

# THE PALISADES

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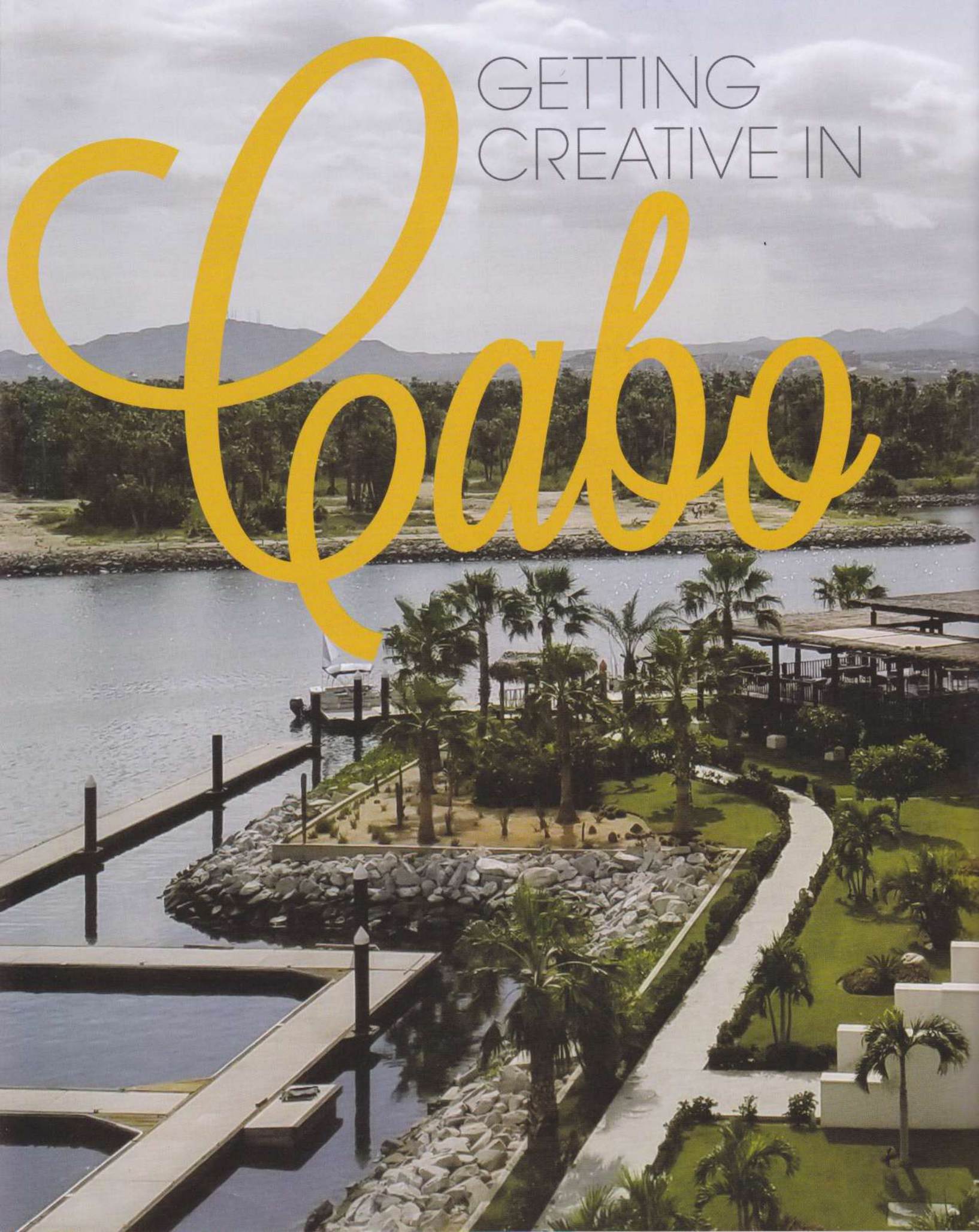
## PREMIERE ISSUE

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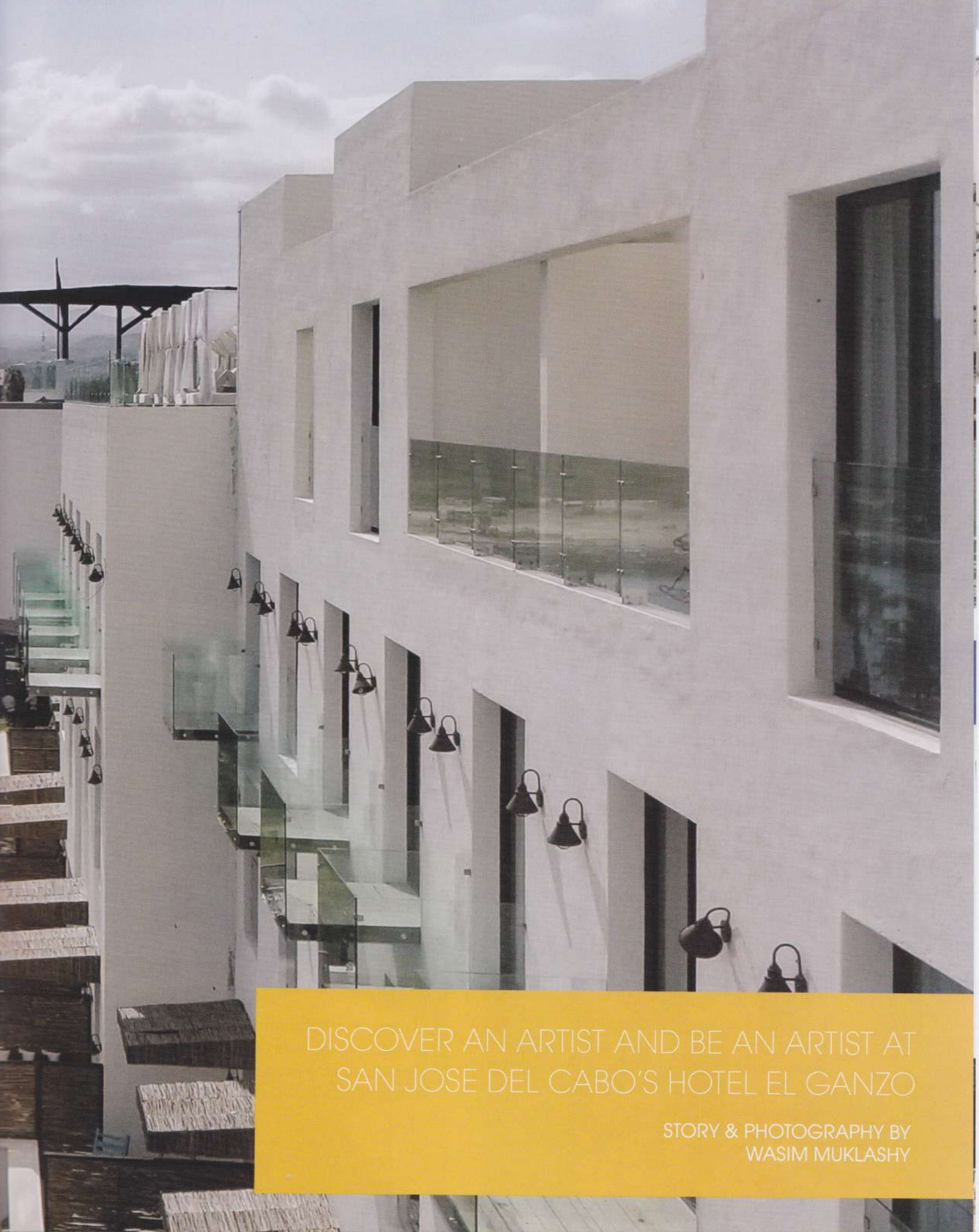


GETTING  
CREATIVE IN

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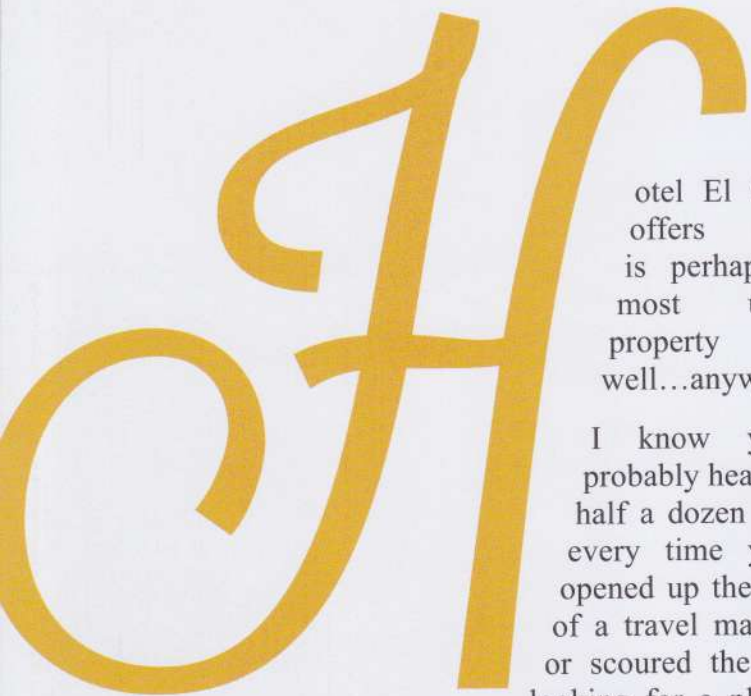




DISCOVER AN ARTIST AND BE AN ARTIST AT  
SAN JOSE DEL CABO'S HOTEL EL GANZO

STORY & PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
WASIM MUKLASHY





Hotel El Ganzo offers what is perhaps the most unique property in... well...anywhere.

I know you've probably heard that half a dozen times, every time you've opened up the pages of a travel magazine or scoured the blogs looking for a place to

vacation, but let me know

if you can think of another property that has its own underground recording studio where the likes of Thievery Corporation, Slash and Telefunke have laid down tracks. Or another property that has an enormous storm trooper watching over you as you marinate in an infinity pool overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Or a property that has its own bike path where you can ride free beach cruisers to a private beach club and then return to the hotel by boat. Or any other resort that has a signature artist-in-residency program, where they invite artists to stay on the property, covering the spectrum from vibrant street art to contemporary minimalistic gallery art, draw inspiration from their stay on the property, and then actually draw that inspiration on the walls of the property, well, then you have me beat.

I recently had a chance to spend a week shooting 360° virtual reality video at Hotel El Ganzo with Superswell VR, the virtual reality production company I founded along with travel influencer Joan Jetsetter, which offered us an intimate look and experience that cemented our suspicion that this is no ordinary

Baja resort, and this no ordinary Baja resort comes with no ordinary story.

Located in the rapidly, but carefully, growing San Jose del Cabo in the Cabo Municipality on the Baja Peninsula of Mexico, don't for a minute conjure up images of tequila soaked, frat-culture-laced, Cabo Wabo'd San Lucas or any of that tourist-laden, overhyped, overpriced nonsense.

San Jose del Cabo is the quieter, headier and chilled out brother across the peninsula.

Resting on its own idyllic slice of the Puerto Los Cabos marina, El Ganzo's owner and founder, Mr. Pablo Sanchez Navarro, "wanted to create a hotel that would become an epicenter for the cultural arts," explains Senior Sales Manager

Miriam Reuter. With an artist in residency program that brings new artists, from visual to musical, to the property every year, "Hotel El Ganzo is a hotel that is always evolving and constantly changing."

This is very much the essence of the resort, which was cemented after Hurricane Odile in September 2014. Odile left most of the peninsula in ruins.

The region's infrastructure, not to mention many of the resorts, are still to this day, struggling to recover. As far as Hotel El Ganzo, "it took us 14 months to reopen the doors on November 1, 2015," Miriam recalls. "The strong winds we experienced over almost 24 hours, and of course the rain, damaged the whole hotel and left us to our bare bones."

During the rebuilding process, they chose to incorporate aspects of Odile the into the character of the property by paying homage to Mother Nature through the work of its artists.

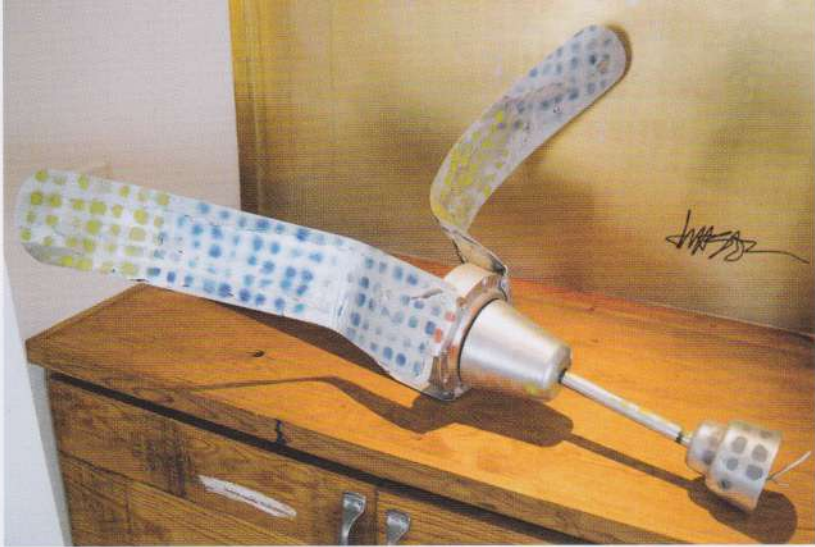
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A WORK OF ART  
ITSELF, HOTEL  
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LOS CABOS.







**ABOVE:** "THE SURVIVOR FAN" A ONCE FUNCTIONAL ACCESSORY THAT SURVIVED HURRICANE ODILE, HAS BEEN TURNED INTO A WORK OF ART BY ARTIST AND FORMER NBA PLAYER DESMOND MASON



**LEFT:** MORE OF MASON'S WORK IN THE FORM OF A MIXED MEDIA PIECE COMBINING PHOTOGRAPHY AND PAINTS.

**BELOW:** "GEOMETRIC FURNITURE" BY MASON



A perfect example lies in the story of artist Desmond Mason.

You may know Desmond Mason as the NBA player and former slam dunk champion, but before, and after his NBA career, apparently he was always an artist at heart. A story I did not know until visiting El Ganzo.

"Desmond first visited El Ganzo in 2014 and during his stay, he stayed in Suite 403," explains Reuter. "When Hurricane Odile hit and devastated the hotel, consequently, it destroyed Suite 403 and the art." Shortly after their reopening, the 'artist' Desmond Mason came back, anxious to stay in the same suite.

During his stay, he created several pieces decorating the room, perhaps most notably, he took one of the ceiling fans that hung in the suite and was destroyed during Hurricane Odile, and transformed it in a piece of art that now adorns one side of the room

He is also the artist behind the signature orange crown that greets visitors as they pull up to the front of the hotel and one of the artists, along with Jimena Montemeyer, that decorated the fountain that sits at the epicenter of the hotel.

The artists they feature come from across the spectrum of artistic disciplines. There are pieces by pencil, stencil, Sharpie (you read that right...you'd be amazed at what people can do with a Sharpie!), oils, spray paint, string and toys.

Yeah...toys.

One of the more elaborate sets, which not everyone gets to see, is suite 300. The hotel's largest suite, replete with its own gym that was decorated by Pedro Reyes, "one of the most important Mexican contemporary artists," Miriam tells us.

While staying in the suite, "he decided to use one of the first materials that mankind used to express themselves through art: charcoal." Reyes decided his theme for the suite, which the property insisted we occupy during our stay to help inspire our own creativity would be





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philosophers, both ancient and contemporary, so you’ll see charcoal drawings of everyone from Socrates to Noam Chomsky.

While some of the art is indeed located in the private rooms, that aspect makes it more of a draw to return to Hotel El Ganzo. For each time you come, you can be treated to a new experience. If you’d like a sample of the various rooms, you can check out images on their website, [www.ElGanzo.com](http://www.ElGanzo.com), or the exclusive access 360° virtual reality Superswell VR tour. However, even without seeing every single one of the rooms, fear not, for there is no shortage of creative inspiration, as the artists have been encouraged to use the walls all over the community areas of the resort as their canvas as well.

Furthermore, the art isn’t reserved solely for the ‘artists,’ but extends to the creative side

of willing guests as well. “One of the best opportunities to get involved is during the class our visual artists give at El Ganzo Community Center,” explains Miriam. “During their stay, the artists give classes for the children of the community of La Playa in which our guests are invited to participate.”

“In the end, it reflects Pablo’s vision to create a feeling of community, where guests experience something unique and different every time they come back to El Ganzo.”

On top of it all, Hotel El Ganzo places an extreme emphasis on sustainability. From heating their rooftop pool using solar power, to using a cactus-based laundry detergent that saves almost 80% of water and 60% of electricity usage, sustainability is embedded in the DNA of El Ganzo. They also have a robust compost system, growing much of their own

**ABOVE:** THE VIEW FROM ONE OF EL GANZO’S GUEST SUITES.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** SUITE 300 NOT ONLY COMES WITH A PERFECTLY MINIMALIST VIBE COURTESY OF ARTIST PEDRO REYES, BUT ALSO ITS OWN GYM.





## THE ARTISTS THEY FEATURE COME FROM ACROSS THE SPECTRUM OF ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES.

food on the grounds, while the rest being sourced from local farms and suppliers. They provide their guests with refillable insulated water bottles that they can use and fill around the resort, eliminating the use of plastic water bottles. Furthermore, Hotel El Ganzo is a Platinum member of CREST, a policy-oriented NGO research organization dedicated to increasing the positive global impact of responsible tourism.

To find out more about Hotel El Ganzo, visit their website, [www.ElGanzo.com](http://www.ElGanzo.com), and to experience the 360° virtual reality videos we produced, keep an eye on [www.SuperswellVR.com](http://www.SuperswellVR.com) towards the end of November 📺

**CLOCKWISE FROM  
LEFT:** ARTIST JIMENA  
MONTEMEYER REFLECTS

AN ARTFUL BATHROOM  
BASIN, ALSO BY  
MONTEMEYER

STORMTROOPER KEEPS  
WATCH OVER GUESTS  
AT EL GANZO'S INFINITY  
POOL

MORE OF DESMOND  
MASON'S IMPRINT UPON  
THE WALLS OF EL GANZO