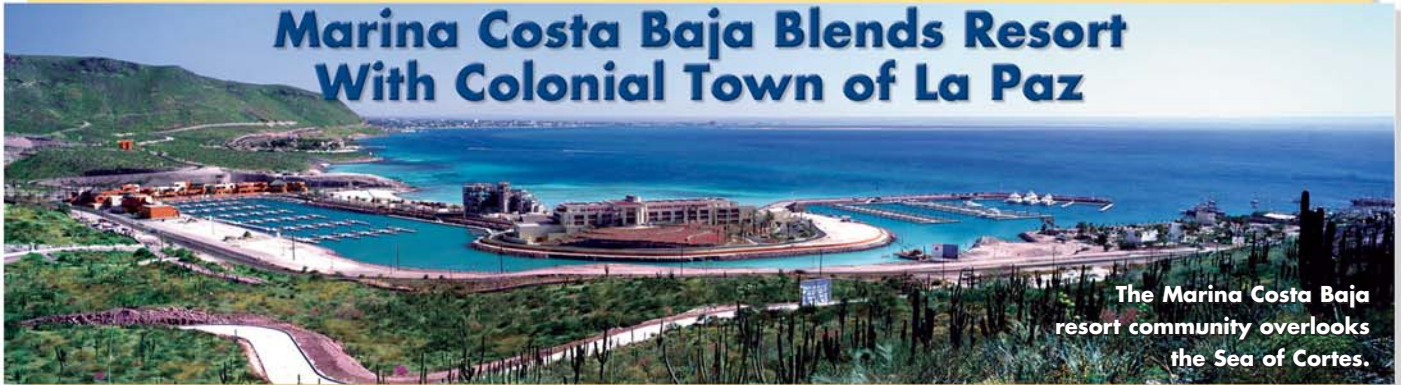


Marina Costa Baja Blends Resort With Colonial Town of La Paz



The Marina Costa Baja resort community overlooks the Sea of Cortes.

For those seeking seaside retirement with a bit of salsa, Marina Costa Baja is a new resort community in La Paz, Mexico. It's set on the sandy beaches of the lower Baja Peninsula fronting the blue waters of the Sea of Cortes.

"La Paz is a terrific area in a true Mexican cultural environment," says Jim Donahoe, senior vice president of Prudential California Realty Mexico Resort Properties. "Residents can live in a vibrant place with a very Mexican feel, yet have access to the health and educational services of a city of 300,000."

La Paz, which translates to "peace," is the capital of Baja California Sur. It's a laid-back colonial city in contrast to the bustling tourist scene of Cabo San Lucas, about 100 miles south. Long a favorite destination for sport fishing and boating, La Paz blends traditional Mexican culture with modern amenities. Residents will be within easy access of the city's four universities, quality hospitals, shopping centers, restaurants and airport. Its desert climate is among attractions drawing retirees here.

"It's only two and a half hours north

of Cabo, but light years away in pricing," says Donahoe of the area's affordability. "The property taxes here are low, and the cost of living even lower." Additionally, ownership of foreign property is now easier and more secure, with U.S.-based firms such as the Pacific Real Estate Group offering financing of Mexican real estate purchases with rates and terms comparable to U.S. mortgages.

Developed by Parque Reforma, Marina Costa Baja is located 10 minutes outside town. The 500-acre resort opened in early 2005 and pre-sales on a new phase of one-, two- and three-bedroom beachfront villas and condos will begin this spring. Floor plan sizes range from 1,200 to 2,800 square feet and prices go from \$350,000 to \$1.5 million.

The all-ages community is projected to have more than 1,000 homes at completion, including condos, villas and single-family residences. Plans for a third phase of single-family homes and home sites are in the works, but the release date had not been determined at press time.

The centerpiece of Marina Costa Baja is its 250-slip double-basin mari-

na, accommodating boats from cruisers to megayachts. Residents can stroll through the surrounding marina village featuring distinctive shops, a museum, art galleries, restaurants, cafes and a grocery store. There is also an American medical clinic, and outfitters offer boat rentals and sport-fishing and diving excursions. Both the marina and Sea of Cortes have abundant water sports such as snorkeling, kayaking and wind surfing.

The resort also has a miniature golf course and a rock-climbing wall. The new 120-room Fiesta Inn has amenities for residents, including an "infinity" pool engineered to look as if it extends to the horizon. Residents can work out in the hotel's well-equipped fitness center with lap pool or surf the Internet in the business center, which has computers for guest use.

Construction has begun on a beachfront amphitheater, which will host open-air concerts and other special events. A resort beach club, luxury spa and extensive trail system also are planned for the future.

For more information, call (866) 207-4612 or visit www.marinacostabaja.com. — *Katie Solar*

The community has a village of shops and waterfront villas and condos.



MICHAEL CALDERWOOD PHOTOS