

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

The Woman Behind Texas's Coolest Hotels Goes South of the Border

This spring, Liz Lambert opens the Hotel San Cristóbal in Todos Santos, Mexico—here's how she created her brand



The latest to open is the 32-room Hotel San Cristóbal, which is part of Tres Santos, a new community that Chip Conley, Airbnb's head of global hospitality and strategy, first brought to Lambert's attention. The airy, '70s-feeling beachfront haven, situated 50 miles north of Cabo San Lucas in the small fishing town of Todos Santos, offers guests the anti-Cabo experience: a place to surf and slow down in a setting featuring furnishings crafted in Guadalajara, vibrant Guatemalan fabrics and local design elements such as stamped concrete tiles.

The Hotel San Cristóbal is new territory for Lambert and her company, but they've incorporated familiar concepts. Besides offering employment for Todos Santos residents, Bunkhouse sought connections with the town's community separate from the hotel. (The company already applies this strategy in Austin, making concert series, workshops and holiday parties at the Hotel San José open to the public.) In the fall of 2015, the company contributed to travel expenses for a game between the Austin baseball club the Texas Playboys and a local Todos Santos team in the town's stadium, which both American groups—Bunkhouse and the Playboys—had repainted the day before.

TRAVEL

more great getaways:
mexico calling

From Yucatán to the coasts of Cabo San Lucas, three beachfront resorts promise sun, surf, and style.



**JW MARRIOTT
LOS CABOS**
Designed by Seattle architect Jim Olson, this sprawling resort evokes Louis Kahn's Salk Institute with its striking assemblage of planes and breathtaking pools (rooms from \$460/night; marriott.com).

HOTEL ESENCIA
This 29-room bohemian escape near Tulum is a favorite among the fashion set, luring the likes of Jason Wu, who chose its lush grounds for his own wedding (rooms from \$615; hotelesencia.com).

HOTEL SAN CRISTÓBAL
Set on Baja California Sur peninsula, this newcomer is the latest from hipster hotelier Liz Lambert, who tapped Texas architects Lake|Flato for the design (rooms from \$250; sancristobalbaja.com).

TRAVELISTA



Above: the view of the ocean from a villa at Chileno Bay Resort & Residences, in Mexico's Baja California.
Below: The Robertson Seal Hotel, offering the only five-star accommodation in the Karoo, in South Africa's Western Cape

→ The Mornington Peninsula wine region has been **MELBOURNE's** summer backyard for a century and a half – a landscape alternating neat vineyards and still-wild bush, calm turquoise seas, prosperous villages lined with eminently Instagram-able cafés, and three of the country's best golf courses. Now Louis Li, a 29-year-old, Chinese-born developer-wunderkind, is raising the bar with a hotel that enlists local artists to contribute provocative installations and site-specific events. The 46 minimalist rooms at **Jackalope** (jackalopehotels.com; from A\$650, about £400) have 11 lush hectares at Willow Creek Vineyard to themselves, with a 30m black infinity pool (a masterpiece in its own right), a private pavilion for spa treatments and – with a longtime Aman old hand running the show – what promises to be the region's best service.



Chileno Bay Resort & Residences, offering a modern take on the beachfront

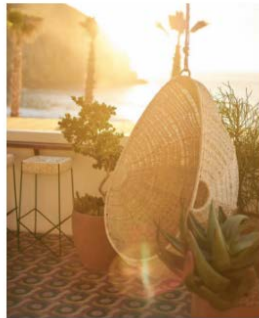
→ A similar marriage of sleek design and wild landscape characterises **MEXICO's** Baja California, that poetic, spectacular convergence of ocean and desert with killer surf breaks and even better tacos. New from Auberge Resorts is **Chileno Bay Resort & Residences** (chilenobayresort.com; from \$775), whose vibrant, indoor-outdoor suites and multi-bedroom villas cling to bluffs and a blinding white beach that's swimmable year-round (rarely the case down here, with the Pacific's capricious currents and thunderous shore breaks). Just south of **TODOS SANTOS**, meanwhile, Texas's funky and forward-thinking Bunkhouse Group is about to open the doors of the **Hotel San Cristóbal** (tresantobaja.com; from \$250), part of the ambitiously holistic Tres Santos development of residences, restaurants and cultural venues that hopes to present a wholesome farm-to-table alternative to the glitz of San José del Cabo.



TRAVEL SHARE 71

5 UNEXPECTED DESTINATIONS TO TRAVEL TO WITH YOUR SO

INSTEAD OF TULUM, TRY HOTEL SAN CRISTÓBAL IN TODOS SANTOS, BAJA, MEXICO



Trust New York scenesters to turn one of the most beautiful places in Mexico into a tropical Williamsburg. If you don't feel like running into your neighbor while trying to reconnect with your SO, head to Mexico's Pacific coast. A shorter drive from the Los Cabos airport than Tulum is from Cancun. Todos Santos has the same charming close-to-nature feel without the masses of tourists biking down dirt roads. Plus, the brand-new Hotel San Cristóbal has that high-design, hipster feeling and was started by the same people who run El Cosmico in Marfa, Texas.

Fodor'sTravel

15 BEST BEACH GETAWAYS FOR 2015

January 28, 2015 by Kathleen Squires



TODOS SANTOS

This once-sleepy beach town in Baja California has become livelier of late, thanks to its thriving artist community, an annual music festival led by REM's Peter Buck, and a soon-to-be completed "mindful living" community, complete with a beachfront boutique hotel. [Tres Santos](#), a community within [Todos Santos](#), will also include an organic community garden, gourmet farm-to-table restaurant, and a research center for Colorado State University, with an agriculture and water research focus. The [CSU Todos Santos Center](#) is set to open in March, while the first residences will debut by September.

Insider Tip: Todos Santos's beaches are a favorite for the surfing set. The historic 11-suite [Hotel California](#), located in the center of town, is a longtime favorite for both the artsy and surfer set.



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Hotel San Cristóbal Baja

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Expansión

HOTEL SAN CRISTÓBAL Todos Santos

La primera propiedad internacional de la firma ultrahípster Bunkhouse abre sus puertas este año en ese espacio semivirgen llamado Todos Santos, una hora al norte de Los Cabos. Diseñado por la firma texana Lake/Flato, fue ideado para interactuar con el paisaje natural que le rodea y crear sentido de comunidad. El concepto detrás es la de recrear un lugar con la atmósfera relajada de los 70. Cada una de las 32 habitaciones del hotel son diferentes, la mayoría, con patios privados para disfrutar en confianza. bunkhousegroup.com

DEPARTURES

Home / Travel

Travel

Travel News: 17 Reasons to Travel in April 2017

By Jen Murphy on March 27, 2017

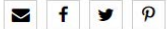
The buzziest happenings in the world of travel this month.



Pia Riverola

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SHARE:



Hotel San Cristóbal Opens in Todos Santos, Mexico

Cabo has stolen the spotlight with its post-hurricane hotel boom, but an hour south of the flashy resort scene is Todos Santos. Hip hotelier Liz Lambert chose this laidback, artsy beach town as the home of Hotel San Cristóbal, the first international property from her Bunkhouse hotel group, opening April 3. The 32-room beachfront hotel overlooks picturesque Punta Lobos and the Sierra de la Laguna Mountains and is connected to town by a three-mile bike path. In addition to reflecting Bunkhouse's celebrated design aesthetic, San Cristóbal will integrate and celebrate local culture. In-room amenities and the hotel's retail program feature local, Mexican materials and products; the restaurant uses locally sourced ingredients in a casual setting overlooking the ocean. *From \$250; Playa Punta Lobos, Carretera Federal N19, Km 54; sancristobalbaja.com.*

how to spend it

Funky new villa and hotel openings in Baja California

A vibrant beachside resort and a wholesome holistic retreat arrive in the Mexican peninsula

A similar marriage of sleek design and **wild landscape** characterises Mexico's Baja California, that poetic, spectacular convergence of ocean and desert with killer surf breaks and even better tacos. New from Auberge Resorts is Chileno Bay Resort & Residences (chilenobayresort.com; from \$775), whose vibrant, indoor-outdoor suites and multi-bedroom villas cling to bluffs and a blinding white beach that's swimmable year-round (rarely the case down here, with the **Pacific's capricious currents and thunderous shore breaks**). Just south of Todos Santos, meanwhile, Texas's funky and forward-thinking Bunkhouse Group is about to open the doors of the Hotel San Cristóbal (tressantosbaja.com; from \$250), part of the ambitiously holistic Tres Santos development of residences, restaurants and cultural venues that hopes to present a wholesome farm-to-table alternative to the glitz of San José del Cabo.

Robb Report



Leslie Patrick Moore

Set along the rugged coastline of Todos Santos in Baja California, **Hotel San Cristóbal** was the first international opening for Texan hotelier Liz Lambert's Bunkhouse brand in early 2017. The Lake Flato-designed beachfront property comprises 32 rooms outfitted with Guatemalan fabrics, Mexican ceramics, and custom furnishings from Guadalajara. Mexican chef Edgar Palau and Austin chef Lou Lambert oversee Benno, the hotel's oceanfront restaurant infusing the traditional flavors of Baja with those of Asia and the Mediterranean, along with a wine list featuring local labels. (sancristobalbaja.com)

Hotel San Cristóbal → Hotelier Liz Lambert recently launched her first international property within her Bunkhouse brand: the 32-room Hotel San Cristóbal beach bungalow in Todos Santos, Baja California Sur in Mexico. Designed by longtime collaborator Austin, Texas architecture firm Lake Flato, the indoor-outdoor hotel—set within residential wellness community Tres Santos, connected to town via a bike path—is designed to not only blend in with and maximize the views of its picturesque surrounding beachfront landscape, but also create a community within by centrally locating the pool, oceanfront restaurant, library, and other public spaces. Rooms (each one slightly different from the next) boast floor-to-ceiling windows and are dressed in Mexican ceramics, Guatemalan fabrics, and custom furniture by Guadalajara makers.

Lambert has also taken over the almost 80-year-old Austin Motel, a mainstay of the Texan city, rehabbing the 41 rooms and public spaces (the highlight is the bold red and white palette), including an outdoor pool that has a decidedly 1950s vibe.



The Standard

APRIL 19 2017

Adios, Tulum: Liz Lambert's Magical Mexico Hideaway Is Here

When the Texas hotelier and all-around magnetic personality Liz Lambert invites you to come check out her new hotel—her first in Mexico no less—you stop whatever you're doing and start booking plane tickets. That's because wherever Liz goes, the surroundings are unparalleled, the aesthetic is pitch perfect, and strangers quickly become like old friends. Invariably there's an incredible, unfussy feast with otherworldly margaritas, and somehow, a guitar player (or in this case, a full mariachi band) within 50 feet of her at all times. Such is the magic of being enveloped in her world.

Hotel San Cristóbal in Todos Santos is an hour drive from Cabos Airport along the southwestern coast of the Baja peninsula. Driving along the ocean, massive cardon cacti butt right up to the rocky edge. Upon reaching the town, a dusty dirt road leads out to the San Cristóbal, which is set right on Punta Lobos Beach. Sure enough, we arrived just as the local fisherman were dropping off their daily catch (which goes straight into the kitchen), and we sat down at a table full of new friends, local mezcal, and the freshest ceviche imaginable. Liz tossed me a helmet for the next day's dirt bike ride, and we were off. We caught up with her to hear about the inspiration that brought her remarkable new creation to fruition.

"There's nothing here that wasn't created by people of Mexico." —Liz Lambert

THE STANDARD: What drew you to Todos Santos? It seems like such an inspiring place, but also a very challenging endeavor.

LIZ LAMBERT: What really resonated with me was the desert, the mountains, the vast open space. There's a little bit of it that's like Marfa on the ocean. This part of Baja has long embraced wellness, yoga, mountain biking, and farm-to-table food, so all it took was one trip here to know that it was really intriguing. It felt right. One of my first trips, somebody offered me a dirt bike ride, and it's just so awesome to be seeing the ocean, the mountains, the completely desolate desert... but it's not desolate. You'll be going back on these dirt roads in the foothills and then suddenly there are people living there.

What made you decide to decide to go for it?

When they got [the architectural firm] Lake Flato involved, it became a no brainer to do the project. We had worked with them for years—they worked on the re-imagining of Hotel San José and I've worked with him on various projects ever since I've been in this business—I trust them implicitly and I'm always a big fan.

The New York Times

52 Places to Go in 2016

Damon Winter/The New York Times

Todos Santos Mexico

A Pacific Coast retreat hosts a new green community.



Nearly 50 miles north of Cabo San Lucas, tranquil Todos Santos has long been a surfer's retreat and a day-trip destination for Cabo travelers keen to visit art galleries. In summer, the new Tres Santos development may tempt longer visits via Hotel San Cristobal, a new 32-room beachfront hotel from Bunkhouse, owners of Hotel San Jose in Austin. A new 3.5-mile hiking and biking path will link the beach to town to encourage sustainable commutes. Tres Santos, which bills itself as a "mindful living community" and includes vacation homes, also plans to open a farm and a village with shops, restaurants and a farmer's market this year.

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What to do in Todos Santos?

Our reader suggestions on Facebook.

VOGUE

Why Everyone You Know Is Suddenly Going to Todos Santos, Mexico



Now, a whole new set of travelers is setting their sights on another treasure at the end of a dirt road: the just-opened Hotel San Cristóbal.

The hotel, located on a previously undeveloped fishing beach called Punta Lobos about 15 minutes south of town, is the first international project from famed Texas hotelier Liz Lambert. Her Bunkhouse Group is known for its highly photogenic boutique properties in Austin and Marfa—hotels that helped put those places on the map for a certain style-conscious, nomadic set. And, now, just one month after opening its doors, the Hotel San Cristóbal is topping that same set of travelers' must-visit lists—and generating a healthy amount of buzz elsewhere, too. Last year, the *New York Times* named Todos Santos one of its top 50 travel destinations thanks, in part, to the impending opening of the hotel, and more recently the retailer Madewell launched a partnership with the property. On the weekend I visited, all 32 rooms were fully booked with blissed-out couples in their 20s and 30s wearing colorful serape kimonos and sipping mezcal margaritas by the long, turquoise-tiled pool.

CONDÉ NAST Traveler

Baja Soul

Ever the master at channeling the essence of a place, Liz Lambert works her magic in Mexico.



► Four years ago, when Austin-based hotelier Liz Lambert first laid eyes on Todos Santos in Baja California, 47 miles north of Cabo, she knew immediately this was where she'd open the Hotel San Cristóbal, her first property outside of the U.S. "It was a place with a deep soul and a story that I wanted to tell," she says of the historic mission town. Its relaxed vibe reminded her of Marfa, Texas (her second home), and *that setting*—framed by the deep blue Pacific and a golden desert coastline—is about as idyllic as it gets.

Working with Lake Flato, the sustainable architecture firm behind her Austin properties, Lambert and her team at Bunkhouse Hospitality did a deep dive into the regional culture and design, making bimonthly research trips for four years. The findings inspired the hotel's polished concrete walls, hand-stamped tiles, and *equipales*, traditional rustic chairs made from tanned pigskin and woven cedar strips.

But for Lambert, creating the hotel's identity was about more than the local design vernacular: Bunkhouse hired New York-based Saira Hospitality, which specializes in giving local communities the skills to work in hospitality, to run a nine-week hotel school open to all Todos Santos residents, and now about half of the graduates work at the property. Chefs Edgar Palau and Lou Lambert rely on the town's generations-old *panga* fishing culture for dishes like whole *huachinango* with fresh lime, and buy from family farms to supplement their seafood-focused menu.

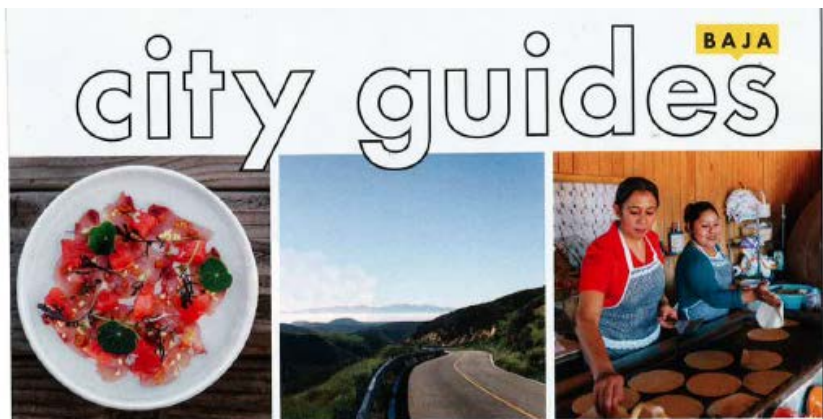
There are other plans in the works too: Palau will lead market tours and longboat-fishing excursions, "though the former lawyer in me says this is a bad idea," jokes Lambert. "Those boats fly." For now, there's horseback riding, yoga, and surf lessons. And, if you're staying in an oceanfront room from November through March, you can watch humpback and gray whales offshore from your outdoor sunken tub.

STIRLING KELSO

Surfbreakers surrounding the Hotel San Cristóbal, good year round, become epic during summer months.



bon appétit



Fish Tacos Were Just the Beginning

The plan was to take a road trip through Baja, Mexico, to find the best fried fish and tortillas. That was before giant clam tostadas, crisp sparkling wine, and private beaches demanded a detour. **by KURT SOLLER**

▲ Clockwise from top left: Encuentro's yellowtail tiradito; Baja views; Doha Cárdena's tortillas; local oysters at Conchas de Piedra

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BENJAMIN HEATH



→ CALIFORNIA HIPPIES

have been chugging their RVs down the Mexican coast to Cabo since at least the 1970s. But most people heading to the Baja peninsula these days are like me: that is, more hipster than hippie, the kind who see some nice photos on Instagram—those rocky Pacific cliffs, that stunning hotel with the Mexican-tiled dining room—and rope in some friends for a vacation adventure, declaring that Baja is “Tulum before it became Tulum” (I stand by this). Before this trip, I knew that I loved the region’s famous Baja tacos: tender white fish fried in a tempura-like batter, beneath a squiggle of cream and some crunchy slaw in a warm corn or flour tortilla. But there was much more to learn—and eat—along the way. Now I’m passing that wisdom on so you can get yourself down to Baja before it’s, well, Tulum.

1—CHOOSE SIDES

The entire Baja California Peninsula—just south of San Diego and, at 760 miles, nearly as long as the state it shares a name with—is really two different places: Baja Norte (North) and Baja Sur (South). The former comprises **Tijuana**, the wine country known as **Valle de Guadalupe** (yes, Mexican wine, but more on that later), and **Ensenada**, a marine town that’s the ancestral home of Baja tacos, all of which are a two-hour drive from each other. At the southern tip, there’s megatouristy **Cabo San Lucas**; its

cooler sister city, **San José del Cabo**; and the even better

Todos Santos, a sleepy beach town a couple of hours away that’s becoming a chic spot to kick back. If you want to hit these half dozen towns (like I did), plan on a week, and don’t bother driving between the South and the North; there’s not much in the middle. Besides, you can fly cheaply and easily on Volaris airlines between Cabo and Tijuana. No matter what, you’ll want to rent an SUV. The roads, especially in the rocky wine country, are no joke in a sedan. Plus, a higher seat is better for taking in those amazing coastal views.

3—WHAT WE TALK ABOUT WHEN WE TALK ABOUT FISH TACOS

You can find superior ones nearly anywhere in Baja—on the roadside in Todos Santos at **Tacos George’s**, or downtown at **Tacos Rossy** in San José del Cabo, where two women across the street press tortillas all day long—but if you want to go all in, the pilgrimage to Ensenada is worth it. In this sleepy fishing village, there are ramshackle stands on most street corners. Locals crowd in among vats of bubbling oil to stand and eat tacos, and you should wander around town and do the same. All of the spots are clearly labeled (thanks to signs sponsored by Coca-Cola); if you happen upon **Tacos Corona** or **Tacos Floresta**, I suggest stopping. But the best fish taco in town is actually the original—well, it’s called **Los Originales Tacos de Pescado**—which serves up long strips of fish alongside a massive buffet of fixings. Here’s how to build your taco like the regulars do:

5—FOLLOW THOSE CHEFS!

As various towns in Baja have risen up, two Tijuana-born chefs have opened spots up and down the peninsula. First, there’s Javier Plascencia, who relies on local ingredients, whether he’s grilling carnitas quesadillas over live fire at **Jazamango** (Todos Santos) and **Finca Altozano** (Valle de Guadalupe) or stocking his raw bar at **Erizo** (Tijuana). Then there’s Jair Téllez, who ushered in “Baja Med” cuisine when he opened **Laja** in the wine country 18 years ago, making a virtue of the olive oil, tomatoes, and herbs that thrive in this Mediterranean climate. His clubbier spot, **Verde y Crema** (Tijuana), follows the same philosophy—as do his white-hot **MeroToro** and **Amaya**, over in Mexico City.

Todos Santos

Austin hotel hero Liz Lambert just opened her first international project, **Hotel San Cristóbal**. It’s like a high-design, Mexican version of Melrose Place, with posh suites that surround a scene-y pool, a private beach, and a swank bar and restaurant that give you little reason to leave the premises. (If you can’t get in, **Rancho Pescadero**, right down the road, has similar amenities, private beach access, and more of a mom vibe.)