



## FORECAST FOR FISHING AND GOLF GALORE...IN LOS CABOS!

*Victor Mena is the Managing Director and principal owner of Cabo Traveler Advisors (CTA), with a 30-year career in the hotel industry. He started as a hotel bellman, passing by the positions of the desk clerk, front office manager, rooms division manager and operations manager. In 1996, he arrived to Los Cabos as the Sales and Marketing Director at the Westin Regina. In 1998 he materialized his dream by opening CTA a destination management company that merge with his own personal values: strong work ethic and commitment to service.*

### **What are some of the unique features of your destination and your facility?**

Los Cabos is composed of three towns – San Jose del Cabo, Cabo San Lucas and Cabo del Este – and is located in the Sea of Cortez, which was discovered by Jaques Cousteau and called the aquarium of the world since 38 percent of the sea life in the ocean is in the Sea of Cortez. Los Cabos is well recognized as a high-end destination for fishing and golfing amongst celebrities and the wealthy of California. All properties in Cabo touting the five-star status will undoubtedly have a very unique spa for luxurious relaxation. Other destinations are working hard to achieve the qualities and standards that Los Cabos has set. The weather is where the ocean and the sea meet, with 75-degree temperature all year round. In the winter, there are fresh mornings and nights with very few rainy days. Outdoor events can be held with almost guaranteed beautiful conditions. This is very important for attracting golfers, fishers and parties holding night events on the beach. Tropical destinations have a very high probability of rain, but it's almost a non-issue in Cabo. The average year has 350 sunny days!

### **What are the most important factors that influence the attendance of an event at your facility?**

When you come to a hotel, you expect the staff to take care of everything that goes on within the hotel – including rooms, food and beverage. On the other hand, a destination management company (DMC) takes care of everything that happens outside of the hotel – starting at the airport. All of the logistics, events, transportation, activities and theme parties are done by a DMC. We put the program together for our clients, including high-end individual or group programs. For example, if we have a couple staying in a beautiful residence, we get their itinerary and approval, and customize their experience down to the groceries they prefer, allergies and foods they should avoid, and what type of pillows they would like. Every detail will be covered, down to their confidentiality preferences, and we make sure we take care of these things with the utmost level of service.

For a group program of 20 people or more (up to a group numbered in the thousands), the first thing you need to know is what the profile of the client looks like: What are the goals the client would like to achieve? Is it an incentive? Is it a meeting? At the time will they leave Los Cabos? What should they have achieved in order to make it a successful event? We play a very important role to put all of the logistics and all of the planning together. We need to know about the client from their history to the reasons why they are coming to Los Cabos. This is where the creativity of our DMC comes into play. We are very well-known because we created the most popular night event which takes place in Cabo, called the Night on

the Desert. We created this activity at the request of a client who said they wanted a unique event. If there is a client who wants to do something Mexican but different from a Mexican fiesta, we offer a hacienda night, which is considered the high-end Mexican fiesta. There are exhibitions with high-end Mexican cuisine made by a chef who really knows how to put the top presentation together which competes with international food. These are the unique things that we do.

We solve problems regardless of how big they may seem. If there is a client that says their plane is arriving at 3 a.m., there is no problem. We make the arrangements and make sure that they know how everything is going to work. We ensure that they are where they want to be. If there is a restaurant that needs to be open, we make sure of that. We really care for our clients. We don't do volume, we do quality and this is what we call creating experiences for our clients.

**What role does guest services play in event coordination and how does management ensure that all of your guests are satisfied with the scheduled events at the facility?**

Guest services plays a very important role because a group program must start with a site inspection. We customize the experience for their satisfaction. We distinguish the difference based on the experience they are looking for. We surpass clients' expectations when they come expecting nothing but the best. Sometimes the client that arrives at the most luxurious and most expensive hotel in the area wants the simplest service, in search of the real flavor of Mexico. Celebrities don't want to come to Cabo and have French food; they can go to France for that. It is very important that a client comes and sees what we can offer. If we are servicing a couple, it is totally different; we send them photographs, menus, and proposals offering them options, and they can make the decision based on what they want it to be. It is very important that clients know in specific detail what they can expect.

How do we make sure that our customers are satisfied? We offer 24/7 services for all of our clients when they are here. We make sure everything we promise is delivered as promised. Due to challenges and last minute requests that might arise, we make ourselves available around the clock. Rain is not a problem in Cabo, but if it does rain, we must have backup plans ready. We go above and beyond to make sure the client is satisfied, and also gather feedback at the end of the event. Sometimes clients will give us extraordinary ideas for events because they have been all over. They have seen many things that can work, and from there we start to create these things. What you want to make sure is that the client returns to Mexico, but particularly to Cabo.

**How does your organization accommodate any language barrier between visitors and your staff?**

Language barriers do not stand in the way of tourism in Mexico today. Hotels and DMCs all have bilingual staff accommodating Spanish and English. There is no one that works in my company that cannot write or speak English, because 95 percent of the business in Cabo is from the U.S. We even have a few people on staff who speak French or Italian since we do have a multicultural family. In the event that a visitor comes to our facilities and we do not have someone available who speaks the language, we hire someone to communicate between the client and ourselves. Fortunately, most world travelers speak English – even Chinese and Japanese clients speak English – so we make sure all of our staff knows the English language.

**What are some of the most popular business amenities that visitors to your facility can enjoy?**

Los Cabos is world-renowned for its prestigious golf courses. We have Cabo Del Sol golf course which is ranked 68th in the world and designed by Jack Nicklaus. Also we have the Palmilla golf course which is also designed by Jack Nicklaus. Los Cabos was the first beachfront destination to concentrate on golf. Cancun is now bringing golf courses into their area, but it is hard to compete with Cabo, since the weather in Cabo provides perfect golfing conditions. As long as there is no rain, it means you can play.

We also have one of the biggest fishing events in the world, called Bisbee's, which takes place every November. You will see up to 400 boats anchored in the Sea of Cortez at the same time. Also, the biggest gray whale reserve is located in Cabo. You can be drinking a cup of coffee at your hotel and look out your window to see the whales jumping and splashing in the water. They come to give birth and arrive in late December and leave in late March. To see the male protect the female during birth is an amazing thing to behold and is a memory of a lifetime.



There are three boutique properties that are ranked in the top three in the world. Celebrities have been going to residential getaways for privacy and to avoid paparazzi. All of these properties come with a spa, which is becoming very trendy these days, and as a result, Los Cabos has stayed one step ahead of the others.

**How would you say the Baja region has evolved over the past decade?**

Three years ago, Loreto only had one hotel and there were no international flights flying into the city. Today, Loreto has a \$2.5 billion investment to build boutique and commercial hotels. This has all happened as a result of a plan devised three years ago that is now becoming a reality. It is not only Los Cabos that is booming; you can see it in any magazine article on Baja that the city is obviously booming.

**How does your company aim to satisfy both the pleasure and the business demands of your visitors?**

We are in constant communication with our clients to put logistics and the program and itinerary together. Everything is prearranged and customized and put in writing so that communication is crystal clear. There is a tight schedule that is followed strictly. Should any changes or alterations arise, it is communicated immediately so that we can ensure that we are up to date and everyone is aware of the changes.

**What are the most popular places that people are traveling from to Los Cabos?**

Traditionally, most visitors to Los Cabos come from California due to their proximity to Los Cabos. After California, most visitors come from Texas, Nevada, Colorado, Chicago, New York and Atlanta. Individual travelers are mostly from California, but when it comes to a group program, they come from all over the U.S. There is a need for a very well communicated commercial airline to get to Los Cabos. Los Cabos is very well connected to several cities in the U.S., and if you get the statistics from commercial airlines, you will see that Los Cabos is one of the top destinations. Los Cabos is the number one destination on Alaskan Airlines. Los Cabos has the busiest private airport in the country after Toluca at the state of Mexico. Going to a destination is not about price; it is about service and price value.