

Talk about vacationing anywhere on the sparkling Mexico coastline and you'll likely conjure images of sun, surf, sand and plenty of frozen beverages. While those amenities are always ready and waiting for visitors, there's another luxuriant draw to the tip of the Baja peninsula: art.

# ART THERAPY

BY LAURA JENKINS



Los Cabos has gained an international reputation as a haven for artists, collectors and those who simply enjoy indulging in the region's rich artistic beauty and culture. Whether your forte is fine art, music, theater, film, dance or simply an eclectic mix of media, Los Cabos is a must for art lovers of all kinds.

#### SAN JOSÉ DEL CABO

The pillar of the copious art scene in Los Cabos is the San José Art District, located in charming, historic downtown San José del Cabo. The area is punctuated by old adobe buildings painted in vibrant, tropical fruit-like colors, and is densely populated by galleries and fine restaurants. The Art District covers roughly two blocks, and while visitors could easily walk the area in 15 to 20 minutes, those who duck in and out of galleries can (and do) spend hours enjoying the wealth of art that has been amassed from all over the globe. Each Thursday night between November and June, hundreds of enthusiasts enjoy the Art Walk in San José.

"San José del Cabo is the second biggest arts district in all of Mexico," says Frank Arnold, a celebrated American artist who lives part-time in Los Cabos and displays his work at a stunning gallery on Calle Comonfort. Arnold explains that the difference between an artist community and an arts district is that the former is where people convene to make art, and the latter

is where serious collectors acquire fine art. San José del Cabo is both; moreover, it has evolved into a major fine art hub. Arnold, who spends hurricane season painting and sculpting in his central California studio, has pieces in collections all over the world. "The last month I was in San José, we sold major paintings to Finland, Moscow, Dubai, Portugal and New Zealand," he says, "though our biggest sales are probably to Chicago and New York."

Another exceptionally popular gallery is Galería de Ida Victoria, which houses such an eclectic collection of fine art that a reporter dubbed it "our little Guggenheim in Mexico." Housed in a tri-level building that was designed and built to showcase art, this high-end gallery exhibits original work in a variety of styles and media, including original paintings, photography, sculpture and limited edition prints.

Apart from the physical historic art district, San José del Cabo offers a variety of other artistic opportunities. Stroll through the walking paths at the edge of the Marina at Puerto Los Cabos and enjoy the bronze

sculptures by Leonora Carrington, a famed Mexican artist who was a major part of the 1930s' surrealist movement. Other sculptures in the area include works by three of Mexico's most respected living artists: José Luis Cuevas, Manuel Felguérez and Gabriel Macotella.

The Festival Sal & Música — held in late October — celebrates art, regional cuisine and local festivities through live music, giving residents and visitors a chance to truly savor the area's cultural heritage in the casual ambience of a street fair.

The Baja International Film Festival held in mid-November is a four-day event that draws thousands of actors, filmmakers, critics and film aficionados from around the world. Screenings, panels, parties, celebrity appearances and performances by musical guests are just a few of the highlights at this annual convention.

San José del Cabo is continually budding with new artistic expression and will undoubtedly continue to develop new platforms and celebrations as the community

grows. One of the most recent additions to the landscape is the Hotel El Ganzo, which boasts an impressive arts calendar that includes acoustic, jazz and flamenco music; film screenings; visiting culinary artists; and other creative events. The facility houses a 1,700-square-foot underground recording studio, which is open to artists from around the world. In that vein, Hotel El Ganzo hosts an assortment of artists-in-residence (usually for four to five days) who create, record or perform during their stay at the luxurious hotel.

#### THE CORRIDOR

Mosey on down The Corridor and you'll find several hotels that showcase remarkable art. Las Ventanas al Paraíso houses an impressive collection of paintings, sculptures, murals and pottery created by celebrated artists from all over the world, and the resort itself has been lovingly crafted by the handiwork of several local artisans. Esperanza, an Auberge Resort, has a Zen-like "open-air oceanfront sculpture garden" that displays 36 works of important Mexican and Latin American sculptors. Paintings from well-known contemporary Mexican artists are displayed throughout the resort, including works by Heriberto Juárez, Javier Marín, Juan Carlos Breceda, Lupina Flores, Elisa Pasquel and Gabriela Villarreal. For those who are hungry for more personal creative encounters, the hotel concierge can arrange for local tours and art classes.

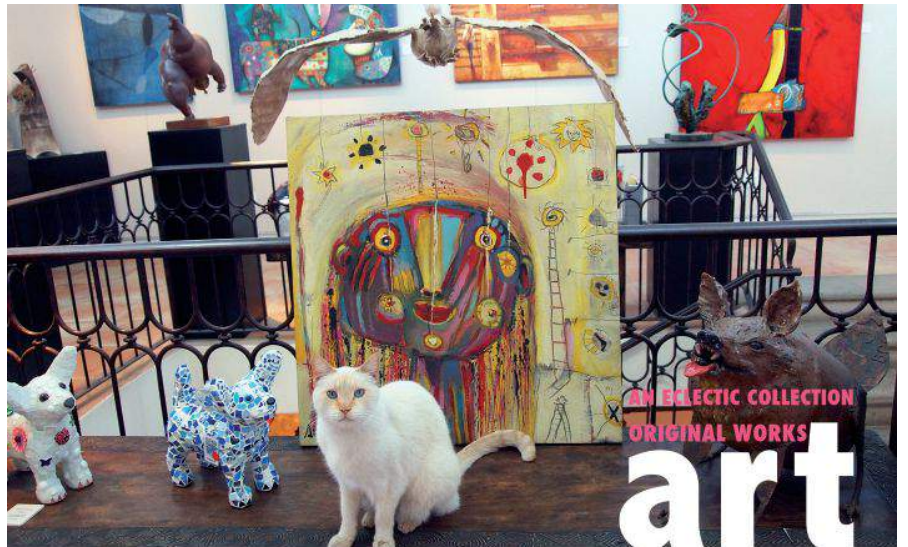
#### CABO SAN LUCAS

Cabo San Lucas is home to the new \$40 million Cultural Pavilion of the Republic, which aspires to cultivate the artistic and cultural expressions of this particular region of Mexico. There are currently both an indoor and an open-air theater, where concerts, ballets, film screenings and other artistic gatherings take place. There's also a conference space that can be booked

for various purposes, including conventions and art exhibits. A museum is currently under construction, and a library has been planned. Both institutions will undoubtedly add to Cabo San Lucas' burgeoning artistic presence.

#### TODOS SANTOS

Located about an hour north of Cabo San Lucas, Todos Santos is another vibrant artist enclave. The annual Todos Santos Art Festival, held each February, celebrates Mexican culture through both the visual and performing arts. Folk dancing, theater performances, open studio tours and musical presentations always draw a good crowd. The Guaycura Boutique Hotel & Spa is passionate about promoting the work of local artists, and shows that commitment by regularly displaying their work. The hotel can also contact artists upon request for guests who are interested in private instruction.



*The soaring Galeria de Ida Victoria displays an impressive collection of original paintings. - Wall Street Journal*

[www.idavictoriaarts.com](http://www.idavictoriaarts.com)

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