Every building has one, and so do each of the twelve villas. The infinity pool that wraps around the Ty Warner mansion is 328 feet long. Not surprisingly, pool butlers are on hand to provide services like wake-up calls, Evian misting and sunscreen distribution.

The smallest room you’ll find is a 960-square-foot suite. Fall rates for the Garden View King Suite start at \$1,400. The one-bedroom villa is a total of 4,500 square feet. Each villa has an expansive infinity-edged pool with jacuzzi, palatial bathrooms, chef’s kitchen, a sprawling patio and folding glass walls for the ultimate indoor/outdoor living. Fall rates start at \$7,600 per night.