The Eye

Beach, Village + Urban Living in Mexico
December 2025
Issue 153
FREE

The Style Issue

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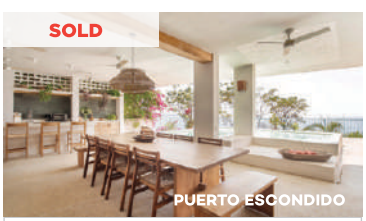

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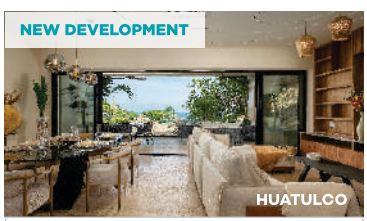

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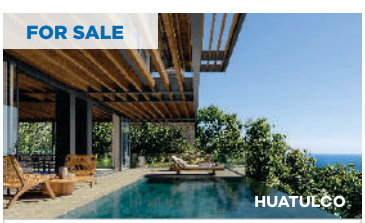

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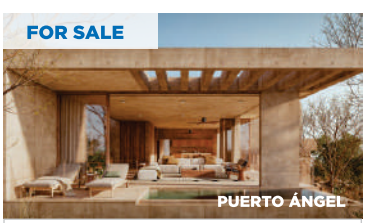

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Editor's Letter

"Buy less. Choose well. Make it last" – Vivienne Westwood, English fashion designer and businesswoman.

Fifteen years ago, the first issue of The Eye rolled off the press. It was nothing more than two sheets of oversized newsprint, and the writers and I sat around a table folding each copy by hand. What pushed us to begin this project? By then I had already lived in Mexico for a decade. I had married a Mexican, my daughter identifies as Mexican, and I've always preferred the rhythm of a small, non-touristy village to resort life. I could have continued drifting between two cultures, or I could create something that connected them. I also knew I wasn't the only one navigating this space.

The Eye became that bridge.

Our mission is simple: to share with English-speaking readers the stories, history, and layers of Mexico they might otherwise miss. We spotlight local businesses and give them a platform to reach new clients. We support organizations doing important work by helping them connect with volunteers and sponsors. At its heart, The Eye is about building community—not a parallel community that sits apart from the Mexican one, but a pathway into it. Learn about this place. Get involved. Participate. That has always been the purpose. And fifteen years later, it still is. We are very excited to announce the launch of *The Eye San Miguel de Allende*. Be sure to check it out.

This month, our writers explore fashion, a topic that can seem frivolous at first glance but is, in truth, a revealing lens through which to examine human behavior. The choice of what to wear is something each of us makes every day. Our clothes carry meaning, whether cultural, historical, or environmental. What are you wearing right now as you read this? What does your choice of fabric or brand say about you? Like all consumer goods, the items we choose to spend our money on have a rippling effect that, in an increasingly globalized world, can reach as far as the shores of Africa.

As we prepare for the New Year, let each of us take stock of the choices we make and the echoes they create.

Happy New Year, and see you in January.

Jane

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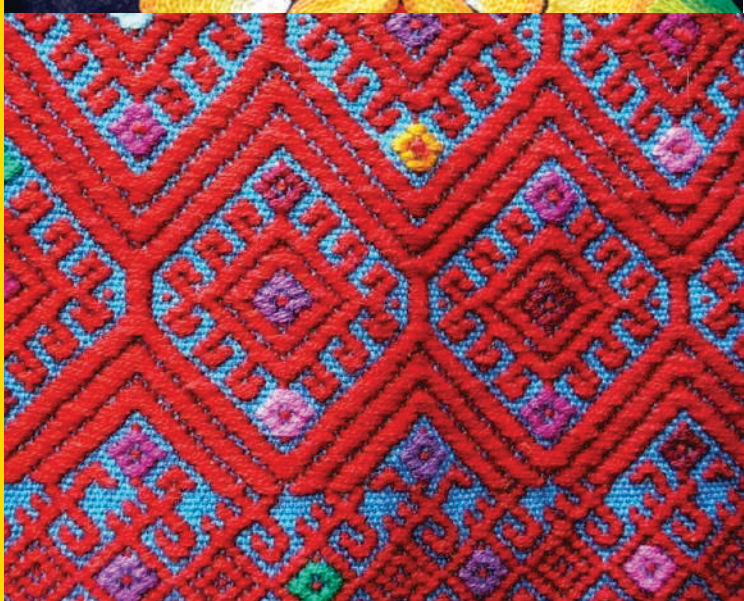

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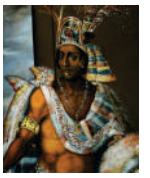
Four Fashionable Mexican Heads of State

By Marcia Chaiken and Jan Chaiken

Fashion statements have been made for millennia by the Heads of State in Mexico. Whether in pre- or post-Columbian eras, the most important political Mexican figures have always signaled their relationship with the common people (and sometimes with their gods) with their attire. Here are the fashion statements made by four of the most known.

King Pakal the Great, (aka K'inich Janaab Pakal), who ruled over Palenque from age 12 for 68 years until his death in 683, may be best known for interpretations of engravings on his sarcophagus that led him to be called the Mayan astronaut or time traveler. The engravings show him sporting paraphernalia that looks like space flight equipment. But whether he was human or extraterrestrial, his funeral dress clearly indicates that he was considered more than a mere mortal. Adorned with a king's ransom of jade, from his death mask to the multiple ear pieces, necklaces, bracelets, and rings, even in death he was an impressive sight. The jade mask is most startling because of the inlay of obsidian "eyes".

Many engravings of Mayan rulers show them wearing elaborate headdresses. But anthropologist Alyce de Carteret described the primary fashion piece of Mayan rulers: "A bark-paper headband adorned with a diadem of jade or shell was bound to the heads of rulers the day they acceded to the throne." However, existing clay figures of Pakal show him wearing a bird mask, a headdress of quetzal feathers and a long elaborate gown decorated with necklaces of jade. We can surmise that the gown was made from finely woven cotton, since only the wealthiest Mayans could afford that material.



Montezuma (aka Moctezuma II) was the 9th ruler of the Aztec Empire and was the head of state for eighteen years until his death in 1520. Unlike Pakal whose living attire requires some conjecture, Montezuma was well known to the conquistador Cortez, who arrested him.

He was an impressive fashion figure on first formal meeting. His headdress alone was spectacular and described as including "the green upper tail coverts of the quetzal bird, the turquoise feathers of the cotinga, brown feathers from the squirrel cuckoo, pink feathers from the roseate spoonbill, and small ornaments of gold." His mantle or cape was completely embroidered in primary colors, and the designs depended on the day, the audience and the ceremony he was attending. He rarely wore the same outfit twice, keeping a small army of embroiderers constantly busy. His outfit was completed with a loincloth and sandals – some of jaguar skin, most with jewels.

For the most solemn occasions, much of the finery was omitted, and Montezuma wore a simple loincloth and a dark cape decorated with skulls. After his arrest, Montezuma was not required to wear today's orange jump suit but rather continued as a figurehead under Spanish rule and wore his diminishing costumes until he died of his wounds after an uprising of his former subjects.

Empress Carlota (née Princess Charlotte of Belgium) was the one and only empress of Mexico for a very short reign from 1864 to 1867. She and her husband Maximillian were placed on the throne by Napoleon III. Given their very progressive ideas about educating and raising up the Mexican populace, they were quickly deposed and Maximillian was shot.

Although the royal couple's ideas about ruling Mexico were violently rejected, Carlota's fashion sense was much more captivating. Given her wish to become the benefactor of "her people," she began to combine European fashion with the costume of the *hoi polloi* of Mexico. Although the wide skirts and rich materials were retained, the bodice of her dresses and overskirt resembled the *china poblana* traditional dresses worn by Mexican women – especially on occasions celebrating Mexican identity. She also adopted the bright primary colors of Mexican dress.

Her rule was short-lived but her incorporation of Mexico's traditional styles into high fashion has lived on. Many of the high-fashion designers of Mexico today merge traditional embroidery or decorations into ultra-modern designs. Just walk down Avenida Presidente Masaryk in CDMX today, and fashions based on Carlota's innovations come alive.

Presidente Claudia Sheinbaum The first woman president in Mexico, who took office almost two years ago, is scrutinized for fashion as no president ever before. She uses this attention to benefit women all over Mexico. For ceremonial occasions, in addition to her presidential sash, she often wears replicas of dresses from different regions of the country including the huipil, the china poblana, the Tehuana (from Oaxaca) and the Chiapaneca. The many artisans who create and decorate her dresses are publicly noted and often find themselves swamped with orders from ordinary citizens and beyond.

Of course, given her intense meeting and travel schedule, she also slips into comfortable pants and blouses. But the styles are business-appropriate. And unlike the wives of many heads of state, she avoids expensive designer clothes and instead wears fashions that are affordable for the majority of working Mexicans.

From Pakal to Sheinbaum, the Mexican heads of state have had distinctive styles worn as political statements. Some such as Carlota and Montezuma have had ruinous careers. Some such as Pakal and hopefully Sheinbaum have made positive contributions to lives of their people. All will likely be remembered for what they wore.

Drs. Marcia and Jan Chaiken have been married for 62 years and have published many justice system research reports together.

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Wearing My Roots: A Queen's Journey Through the Vela 27

By Daira Moreno

When I reflect on my roots, I picture myself beautifully dressed in Tehuana attire. It brings me back to my ancestors, especially my grandmother. The beauty of these dresses lies not only in their embroidery, but in the way they are passed from one generation to the next. Today, only a few artisans still know how to make Tehuana attire in its traditional form. The Zapotec language, along with the traditional techniques, is at risk of disappearing. Wearing the dress is an act of resistance, a way to keep our identity alive. The reaffirmation of Zapotec identity through the figure of the Queen of the Vela 27, embodied in my own experience of wearing the Tehuana dress, is a form of empowerment for the people of my town, the Ixtepecanos. It is also a way of preserving our culture at a time when many traditions are being lost in an increasingly globalized world.

Ciudad Ixtepec's cultural identity lives within its traditional attire, the Tehuana dress, and in the fact that only a few artisans continue to make it in the old way. This fragility, of both language and dressmaking, shows how urgent it is to preserve these parts of our heritage. The Tehuana attire has also found its place in the larger story of Mexico. Iconic figures such as Frida Kahlo and Salma Hayek embraced it, drawing inspiration from Isthmus women and, in Hayek's case, from her own Ixtepecana roots. Lupe Vélez immortalized the style in her film *La Sandunga*, helping introduce Oaxacan culture to national and international audiences. Many consider the Tehuana costume the most beautiful in Mexico. These cultural references strengthen the idea that Zapotec identity carries a significance that must be protected.

In this piece, I offer a brief reflection on my experience as queen of the Vela 27 and on the meaning of a Vela, with special attention to the clothing I wore throughout the five-day celebration which culminates in the coronation, where I step into the same role my mother and cousin once held, continuing a legacy begun by my grandmother, one of the festival's founders.

This year, I served as queen of the Renombrada Vela 27, held in honor of San Jerónimo Doctor. It is characterized by dancing throughout the entire night, waiting for dawn to arrive. "Vela" is the name given by the friars to the indigenous festivities dedicated to the deities called "Za" or "Binnizá," meaning "men of the clouds," according to the agricultural calendar. With evangelization, these rituals were transformed into patron-saint festivals dedicated to Catholic saints, following the mission and religious order of the friars during the colonial period. The word *vela* comes from *velar*, meaning "to stay awake, to keep vigil all night," which remains at the heart of the celebration today.

One of the most striking parts of the Vela is that all attendees must wear the Tehuana gala dress; otherwise, they are not permitted to enter. Women showcase their finest traditional gala dresses and high heels, each one striving to look as spectacular as possible. Men must wear a plain white guayabera with no floral embroidery.

The use of gold, coins, and ornaments in the festivities has its roots in practices of prestige and offering. In the case of coins, their presence is more recent, linked to the arrival of the Trans-Isthmus Railway and the port of Salina Cruz in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Gold in women's attire also symbolizes the empowerment of Isthmus women, as well as well-being, economic stability, and even wealth. The use of minted coins changes the meaning significantly, which is why I emphasize empowerment.

Many of the pieces I wore are family heirlooms, and when I put them on, I feel the presence of my grandmother, my mother, and the women in my family who have kept these traditions alive. Each garment reflects the work of artisans whose techniques are at risk of disappearing.

To understand the significance of each day and the meaning behind every outfit, it is helpful to look at the schedule of the Vela 27 and the Tehuana attire I wore throughout the celebration.

The Vela 27 Schedule: September 26 (evening): The festivities begin with the *Calenda* (traditional street parade) at 8 p.m., continuing until 2 a.m. The streets of Ixtepec come alive with dancing, fireworks, and music, announcing the start to the Vela 27. That evening, I wore a coordinated skirt and huipil made with the *cadenilla* technique, featuring pink and yellow *greca* designs crafted by the artisan Francisco Javier Reyes Vázquez from San Blas Atempa. My hairstyle followed the traditional style of the women of Ixtepec: two braids intertwined with a pink ribbon and adorned with artificial flowers. To complete the *muda*, I wore a three-strand *espejito azucena* necklace with a calabaza pendant in pearls and gold filigree, along with matching earrings and a bracelet made from 2.5-peso Mexican coins embellished with rubies and *alejandrina*.

2nd Day of Activities:

September 27 (morning): The queen's Mañanitas begin at 7 a.m. and include serenades, prayers, and dancing. The organizers of the Vela attend, making it one of the most beautiful moments of the celebration, filled with emotion as the family prepares for the day. Breakfast is offered at the queen's home to those who came to serenade her, and gifts are given to the attendees. This festivity also commemorates the birthday of the patron saint, San Jerónimo Doctor. For my *muda* during the Mañanitas, I wore a circular stylized yellow *rabona* skirt with a hand-stitched *cadenilla* huipil. I accessorized with a choker made of hinged coins and matching cross-shaped earrings.

September 27 (evening): The most significant and symbolic day of the Vela 27 gathers about 3,000 people. It begins at 9 p.m. and lasts until 7 a.m. The highlight of the event is the queen's coronation, which includes her arrival, her first dance, and her speech. Past queens, as well as the queen from the previous year, also make their appearances. After the ceremony, the community spends the rest of the night dancing. On the day of my coronation, I proudly wore an original, hand-embroidered traditional dress crafted by the artisan Antonia Morales Lobo from the town of Santa Rosa de Lima. This community is distinguished by its mastery of the Tehuana gala dress, an art practiced by both its women and men. The making of this outfit was commissioned a year in advance.

The dress is a replica of one of my mother's gala dresses, which she wore when she served as queen in 1985, although for my version I chose a garden of yellow Castilian roses. The outfit consists of the *enagua* (skirt) and the *huipil* (blouse). I also wore a gold *fleco* made of *gusanillos* and *canelones*, a distinctive accessory that sets the queen apart from the general public. My hair was styled in gathered braids with a rosette at the nape of the neck and a floral adornment on the left side, leaving the top free for the crown. The crown and its matching scepter were crafted exclusively for my reign by the master goldsmith Hugo Charo from the town of San Blas Atempa. My Tehuana attire was complemented by a set of gold *doblón dos María* jewelry and a matching *ahogador*, along with a bracelet, rings, earrings, and a hair brooch. All of these are family heirlooms in gold, passed down from generation to generation.

September 29: The lively and colorful Regada de Frutas fills the streets with decorated buses carrying the queens or captains, who toss food and gifts to the townspeople. Horses, bulls, and captains in traditional attire parade alongside, accompanied by children's orchestras playing music from the buses. This day symbolizes giving back to the community.

During the Regada de Frutas, we rode on a float designed to match the colors and floral motifs of the outfit I wore that day. With great pride, I wore a huipil and *enagua* featuring multicolored orchids. This traditional ensemble from Salinas del Marqués, an agency of the municipality of Salina Cruz, Oaxaca, was crafted by the artisan Francisco Gallegos. The design itself was created by my mother, making it especially meaningful. The technique used for this dress is crochet work with yellow filled stitching. The outfit was completed with a two-strand *lazo*, a choker (*ahogador*), earrings, a bracelet, and a ring.

October 1 (noon): A mass is held in honor of the Vela 27's patron saint, San Jerónimo Doctor. Afterward, the queen and princesses take a long walk accompanied by the music group until they arrive at the *lavado de olla*, where the founding members and the community await them. To enter the church and offer floral arrangements to San Jerónimo Doctor, I wore a yellow velvet Tehuana dress created with two traditional techniques known as *flor en medio*. The central floral motif was made using crochet work, while the edges featured geometric stitched patterns. I also wore the traditional gold *fleco*, and on this occasion the jewelry I used included a *doblón* necklace and a choker (*ahogador*) of great sentimental value, as both pieces belong to my mother. This dress was crafted by the artisan Francisco Javier Reyes Vázquez from the town of San Blas Atempa. This Tehuana dress uses an ancient technique that is now being revived, since velvet (*terciopelo*) is rarely used in contemporary Tehuana dressmaking.

As the final notes of the Vela faded, I realized that this experience was not only a personal honor but a reminder of the responsibility we carry. The Tehuana dresses, the rituals, the music, and the devotion of the community showed me how culture survives through practice, through memory, and through each generation choosing to keep it alive. Serving as queen of the Vela 27 strengthened my belief that our heritage is not something of the past, but a living tradition that continues to shape who we are.

How America's Closets (And Sometimes Runways) End Up in Mexico's Markets

By Kary Vannice

Whenever I travel to a new town in Mexico, the very first thing I look for is the local *tianguis* market. Some people go straight to the beach or the zócalo, but I make a beeline to the used clothing stalls. There is something irresistible about those long rows of tarps and huge piles of clothing, each one holding the possibility of an unexpected treasure.

Over the years, I have found everything from soft cashmere sweaters for eighty pesos to high-end dresses like Prada and Kate Spade with the original tags still attached for under ten dollars. And every time it happens, I feel the same spark of excitement and disbelief. How did this piece, so clearly meant for a very different kind of clientele, end up here amongst the street tacos, veggies, and *chingaderas*?

To me, it feels like fashion magic. But what feels like magic is actually part of a far bigger story, one that starts far from Mexico's markets and reveals a great deal about the way clothing moves around the globe.

Most people in the United States believe that when they donate clothing, it ends up hanging neatly in a thrift store, ready for a new owner. The truth is very different. Only a tiny fraction is ever resold in the U.S. More than half is bundled, compressed and shipped out of the country. Mexico happens to be one of the main destinations.

Every year, the United States exports millions of tons of used clothing. Much of it from discount retailers, thrift stores or big box stores. But you can also find unsold inventory from more upscale stores, last season's corporate clear outs and even brand samples that never make it onto the market. A well-used T-shirt from Walmart and a designer sale sample can all end up in the same enormous stream of "fashion waste".

Arriving in Mexico as tightly wrapped bundles known as "*pacas*" and sold as "*Ropa Americana*", they look a lot like plastic hay bales stuffed to bursting with mostly used (but sometimes new) clothing. Vendors buy them unopened, relying on codes stamped on the plastic to guess what might be inside. A paca can hold anything from children's sweatshirts to high quality outdoor jackets to a dress from a designer brand that never made it past the showroom. And for many families, these bales are not just bundles of clothing. They are income, opportunity and a monthly gamble they hope will pay off.

Once something enters this bulk resale circuit, it follows its own path. A single sample blouse worn once for a catalog shoot can travel thousands of kilometers and eventually land in a street market in Oaxaca, Queretaro, or Mexico City.

The Mexican tianguis shopping experience reveals something important about fashion and culture. And that is, this humble community marketplace treats all clothing the same. In the United States fashion is organized by price, privilege, and status. Here, everything becomes just another piece of clothing again. A four-thousand-dollar designer suit jacket can be found under a faded tank top from Target. Here, the fashion hierarchy completely breaks down and a shirt is simply a shirt.

This unseen migration of clothing from the US to Mexico also reflects a bigger picture. Clothing doesn't just disappear when one person is done wearing it. It continues its journey. It moves between countries, homes, economies, and cultures. What one society considers used or outdated becomes valuable in another context and community.

In our world, discarded clothing operates as a global supply chain of waste, resale, redistribution, and revaluation. It serves as a reminder that, in fashion, value is fluid, movement is constant, and our world is far more interconnected than it appears. Here in Mexico, the tianguis culture gives us a front-row seat to something most people never see, how global waste becomes local value, and how communities creatively reshape what the world throws away into income, opportunity, and economy.

Kary Vannice is a writer and energetic healer who explores the intersections of culture, consciousness, and daily life in Mexico.

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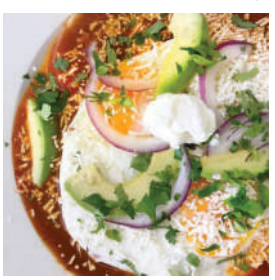

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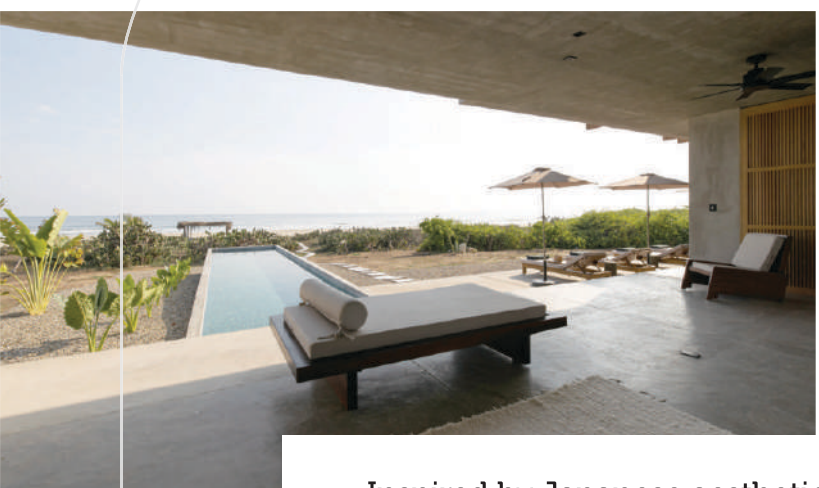

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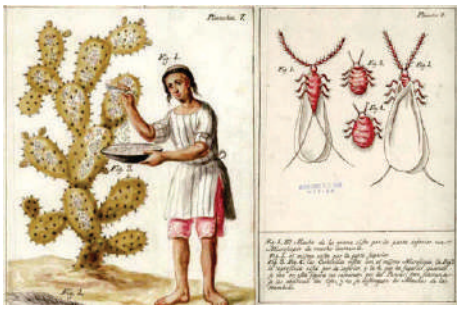
Cochineal;
The color that became an International Sensation

By Julie Etra

Cochineal, Dactylopius coccus, is a scale insect that resides and feeds parasitically on the pads of nopal , known as prickly pear cactus, which when processed produces a bright red color that was unknown to the conquering Spaniards. The insect produces carminic acid, the source of the pigment, which deters other predators and thus protects the insect. Only the female produces the color when she is crushed, sometimes along with eggs, either fresh or dried. Carminic acid can be mixed with aluminium or calcium salts to make carmine dye. It takes about 70,000 dried cochineal and around 25,000 fresh insects to produce 0.45 kg (one pound) of dye. Historically in Mexico it was primarily produced in the state of Oaxaca by the Zapotecs and Mixes at least three centuries before the arrival of the Spaniards. It was also cultivated to a lesser extent s by the Aztec (Tenochtitlan) and Otomi (Hidalgo, México, Querétaro, Guanajuato, Puebla, Tlaxcala, Michoacán and Veracruz) cultures. The plant was bred to eliminate the spines on the cactus pads and was thus easier to cultivate for cochineal production. In addition to textiles, it was used for painting manuscripts as early as the thirteenth century.

Traditional (and non-traditional) production is a tedious labor-intensive process. Historically the insects were sun dried, steamed or boiled, all which produced slightly different colors, prior to being ground into a fine powder.



Farming of cochineal takes place on a nopal farm, either by planting infected pads (which readily root, and thus are easy to propagate vegetatively, as is true of all species of Opuntia) and by infecting existing plants with hand placement of the insects. An alternative method consists of placement of small baskets, called Zapotec nests, on the pads. The baskets contain fertile females which then migrate from the baskets and infest the host plant. Both methods require protection from the elements for the entire three-month maturation cycle, at which time the new cochineals are allowed to reproduce and/or are collected by knocking or brushing the insects into an awaiting bag, after which they are usually sun or oven dried to obtain about 30% of their original weight, necessary for stable storage. Pest control is required throughout the entire cultivation process to ensure success of this coveted product. The dried, crushed insects are then sold to small local processors or exported.

Today's producers may add aluminum salts are added as precipitate to the carminic acid. By manipulating the pH and adding mordants, such as acidic lime, or metals salts, the color can be shifted to various shades. Lime juice produces purple while vinegar, also an acidic mordant, can shift the color to a brighter orange-red.

This pre-Hispanic, Oaxacan dye was an eye-opening surprise for the conquering Spaniards who quickly understood its value in European markets as no other comparable color existed in Europe at the time. It rapidly became the most lucrative Spanish colonial trade item following silver, especially coveted as a status symbol by the wealthy, which included the clergy. The monopoly was strictly controlled by the Spanish government until the 19th century when synthetic dyes became available.

The construction of the Church of Santo Domingo in Oaxaca City, originally a monastery and now a museum and ethnobotanical garden, was entirely funded by the sale of this dye. The museum houses an excellent exhibit on the bug and its rise to become an invaluable trade item. The gardens behind the museum are home to Opuntia ficus -indica, amongst dozens of other native species, so one can observe the scale insect on the host plant.

Peru is now the leading producer of cochineal with over 80% of the world's supply followed by Mexico and the Canary Islands, all three industries being established by the conquering Spaniards. Chile and Argentina are also significant contributors to the current market.

These days it is a common food dye, listed as carmine or carminic acid or even cochineal extract. It is found in yogurt and countless other products including cosmetics.

As an interesting aside, the red uniforms worn by the British forces in the US Revolutionary War were primarily dyed with the roots of madder, although some wealthier officers preferred the brighter, more expensive red derived from cochineal. Of course they had the means to purchase the uniforms.

If you want to see the insect and how it is used plan a visit to Teotilán del Valle, a famous community of weavers and their gorgeous tapetes (wall hangings) south and east of Oaxaca City.

Contact us to announce your activity or event.
TheEyeMexico@gmail.com

The Hidden City Behind the World's Shoes

By Ximena Collado

When I tell people I'm from León, they usually smile politely and ask, "Oh, where is that?" Few know that my hometown, tucked right in the heart of Mexico, is actually considered the shoe capital of the world. Not just of the country — of the world.

Not many people think of León as a tourist destination, even though it has a rich culture and great food. Yet it's one of the closest airports to **San Miguel de Allende**, so countless travelers who fly in to visit San Miguel arrive through León. Many have unknowingly taken their first step in Guanajuato right here — in the city where the shoes they wear might have been made.

For those of us who grew up here, leather is more than a material; it's part of our identity, the scent that lingers in the air, the texture of our childhood memories, the heartbeat of our city.

Some of my earliest memories are filled with that smell — the deep, warm leather that seemed to live in every corner of my house. My uncles worked with leather, crafting boots by hand in small workshops scattered across the city. When they hugged me after a long day, they always smelled like leather — rich and earthy, a scent that clung to their clothes and hands. To this day, whenever I catch that smell, it feels like home.

Walking through León, it's impossible not to feel that connection. The smell of tanned leather still floats from old factories, and the markets shine with beautifully crafted boots and bags.

Our story with leather reaches back to the early 1600s, when León's artisans began tanning hides and crafting goods by hand. The abundance of cattle in the Bajío region provided plenty of raw material, and the city's location made it a natural hub for trade. Local histories suggest that Spanish settlers introduced new tanning methods during colonial times, techniques that blended with the skill and ingenuity of local craftspeople. Over the centuries, those small workshops grew into a thriving industry — and with it came a new identity. People from León earned the nickname *panza verde*, or "green belly," a name said to come from the dyes and pigments that stained the aprons and skin of the leather workers. Over time, *panza verde* became more than a nickname; it became a badge of pride, a symbol of the color and character that define our craft.

Foto destacada: El Heraldo de León

Today, León produces millions of pairs of shoes every year, from classic cowboy boots to modern sneakers and elegant heels. But what many people don't realize is that some of the world's most recognized brands are made right here. I've even known friends who produce shoes for brands like **Sperry** or **Steve Madden**, proof of how León's craftsmanship quietly travels the world. Their global designs are brought to life by Mexican hands — by people who've learned the balance between precision and intuition, between tradition and trend. If you're looking for some beautifully made leather shoes, start with local names like **Bala di Gala**, **Flexi**, **Cuadra**, **Dante**, or **Perugia** — each one rooted in León's heritage of craftsmanship and quality.

I always smile when I travel and spot a pair of shoes in a store that I know came from León. There's something magical about seeing a piece of your city walking around the world — quietly, beautifully, without most people even knowing where it was born.

But León isn't just an industrial city anymore. It's transforming into a creative hub, a place where design, fashion, and culture come together. In recent years, I've watched boutique studios, design schools, and concept stores pop up all around the city. Events like SAPICA — Latin America's biggest leather and footwear fair — attract buyers, stylists, and designers from all over the world. León is redefining itself: still rooted in craftsmanship, but now looking boldly toward the future.

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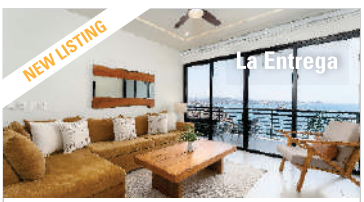

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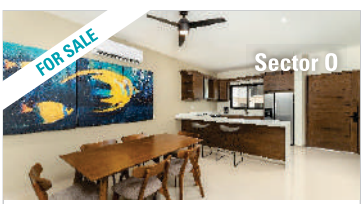

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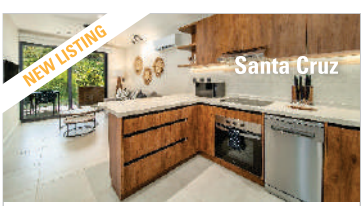

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Continuing My Dream: Empowering the Future of Rural Youth

By Britt Jarnryd

In rural communities, attending high school requires more than academic effort; it also means long distances, high costs, and emotional challenges that many families simply cannot take on. In response to this reality, the "Continuing My Dream" scholarship was created—an initiative deeply committed to supporting young people with limited resources who want to continue their education but live far from upper-secondary schools.

"Continuing My Dream" includes a network of six mentors- professionals and volunteers who are strongly committed to fostering each student's personal and academic growth. Through in-person and online sessions, the students participate in workshops on soft skills, leadership, English, math, study habits, and self-awareness, strengthening their confidence, future vision, and life skills.

Currently, 16 students are part of this new program. Each one has received comprehensive support that includes school supplies, footwear—both athletic shoes and formal shoes—and financial assistance to cover enrollment, uniforms, and other essential academic expenses. In addition, they receive a monthly stipend for transportation, food, rent, and basic needs, ensuring that financial limitations do not become an obstacle to their education.

As an essential part of digital learning, every scholarship recipient received an iPad, a tool that allows them to access online libraries, educational platforms, and resources that broaden their study and academic development opportunities.However, the project goes far beyond financial aid.

Join us in transforming lives.Every step we take is possible thanks to those who believe in education as a driver of change. Today more than ever, your support can change the course of a life. Every donation—big or small—becomes a real opportunity for young people who dream of studying and building a better future for themselves and their communities.

We invite you to learn more about this and other projects at Bacaanda.org.Donate, share, support... and be part of this growing chain of dreams.Together, we can go further.

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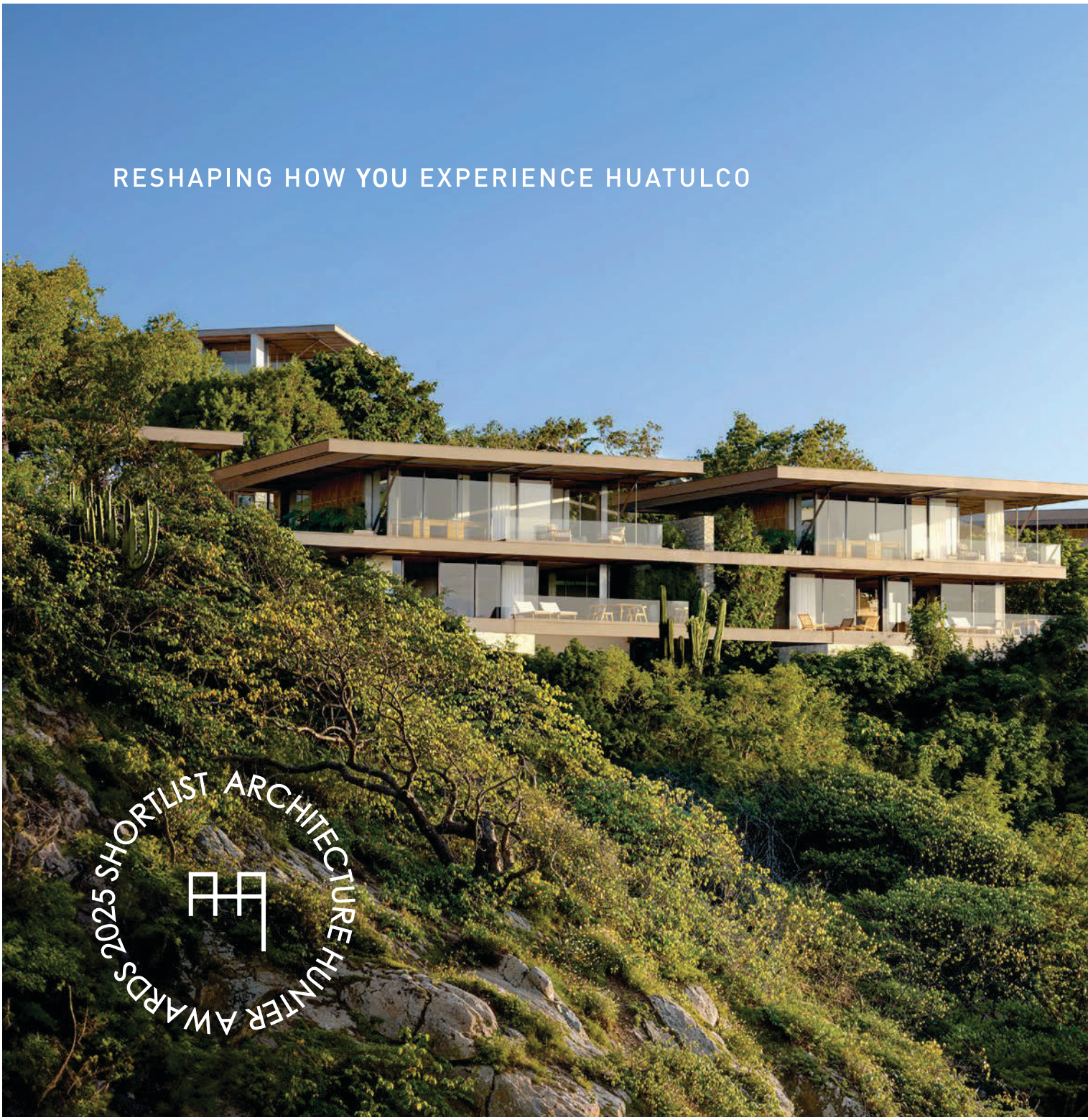

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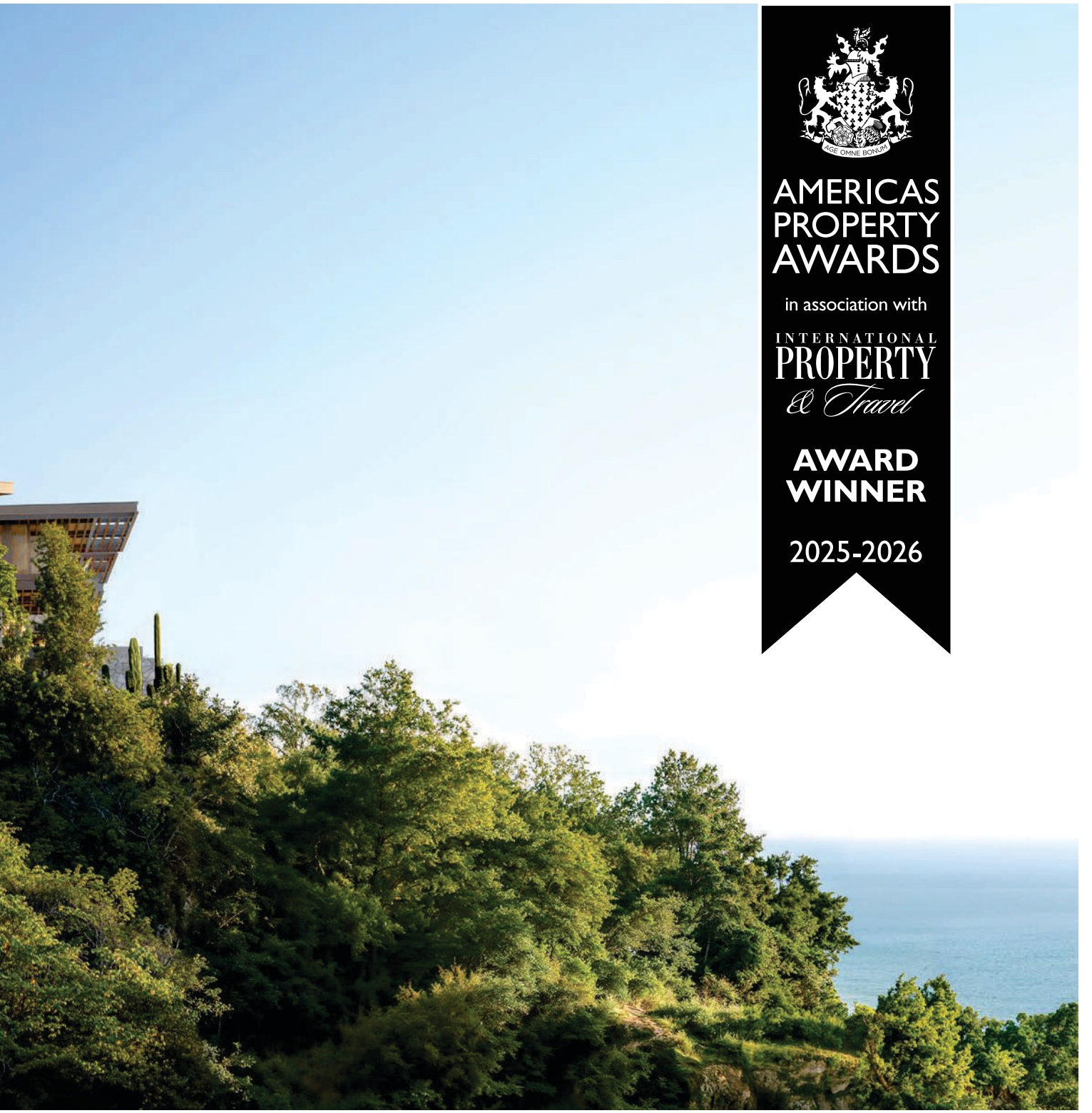


Set amongst the lush landscape of Huatulco, ALMA embraces visual integration, low height, low density, sustainable design, and an elevated living experience.

With perfectly framed ocean views, ALMA calls to those in search of a balance of nature and architecture.

CLOSE TO THE CITY, FAR FROM THE CROWD

ALMA is **embraced by Playa Órgano** and **Playa Violín**, nestled between the National Park and the Lighthouse. **It boasts jungle trails to virgin beaches**, impressive sea views, **300 meters of oceanfront** (1,000ft), along with miles of biking lanes, sunrises and sunsets.

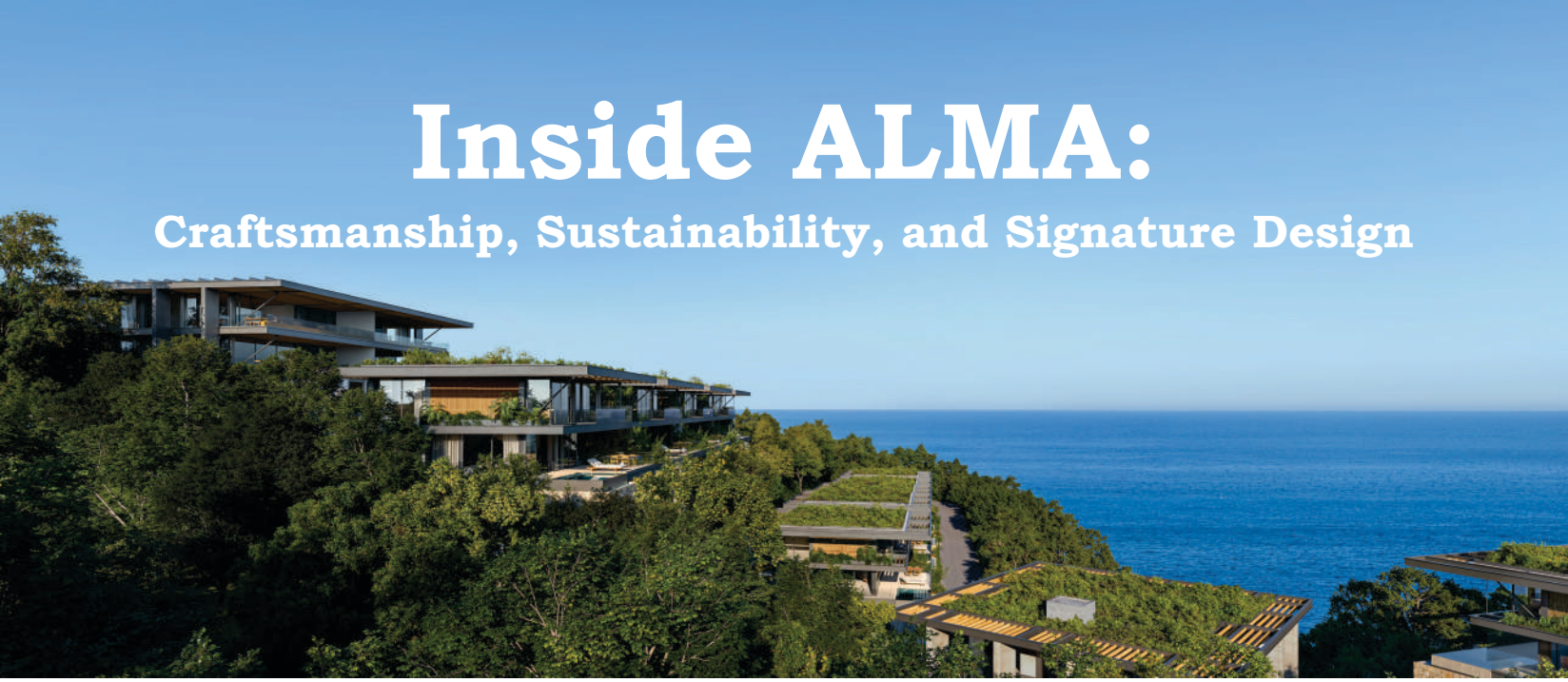
While **feeling completely secluded**, enjoy a short **4-minute nature drive** to the conveniences of **Santa Cruz**, and an **8-minute drive to La Crucecita**.

Huatulco's first sector dedicated to **modern architecture integrated into nature** will **forever remain quiet and preserved** thanks to the presence of the **National Park,** as well as **low density** and **low height** regulations. Bike, walk, jog or drive into town easily via a scenic road in perfect condition, all while relishing the silence of a **one-of-a-kind neighbor: Huatulco's National Park**.

www.alma-huatulco.com | hola@alma-huatulco.com

Inside ALMA:

Craftsmanship, Sustainability, and Signature Design



In this interview, we speak with Frederic Baron and Noémie Bourdin-Habert, the developers behind ALMA, an architectural project in Huatulco that blends design, sustainability, and community. They share the story behind the name, the philosophy that shaped the residence, and the details that set ALMA apart in Mexico's coastal real estate landscape.

Where does the name ALMA come from ?

Noemie: ALMA means "soul" in Spanish. We chose it because it captured exactly what we had in mind: to create not just a development, but a community with a soul. A residence with a positive impact and a clear purpose—to promote Mexican modern architecture and sustainability within the real estate development sector and create a unique user experience. It also resonated deeply with a book that transformed both our lives: *About the Soul*, by Francois Cheng.

What's the differentiator of ALMA as a residence?

Frederic: I'd say the key differentiator of ALMA is that it was never about simply selling properties. It's always been about bringing a genuine piece of architecture to the market—crafted by incredible architects down to the smallest detail and set in an extraordinary oceanfront environment—literally surrounded by National Parks. In a word, it's a place where you *want to live*, not just invest.

Designed by world-renowned architects José Juan Rivera Río and Modica-Ledezma, each ALMA property carries the qualities you usually only see in magazine homes. In short, ALMA aims to make signature architecture and sustainability the standard, so the end-user experience is elevated. With that in mind, it's no coincidence that ALMA has recently received several distinctions: shortlisted for its masterplan by one of the most prestigious international architecture competitions, the Architecture Hunter Awards; nominated at the Americas Property Awards in the category of Luxury Project of the Year; and awarded the title of Most Sustainable Project in Mexico at the Americas Property Awards—now advancing to compete for the title of Most Sustainable Project in the Americas.

What inspired ALMA ?

Noemie: A large part of ALMA was inspired by extensive past architectural and hospitality experiences—from museums to hotels, from shacks to palaces. We both love lines, light, shadows, textures, shadow gaps, lush gardens, and generally speaking, unique experiences. We've always felt that the level of architecture you see in magazine homes, galleries, or high-end hotels should also exist in residential developments. Yet it rarely does.

Architecture is a major art—the only art we can actually inhabit—and that gives it the power to transform our lives. Think about it: we've all felt instantly right or totally off in a place because of its brightness, volumes, materials, warmth, etc. And this is precisely what sparked our desire to create a truly architectural project that elevates our daily lives, *not just our holidays*.

At the end of the day, ALMA wasn't born out of ambition but out of our shared commitment towards architecture and sustainability and the desire to achieve it at a price per square meter or square foot that remains completely within market standards.

Interesting! Now, in practice, what can ALMA clients expect in terms of design and finishes?

Frederic : When it comes to design, Charles Eames said it perfectly: "*The details are not the details; they make the design.*"

At ALMA, the number of details that actually shape the design is endless. I can name just a few that stand out in order to illustrate the level of finishes we offer:

1- Fan-coil air conditioning: Goodbye mini-splits! Of course they work, but it's no secret that they kill the design. Instead, we use inverter fan-coil units with subtle grids integrated into walls and ceilings. Almost invisible, they perfectly preserve the purity of the architectural lines and consume less energy.

2- Swimming pools: We all love cooling off around these latitudes, but plastic or steel drains often ruin the look. At ALMA, every pool is infinity and integrated into the ground with drains hidden under the travertine floor, creating a true water mirror. Plus, all pools use salt water and overflow tanks.

3- Green roofs: Besides reducing upper-floor temperatures by up to 4°C / 7°F and enhancing pollination, green roofs are beautiful and blend the residence into the native landscape. So instead of seeing concrete and A/C condensers, our upper villas look at the ocean ahead and roof gardens below. A great spot for butterfly-watching!

4- Windows: ALMA's sliders are fully custom, imported, made of thick tempered glass for safety and slim frames for the design—a rare feature in real estate developments. They're the type you can open with just a finger, lock properly and that keeps out torrential rains. With views as exceptional as these, this choice made itself obvious. That being said, because of the heavy impact of their cost on profitability, it is very uncommon to see them featured outside of architect designed standalone villas.

5- Built-in appliances: Very common in architect-design properties, built-in fridges, freezers, or other appliances allow to reduce the "centerpiece" effect of appliances and let the design and the views be the protagonists of a room.

6- Toilets: Hanging toilets are already the norm in countries known for hygiene and minimalism, like Japan, Singapore or Sweden, but they're not common here. At ALMA, all bedrooms feature en-suite bathrooms with minimalist hanging toilets—always behind doors and separate from showers for more privacy.

And in addition to many other indoor and outdoor details, ALMA offers high-level amenities, such as a wellness center, a fully equipped gym, generous common pools, an all-day concierge service, a forest path to a virgin beach, and a beach-hopping shuttle.

Beside the experience ALMA offers, are there other advantages to being part of the community?

Noemie: Absolutely. Several, actually. Since the experience our owners live at ALMA is our main focus, the chances for them to meet like-minded neighbors and build meaningful friendships based on a shared appreciation for architecture and nature are really high. It's not a coincidence that buyers planning to live in ALMA outnumber pure investors, by far!

Another major advantage is the controlled environment. Many of our owners previously bought in oceanfront neighborhoods only to see them drastically change or become overbuilt. The fact that the National Park has expanded and now fully surrounds ALMA ensures this cannot happen here. Low density—the lowest of any neighborhood in Huatulco—is a secured long-term advantage.

Property appreciation is another key benefit for our owners. Around the world, experience shows that sustainable, award-winning properties designed by renowned architects offer stronger capital gains.

Finally, something our owners repeatedly highlight is our dedication and our accessibility as developers. Being genuinely reachable, being onsite daily, constantly sharing professional construction photos, having lived in the community for over five years, and being part of both the local and expat communities are things that really matter to them. In return, we truly value the relationship we have with each of them, and our conversations—sometimes over casual diners or drinks—have often helped us refine the ALMA experience even further.

For more information:
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Turning the Pages of 2025: The Novels That Moved Us

By Carole Reedy

"*By writing a novel one performs a revolutionary act. A novel is an act of hope. It allows us to imagine that things may be other than they are.*"

Those are the words of Hilary Mantel, who more than accomplished the above in her many books over the years. Mantel's brilliant mind discerned more than what could be readily seen.

From the dozens of novels I read this year, several revealed a new perspective or a deeper emotion. The feelings evoked by these books spontaneously pop into my mind at various times, offering perspective and contemplation.

My Friends by Frederick Backman

I always considered Backman to be a writer of "easy reads," an author who enchanted his readers with compelling characters and entertaining plots. *My Friends*, however, breaks this mold to awaken in the reader a deeper sense of the meaning and significance of friendship and beauty, the twin pillars that make life worth living.

A painting, a lifetime of friendship, and a series of problem years filled with conflicting emotions drive the plot and shape the structure of the novel. Backman is a master storyteller and character developer.
The *Washington Post* said it well: "Backman captures the messy essence of being human."

What We Can Know by Ian McEwan

This is renowned writer Ian McEwan's 18th novel. *The New York Times* called the book "the best thing McEwan has written in ages" and "entertainment of a high order." I agree wholeheartedly.

The setting is 100 years from now, with continuing and not necessarily favorable references to the times in which we are living. McEwan refers to his book as "science fiction without the science."

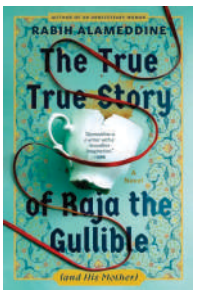
The storyline is compelling and entertaining despite McEwan's discomfiting view of our future. Tucked between descriptions of the devastation of 100 years of climate change, wars, and general chaos and disruption of the planet is a delightful narrative of a young literary type who in 2119 is pursuing the location of a poem that was deliberately hidden more than 100 years previously.

The poem was written by a fictional esteemed literary figure of our current era. In addition, McEwan offers keen insights into this poet, his wife, their friends, and their lifestyles.

A formidable plot, complex characters, and sense of place drive the action. This novel has all the essentials required in a narrative about the future to create a novel I read almost nonstop!

You may also want to read these other gems by McEwan: *Atonement*, *Saturday*, *Nutshell*, and *On Chesil Beach*.
All will satisfy your craving for fine writing and precision craftsmanship.

The True True Story of Raja the Gullible (and His Mother) by Rabin Alameddine

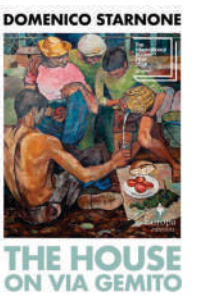


Each page of this simultaneously comic and tragic novel flows like ice beneath a skater's blade. This despite the fact that Lebanon, where the action takes place, usually would not be described this way.

These characters experience rough times in Lebanon, a country that has undergone many tragic phases. But Alameddine entertains us as the main characters take us through the dark side of the country's history as well as through his and his mother's personal struggles, met with determination and even a dash of joy.

This book offers so much easy enjoyment, much like his novel *An Unnecessary Woman.*

The House on Via Gemita by Domenico Starnone



Do you recognize this Italian author's name a
was thought to be the ghost writer of the s
Ferrante novels, specifically the Neapolitan s
has denied it, being an illustrious author in l
equally famous wife, Anita Raja, a transla
director, has also been "accused" of the decepti

In the end, Ferrante has been accepted as a
another Italian author who believes that book
written, have no need of their author."

Many avid readers have enjoyed Starnone's witty novels, *Ties* and *Trick*. *The House on Via Gemita* presents a new, darker side of Starnone. Not light and humorous as *Ties* and *Trick*, this novel places a cantankerous artist front and center.
1960s Naples, Italy, is the place where a frustrated railway worker is convinced he is a great artist, his family suffering the consequences of the obsession. The trials of the family are detailed and vivid, Starnone's best talent clearly at work.
The novel deservedly was long-listed for the International Booker prize.

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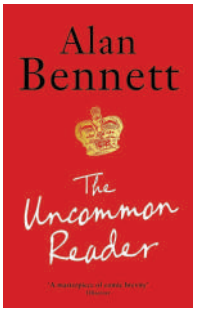
The Uncommon Reader by Alan Bennett



Alan Bennett is, simply put, a gem. I am listing his short novel as a favorite because it truly illuminates the joy of reading.

British-born, raised and educated at Oxford, Bennet is exceedingly accomplished, with a rich stock of stories, plays, and films in his repertoire. When I want to feel good and laugh, I pick up one of his works.

*The Uncommon Reade*r is a novel for the book-addicted. The uncommon reader of the title is the Queen of England, and Bennet takes us merrily through her introductory, and eventually continuing, passion for the written word.

Novelist/writer Jennifer Kloester's review calls it "brilliant on many levels, but also a delicious, edible morsel of a novel. And wait until you read the ending."

My Final Read of the Year: The Volcano Lover by Susan Sontag

At year's end, I find myself thoroughly engaged in Susan Sontag's radical novel of ideas, *The Volcano Lover* (1992), set largely in Naples Italy in the late 18th century. The gentle pace of her style in this unconventional historical narrative perfectly complements my year-end reflections. I will read it slowly through December in order to savor her luscious writing style.

Here's to many provocative reading experiences in 2026!

The Legal Reality Of Owning Property In Mexico's Coastline

By Adrian Sánchez

Buying a home in Mexico feels like a dream, ocean views, palm trees, slower days, and better weather. But behind every dream property, there's one detail that can make or break your investment: the legal structure.

In countries like the U.S., Canada, or across Europe, purchasing real estate is fairly simple: sign, pay, and record. In Mexico, however, the rules change especially if you're a foreigner.

What you can own?, how you can own it?, where you can own it depends entirely on your nationality and the legal structure you choose.

The Constitutional Restriction

Under Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution, foreigners are prohibited from directly owning land within the so-called "Restricted Zone" that is, within 50 kilometers (31 miles) of the coast or 100 kilometers (62 miles) of any international border.

In other words, most of Mexico's most desirable real estate from Los Cabos, Cancún, and Tulum, to Huatulco and Puerto Escondido lies entirely within this restricted area.

So... how do thousands of Americans, Canadians, and Europeans legally buy beachfront villas and condos in Mexico every year?

The Legal Path: Fideicomiso (Bank Trust)

The answer lies in a legal mechanism designed precisely for foreign investment: the Fideicomiso.

This 50-year renewable bank trust allows foreigners to acquire and control property within the restricted zone without violating the Constitution.

Here's how it works: A Mexican bank holds the title as *trustee*, while you (the foreign buyer) are the *beneficiary*. You retain all ownership rights, you can live in, rent, remodel, sell, or even inherit the property. The property does not belong to the bank; it's your asset, protected under Mexican law.

Setting up a fideicomiso involves a one-time setup fee and annual maintenance fees.

What You Need to Establish a Fideicomiso

To legally acquire property within the restricted zone, the process includes a few key steps and legal documents:

1. A Foreign Investment Permit issued by the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, SRE).

2. Then there's something called the "Calvo Clause." As required by Article 27, Section I of the Mexican Constitution, foreigners must agree to be treated as Mexican nationals regarding property ownership and waive the right to seek protection from their home government in any dispute related to the property.

In simple terms: you accept Mexican law and Mexican jurisdiction — no international claims, no diplomatic involvement.

3. A Trusted Notary Public (*Notario Público*) to oversee and formalize the legal process.

4. A Mexican Bank authorized to act as the fiduciary institution (trustee).

Once those steps are complete and your lawyer ensures all due diligence your property is legally yours.

The key to owning property in Mexico safely is understanding the legal foundation beneath your dream home.At Lead the Future Law & Tax Firm, our bilingual legal and tax experts guide you from acquisition to sale, ensuring that your investment remains as solid as the ground it stands on.

Adrian Sánchez | @MexicoLawyer | CEO, Lead the Future Law & Tax Firm
Lawyer (Universidad Iberoamericana) | Corporate & Real Estate Law Specialist | Compliance Officer | Legal Columnist

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María Mayoral: A Lineage in Thread

By Bianca Corona

There is a pace to the coast that does not translate in cities. It is slower, but never lazy. It is intentional. The light moves differently here, and the wind carries salt and sound in a way that makes you stop without realizing you have stopped. Even the fabric you wear asks you to release anything heavy and choose something that breathes. When I first sat down with María, this was the feeling that met me before she even spoke. A quiet, grounding presence. Not shy. Just someone whose voice comes from a deeper place, the kind of place most people forget to visit once they leave the coast.

Born in Pochutla, a town 45 minutes from Huatulco, Maria's family came to the coast decades ago, long before tourism reshaped the shoreline. They arrived to work. Work that demanded patience. Work taught by hands rather than classrooms. Work that held their identity in cotton and color.

“We practically lived in the hotel,” she told me, remembering the Sheraton before it became the Barceló. She described the smell of sunscreen mixing with thread, the sound of tourists moving in and out, the constant presence of sand under her feet. Childhood for her was not divided into playtime and work. It was one space. One long rhythm set by the loom.

Her mother wove. Her father wove. And slowly, María learned too. First watching. Then assisting. Then creating. She began weaving at 12, sewing at 15. Not because someone told her to. But because the rhythm of the loom teaches by itself if you sit close enough. Press, release. Press, release. A heartbeat made audible.

But lineage is rarely a straight line. It bends. It tests. It takes you away from home so you can return with a different perspective. María left the coast to study International Design in Puebla. She wanted to understand fashion in a broader sense. “Where I studied, the approach was very artistic,” she said. “It gave me a wider range of what fashion could be.” She liked that contrast. Traditional weaving in one palm, modern design in the other. She could feel how they might meet without contradicting each other.

After graduating, she tried to stay in the city. Everyone always told her to go big or go home. To prove yourself in a larger place. To move fast. To produce more. She tried to believe it, but her heart disagreed. “I couldn't keep up with that life,” she said. “I missed breathing.” So, she returned to Huatulco. Back to the coastline. Back to the thread.

I then asked, “What stories would you say are figuratively woven into your pieces?” She shared, the first thing to come to her mind was when her mother began losing her vision. The woman who once guided every stitch, whose presence was the essence of their workspace, slowly entered a world without images. María told this part of the story without dramatizing it. She simply explained how the workshop changed, and how she changed with it. She started weaving differently, adding dimensions that her mother could feel with her fingertips. Texture became language. Color became memory. Craft became closeness. “I changed the way I weave so she could still be part of it,” she said. Her tone held no sadness. Just devotion. A very soft but very steady kind of love.

But life never teaches one lesson at a time. While she was caring, adapting, holding her craft close, another part of her self-development broke. A brand she previously helped build was taken from her. Her designs, her work, her name. “They robbed the brand from me,” she said. And around the same time, projects she depended on slowly unraveled. Her income disappeared. Her confidence wavered. She took a job as a waitress. Long shifts. Late nights. A kind of exhaustion that demands all of you. She worried that maybe she had stepped into a life that would not offer anything beyond survival. Meanwhile her family encouraged her to come back to the workshop and begin her own brand from scratch. She was resistant at first. Pain makes us hesitate. Starting over feels heavier when the loss is still fresh.

She laughs when she talks about this now. Not because it is funny, but because distance gives shape to things. She says it taught her something very clearly. “I realized I couldn't let go of what I love just because someone else was dishonest or because things did not work out the first time.” So, she returned to the loom. And from that return, her brand took its true name, María Mayoral. Not born from inspiration or timing or trend. Born from refusal. A refusal to shrink. A refusal to disappear.

And now, when she talks about her work, she does not speak like someone trying to sell you something. There is no presentation. She speaks from inside the process itself. “When someone wears my pieces, I want them to feel something. To feel astonished at themselves,” she said. Not astonished as in spectacle. Astonished by the soulful care webbed through the fabric. Astonished as in remembering something ancient in the body. Something warm. Something that feels like home even if you are far from it.

Because here, in Huatulco, clothes are not stiff. The heat demands breath and softness. The ocean demands movement. Cotton is not an aesthetic choice. It is the only fabric that lives well with the climate. Nature decides. The land chooses the material. The coastline decides the palette. Her colors shift with seasons and tides. The marigold dye that blooms today will not bloom the same next year. Rain changes the tone. Soil changes the shade. Emotion changes the hand. Nothing repeats. Not because she refuses repetition, but because the land does not repeat itself.

Her atelier holds eight looms of varying sizes. The sound inside is steady and meditative.

And when you watch a piece being made, you understand instantly why a garment created in this space cannot be compared to anything made in a factory. “The piece that took me the longest took three months,” she said. Three months of touch and patience and presence. Machines can imitate the pattern but not the weight of meaning. Not the warmth. Not the life. Visitors who spend time in the workshop leave with reverence because they see what cannot be massed produced… time.

Her first collection, the one that gave real shape to the brand, was inspired directly by the ocean. Not as metaphor. As literal memory. Textures that mirrored tide lines. Movement that echoed waves. Only six pieces. They sold out in two weeks. It was the beginning that confirmed everything she believed. Her next collection draws from Tangolunda and the memory of the old Camino Real. The coastline there holds a specific glow. The sand is filled with tiny spiral shaped shells. She will bring those spirals into her designs. Not traced. Remembered.

María also collaborates with families of embroiderers in the Valley. Women who carry techniques older than any written history. She respects the knowledge they hold. She asks before using something with ancestral meaning. She learns the symbols. She refuses the imitation culture that has taken root in Oaxaca's markets. There are stitches she keeps hidden. Marks meant only for the women who will wear her pieces close to their skin. “Something just for them,” she said. A private language made of thread.

When I asked María where she sees the future of her brand, her answer surprised me. Her dream is not global exposure. It is continuity. She wants to create her first runway in Oaxaca and take her mother with her. She wants the community to rise alongside the brand. “First Mexico,” she said. “And when Mexico knows us, then the world.”

This is not a comeback story. It is a return. A realignment. A remembering of who she has always been. Her pieces are not garments. They are memory held in cotton. They are lineage moving forward. They are devotion stitched into form. They are a daughter refusing to let love, or craft, or identity be dimmed.

These pieces are woven time.

Contact for designs WhatsApp: + 52 958 587 8556
Instagram: @mmariamayoral

Reviving Rail:
A New Era for Mexico's Transportation

By Randy Jackson

For fifteen years, our annual migration south meant driving the length of Mexico—from Nuevo Laredo to Huatulco. But not anymore. Over time, the toll roads have steadily improved and extended, now reaching all the way to the Oaxacan coast. But as the roads improved, so too did the volume of semi-trucks. What began as an encouraging sign of economic growth, especially in the northern half of Mexico, has become a source of gridlock. The tollways are now truckways—clogged with freight traffic that slows travel and occasionally brings highways to a standstill.

And it's not just the highways. Urban congestion is becoming unbearable. Try stopping in San Luis Potosí, and you may find yourself mired in a 24/7 rush hour. The operations of global manufacturers like General Motors and BMW largely drive that gridlock. Efficient transportation is vital to economic life, but Mexico's current road-based system is straining under pressure. For the first time in decades, the country is signalling a shift—from asphalt to steel—investing in rail projects that aim not only to reduce road traffic, but to position rail as a driver of future growth.

MEXICO'S GOLDEN AGE OF RAILWAYS

Mexico's golden age of rail came under the pre-revolutionary presidency of Porfirio Díaz. When Díaz took office, Mexico had just 670 km of rail; by the end of his term in 1910, that number had jumped to 24,700 km. The building boom was fueled by concessions to foreign investors, a practical but flawed approach that produced inconsistent track gauges and just three nationwide connections. The destruction and disorder of the Mexican Revolution halted progress. Later, foreign-owned railways were nationalized, which helped standardize track width and improve interconnectivity.

Though rail suffered for decades from poor maintenance, corruption, and union strife, it still marked a major step in Mexico's industrialization. In its early days, rail was up to ten times faster than roads and slashed freight costs by as much as 80%. But under investment, administrative failures, and shifting government priorities gradually relegated rail to a secondary role. Roads took precedence, and the consequences—congestion, emissions, economic bottlenecks—are now coming home to roost.

A DETOUR INTO ASPHALT

In 1995, under President Ernesto Zedillo, Mexican railways were privatized. The national rail system was divided among three major companies that still operate today: Kansas City Southern de México (KCSM) in the northeast, and Ferromex and Ferrosur, both now owned by the conglomerate Grupo México.

Over time, these private operators shut down nearly all passenger services, citing a lack of profitability. For many years, only two tourist trains remained: El Chepe in the Copper Canyon and the José Cuervo Express on the Guadalajara–Tequila line.

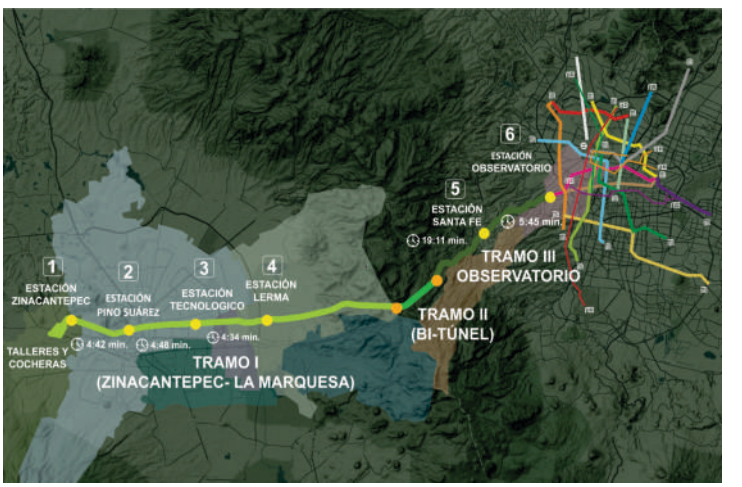
That downward trajectory began to reverse under President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), who made passenger rail a national priority. His administration launched high-profile projects like the Maya Train and the Interoceanic Corridor and passed reforms requiring private freight lines to support or offer passenger service.

His successor, Claudia Sheinbaum, has pledged to continue this shift—supporting existing projects while proposing new routes. Together, these efforts signal a strategic turn: new rail infrastructure designed to support regional economies, diversify tourism, and ease the country's dependence on highways.

STEEL AMBITIONS

Mexico's new rail projects are large-scale passenger projects and freight modernization, aiming to cut road dependency, stimulate tourism, and strengthen industrial corridors.

Tren Maya – This project's cost has ballooned to $28B USD—a passenger train stretching 1,500 km across five southeastern states. The train is now partially operational, with more sections and stations scheduled to open in the future. It aims to spread tourism away from the Riviera Maya's concentration, create jobs, and link new economic hubs. However, the project has also been a source of significant controversy due to its environmental and social impacts.



Mexico–Toluca Interurban Train – With costs swelling to nearly $10B USD, this 58-km commuter line connects Toluca with western Mexico City. Well-publicized delays have pushed full operation out to 2026, though partial service began in 2023. The train is designed to ease congestion and reduce emissions. Its escalating costs and long delays, however, have demonstrated the hurdles faced in new infrastructure construction in Mexico.

Mexico City–Pachuca & Querétaro Lines – Two proposed high-speed routes, with the Pachuca line estimated at $2.5B USD and the Querétaro line at $7B USD. Construction began in 2025. They are intended to extend rail northward, linking the capital with fast-growing industrial centers. Strategically, they would strengthen central Mexico's manufacturing corridor, provide alternatives to crowded highways, and reduce emissions. Political will and financing are key uncertainties for moving these projects forward.

Interoceanic Corridor of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec (CIIT): This is a freight modernization project with a reported cost of over $7 billion USD. It upgrades a 300-km rail line between the ports of Salina Cruz on the Pacific coast and Coatzacoalcos on the Gulf of Mexico. While limited passenger and freight services began in late 2023, the project is still undergoing major expansions, with the full system expected to be completed in 2026. This project is strategically significant as it is meant to create a competitive alternative to the Panama Canal. It also aims to stimulate economic development in one of Mexico's poorest regions. Besides port expansions, the project's plans call for new industrial parks along the route to attract investment. As promising as the project is, questions remain about its ability to attract sustained international shipping and investment.

RELIEF IN RAIL? THE VIEW FROM THE DRIVER'S SEAT

After decades of pouring resources into asphalt, the shift back to steel marks a strategic bet on efficiency and economic development. For those of us who have spent long days driving south, boxed in by semis on endless tollways, the return of rail isn't just policy; it feels like long-overdue relief. Still, with costs climbing and schedules slipping, the success of these projects will depend on sustained political will and the willingness to commit serious resources in the years ahead

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Enrique Flores Workshop and Artists of Oaxaca

By José Palacios y Román

In the mid-twentieth century, Mexican muralism experienced a turning point. Yet by then, Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and Rufino Tamayo had already secured a central place in modern art. Among them, Rufino Tamayo, a native of Oaxaca, stood out not only for his artistic genius but also for his generosity.

In Oaxaca City, Tamayo's deep commitment to culture lives on in the Museum of Pre-Hispanic Art of Mexico, a carefully curated collection he donated in January 1974. That same year, through the initiative of Roberto Donis, the Rufino Tamayo Workshop of Visual Arts was founded. Tamayo contributed resources to create a space dedicated to the artistic training of young people from rural communities. From its first generation, the workshop became an important reference point for artistic education in Mexico and Latin America. Among those early students was Enrique Flores.

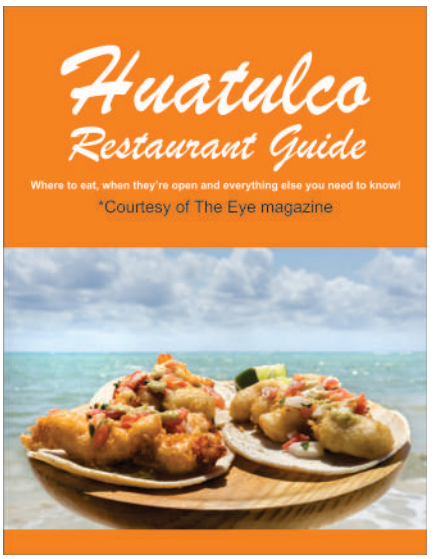
In 1981, Rufino Tamayo and his wife, Olga Tamayo, made another extraordinary gift to the nation: the Tamayo Museum of Contemporary Art in Mexico City. Their collection includes works by many of the great masters of twentieth-century art — Picasso, Miró, Dalí, Bacon, Dubuffet, Calder, Warhol, Vasarely, Magritte, and others. Today, the museum is recognized as one of the finest in the world.

This legacy is closely tied to the ongoing vitality of Oaxacan art. Enrique Flores, painter and educator, has built an extensive career that he combines with the work of the Enrique Flores Cultural Center and Workshop, which he has sustained for over thirty years in San Pablo Huitzo, near Oaxaca City. The workshop has become a vital meeting point for the teaching and exchange of artistic techniques — printmaking, stained glass, ceramics, sculpture, and high-quality editions in engraving.

Now, Copalli Art Gallery in Huatulco is honored to present, in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Enrique Flores Workshop, a new exhibition featuring recent works by the master. On this occasion, he is joined by ten internationally recognized Oaxacan artists, reflecting the strength and diversity of contemporary art from the region.

The exhibition, "Enrique Flores Workshop and Artists of Oaxaca," opens on December 21 at 6:30 p.m. and will remain on view until January 18, 2026, at Punta Tangolunda (across from the entrance to the Golf Club). The opening event will feature Chef Eusebio Villalobos and live music.

Check out our
Huatulco Restaurant Guide
on the website!
www.theeyehuatulco.com/huatulco-guides/



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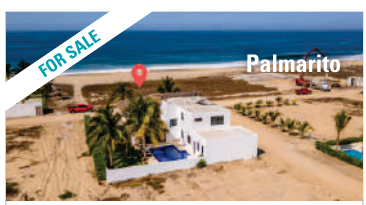

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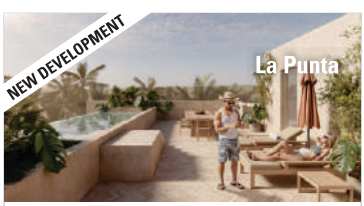

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Chiles & Chocolate Cooking Classes

The best way to learn about a culture is through its food.





Chiles & Chocolate Cooking Classes offer hands-on culinary and cultural experiences that celebrate the rich flavors of Mexican cuisine.

- **-Hands-on**
- **-Instruction in English**
- **-Recipe Manual**
- **-Free Gift Bag**
- **-Food and Drinks Included**
- **-Transportation Included**

Cost:
115 USD adults,
75 USD kids under 12
Pick up 9am
Return 1pm

"We had amazing food, learned a lot about the region … HIGHLY RECOMMEND!"
— Lisa R., UK

"Street Food class is a gem! … we experienced an anthropological cooking class with Jane … in a small town."
— Tom D., Canada

"Hands down the best cooking class I've ever taken — everything was delicious!"
— John M., USA

WEDNESDAYS
Mama's Kitchen-
-Black Mole and Yellow Mole
-served with Rice and Chicken
-Handmade Tortillas
-Mezcal Margarita

THURSDAYS
Fiesta-
-Beef Picadillo Tamales
-Poblano & Nopal Empanadas
-Guacamole
-Jicama, Cucumber, and Orange Salad
-Ancho Reyes Margarita

FRIDAYS
Street Food-
-Red and Green Salsas
-Pico de Gallo
-Handmade Tortillas and Sopes
-2 types of Taco Fillings
-Tlayudas
-Jamaica Margaritas

SATURDAYS
Seafood-
-Fish Ceviche with Totopos
-Rosemary Shrimp
-Shrimp Mousse
-Baja-style Fish Tacos
-Beer Micheladas

Reserve your spot in the kitchen:

www.HuatulcoFoodTours.com

WhatsApp +52 958 100 7339

VILLA CONCHITA

OCEAN FRONT LUXURY LIVING

5 BEDROOMS ○ 4.5 BATHROOMS
SALT WATER SWIMMING POOL ○ FULLY FURNISHED ○ SOLAR PANELS

$1,900,000 USD

BAYSIDE REAL ESTATE

MX (+52) 958.587.4543 | www.BaysideHuatulco.com

PROUD SPONSOR OF LOCAL SURFERS REGINA PIOLI, MAX MUÑOZ & CORAL MUÑOZ