

Climate, lifestyle draw Canadians to Nuevo Vallarta

BY MARTY HOPE, CALGARY HERALD; CANWEST NEWS SERVICE MAY 30, 2010

For nearly six months per year, Brad and Marlene Lay live on manana time. The Canadian couple have been spending their winters on the beach along the Bay of Banderas for a few years now, totally getting into the laid-back Mexican lifestyle on the quiet beaches north of Puerto Vallarta.

Manana time refers to getting around to something by and by, rather than being a slave to the clock.

Just a little over two years ago, the Lays decided to upgrade their vacation home digs and put down a deposit on a 2,700-square-foot, two-bedroom condo just up the beach. They have taken possession of a unit in a spanking-new beachfront adult development called Luma.

The one-, two-, and three-bedroom suites in the first tower feature ceilings as high as 13 feet, along with window walls and large terraces.

Kitchens have high-end appliances, granite countertops and tile floors, laundry room, large closets and storage. Prices run from \$537,000 US for a one-bedroom-plus-den unit to \$2 million for a penthouse.

Located on the Pacific Ocean coast in Nuevo Vallarta, in the beach resort area of Riviera Nayarit, Luma is the first American-developed beachfront community in Mexico that also offer full-ownership for active adults.

It is part of the larger Paradise Village project, a 176-hectare resort development a 15-minute drive north of the Puerto Vallarta airport.

Luma will be an enclave of 10-storey towers designed and located so that each condominium has views of the ocean to the west and the mountains to the east.

The first tower has opened for occupancies, the second will be ready later this year and there are plans for a third tower.

Back from Mexico early this year, the Lays are busy renovating the circa-1947 home they bought in Vernon, B.C., about a year ago. They have sold their Calgary home, but maintain a condo there for their children, who are attending U of C.

"We bought in Vernon for the same reason we bought in Mexico -- the climate," says Brad, an owner of a Medicine Hat-based gravel-crushing company. "I'm originally a Saskatchewan boy; I know about dry and cold winters. So we go to Mexico where it's warm and humid."

The Lays have also found an enjoyable social life and can count other Canadians, Americans, and Mexicans as friends. "Our social life is busier than at home," says Brad. "We have friends in, go out for dinner, and play golf and tennis."

The fact that everybody in the development is age 50 or older means they will have plenty in common.

But Luma is about more than just mai tais, margaritas and cerveza. It's also big into healthy living.

The architecture, amenities and landscape are designed with a focus on well-being, says Front Porch Development Co., partner in Luma. The company aims to follow an all-encompassing approach to wellness that involves both mind and spirit as well as body. To this end, Luma's fitness centre looks at the ocean, while its garden pathways criss-cross through the property.

There are also personal trainers and masseurs, as well as a varied selection of fitness activities to suit anyone. Luma's beachfront common spaces will include a beach bar and bistro, a Pilates and yoga centre and saltwater infinity pools. There will also be a bocce court, sports/game room, library, large meeting room and a panoramic terrace with views of the Pacific Ocean.

Local artwork will grace Luma's common spaces and complement the Pacific setting.

Emphasis will be placed on preserving the plant and animal life native to Nuevo Vallarta. Residents also have the opportunity to join a nearby sea turtle preservation and protection effort at the site of a historic nesting area.

Luma's location within the Paradise Village resort area -- an established enclave with restaurants, hotels, marina, sports and spa facilities -- gives residents easy access to championship golf, boating and fishing, as well as shopping.

The Paradise Village shopping mall features 100 stores ranging from small supermarkets to artisan boutiques and is within walking distance from Luma.

For more information, visit www.lumaliving.com or call 1-866-554-5862.

ON THE BEACH

Nuevo Vallarta is at the centre of the shore of Banderas Bay on the Pacific Ocean in the state of Nayarit, Mexico. It is a luxurious and spacious hotel zone that has been built up during the last 15 years as part of a Mexican federal government program to increase tourism.

Nuevo Vallarta, with its long sandy and shelf-water beach, is about a 25-minute drive from Puerto Vallarta and 15 minutes from the local Diaz Ordaz airport.

Nuevo Vallarta is not a city or a village. It is a planned Mexico vacation resort featuring all the modern tourist amenities that invite travellers to relax during their vacation.

Along the almost eight kilometres of white sand beach, tourists will find a selection of hotels at various prices.

One of the special features of Nuevo Vallarta is the huge 300-slip marina with about 17 kilometres of shippable water channels. It has been described as being like a little Venice.

Luxury villas, world-class golf courses and the spacious beach resorts make it the most modern vacation zone in Mexico and the Banderas Bay.

The population grew from 57,000 to nearly 111,500 between 1980 and 1990, a result of the ongoing redevelopment.

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