

Backgrounder

<p>About</p>	<p>Playa Viva is a sustainable resort and residence community under development on 200 acres of ocean-front property, just 30 minutes south of the Zihuatanejo/Ixtapa International Airport (ZIH) on the Pacific Coast of Mexico, in the State of Guerrero.</p> <p>Phase 1 includes 10 <i>casitas</i>, which are individual suites of one, two or three bedrooms with bathroom, and full porches for living and dining space. These casitas are designed as treehouses with living coconut palms serving as the piers. Beautiful natural and environmentally friendly products are used throughout the construction.</p> <p>The Master Plan for Playa Viva includes up to 60 casitas, 13 lots for homes, town square and boutique hotel with up to 120 rooms plus additional infrastructure for energy, water, activities and operations.</p> <p>Playa Viva aims to set a new standard for environmental excellence: We recognize the deep interconnectedness between the health of the greater community, the health of the land, air and water, and the overall well being and enjoyment of our guests. Playa Viva is therefore designed to revitalize and nurture the land it's built on and the surrounding community.</p>
<p>Natural Capital</p>	<p>Playa Viva is situated on sprawling terrain replete with beaches, a private nature preserve, turtle sanctuary, ancient ruins, and a natural estuary that is home to over 200 species of exotic birds, making the resort one of the most vibrant and beautiful natural vacation destinations.</p>
<p>Facilities and Amenities - Luxury With a Sustainable Authenticity</p>	<p>Playa Viva sets a new standard for eco-resort hospitality, providing access to design, amenities and personalized service expected from a five-star luxury resort but with an environmental consciousness found no where else.</p>

	<p>Facilities and amenities include: on-site concierge service, valet, 24-hour front desk, in-residence dining and room service, daily maid service, airport transportation, personal year-round storage, a world-class spa, state-of-the-art fitness center, yoga classes, multiple pools, and Jacuzzis, exquisite seaside restaurants and one very well-stocked wine cellar.</p>
Recreation – Acres of Options	<p>From the serene to the sublime, Playa Viva's 200 acre property offers much to see and do. Enjoy a morning of yoga or meditation followed by an afternoon of surfing or horseback riding along the beach, deep sea fishing or test your agility at our private ropes course.</p>
Development Timeline	<p>Ground breaking – December 2007</p> <p>Phase I Completion – November 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 Casitas • Beach club • Pool • Restaurant • Bar • Recreation Room • Nature Center • Operations Facilities <p>Master Plan Completion – February 2010</p>
Team	<p>Play Viva is created by a team of award-winning environmentalists, with a strong background in ecological hospitality. The project is headed by the husband and wife team of David Leventhal and Sandra Kahn, developers of Casa Viva Troncones, a popular B&B located 30 minutes north of Zihuatanejo and Rainforest2Reef, a group protecting over 350,000 acres of jaguar habitat in Mexico's Yucatan peninsula.</p>

Additional Background Information:

Location

Juluchuca is nestled between the drama and beauty of the Sierra Madres and the sparkling waters of the Pacific Ocean. This unique location's proximity to these natural wonders provides easy access to a host of activities -- from hiking to surfing, scuba diving or deep-sea fishing to bird watching, and kayaking.

Climate

Playa Viva enjoys a year-round semi-tropical climate with approximately 300 sunny days a year and temperatures ranging from 23 to 33 degrees Celsius (73 to 93 degrees Fahrenheit). The rainy season lasts from late July through to late September or early October, with an average rainfall of 300 millimeters (12 inches) per month. During the rainy season, the surrounding countryside comes alive with verdant grasses and fragrant blossoms and Juluchuca transforms as this semi-arid zone becomes a tropical forest.

Private Reserve

Playa Viva offers an unrivaled opportunity to enjoy the unspoiled natural beauty of Mexico. Here, you can experience first hand the fascinating relationships between the insects, birds, mammals and flowering plants of this diverse ecosystem.

Playa Viva has set aside almost 160 acres, close to 80% of all the total available land, as a private nature reserve. Playa Viva's permaculture experts have located the last remaining virgin forests in the region not destroyed during the agricultural transition of the 1930's and are developing a nursery from this unique seed bank to reforest Playa Viva with native species.

Turtle Sanctuary

Each year thousands of Green (Golfina) Turtles and tens of endangered Leatherback (Laud) Turtles come to the shores of Playa Viva to lay their eggs. The turtles come to nest year round, with egg laying peaking during the rainy season, between May and September.

These fascinating creatures have varied little in their millennia of existence, surviving many geological and climate changes. However, over the past 50 years of commercial exploitation and degradation of nesting and foraging habitats, most species of marine turtle have been placed on the endangered species list.

Playa Viva's "La Tortuga Feliz" turtle sanctuary was founded by the residents of neighboring Juluchuca in order to protect turtles from predators and poachers alike. In 2006, La Tortuga Feliz was able to protect over 2000 nests that resulted in the release of over 100,000 baby turtles. In 2007, with the assistance of Playa Viva team, La Tortuga Feliz has increased this number by 30%.

Archeological Site

Early in the design process, we made a remarkable discovery -- an archeological site within the property boundaries of Playa Viva. The team archeologist determined that the ruins belonged to the Xolochiuhyan at the time of the Aztec empire.

Ocean

Playa Viva has over 1.2 kilometers, close to three-quarters of a mile of beach front. In addition to the sea turtles that come to our shores to lay their eggs, the ocean is teeming with life. Depending on the season, it's not uncommon to spot breaching whales or dolphins playing in the surf.

Sustainable by Design

While some hospitality brands/resorts call themselves green just for asking guests to take it easy on the towel turnover, Playa Viva aims to set a new standard for environmental excellence: We recognize the deep interconnectedness between the health of the greater community, the health of the land, air and water, and the overall well being and enjoyment of our guests. Playa Viva is designed to revitalize and nurture the land it's built on and the community it's surrounded by. All aspects of resort operations are designed to not only be low-impact but also regenerative: Our stewardship will actually improve the land, water and air quality in and around our space, and for the entire community. Construction and maintenance at Playa Viva will be certified according to the LEED standard, the nationally-accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high-performance green buildings (LEED is Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design; see www.usgbc.org for more information).

Reliance on non-biocompatible products will be minimal, and a comprehensive recycling program will reduce our waste production. Organic and permaculture gardens will provide locally-grown food products to nourish our guests while at the same time increasing our self reliance. Solar energy generated at Playa Viva will provide our energy needs, with excess 'green' power sold back to the local utility. And we will continue to support the conservancy-driven turtle sanctuary on our property.

Community Development

We are currently developing educational and recycling programs for the neighboring town of Juluchuca and beyond to eliminate the harmful burning of trash, including plastic bottles. Playa Viva is also developing an organic Community Supported Agriculture program that will provide healthy and wholesome food for the community as well as livelihood for local farmers, and will also minimize or remove reliance on harmful pesticide use that would otherwise contaminate the water table. We continue to financially support the Turtle Sanctuary on our property, and are committing 1% of our revenue to a local community fund.

Permaculture

Playa Viva is taking particular care to ensure our landscaping is harmonious, regenerative and aligned with the principles of permaculture. Landscaping elements include:

- Drought-tolerant, water-efficient landscaping
- Permaculture and bio-intensive gardens
- Reintroducing native species wherever possible
- Landscaping consistent with natural landforms

Water

As Playa Viva is at the base of the watershed and adjacent to the estuary, water is plentiful for Playa Viva. However, Playa Viva is taking steps to conserve and protect this important natural resource. We working with Michael Ogden, the founding director and principal engineer for NSI, a firm that provides specialized engineering services in the area of low cost, energy efficient natural systems for the treatment of sewage, using the natural ecologies of ponds (wastewater lagoons), marshes (constructed wetlands), prairies, grasslands, woodlands and forests.

Michael and his team are working with Dr. Gerardo Ceballos, Playa Viva's team biologist, to design a constructed wetland system that not only treats all of the grey and black water from Playa Viva resort and facilities, but uses that same water to restore damaged wetlands and to support and regenerate deteriorated ecosystems.

Beyond access and treatment of water, Playa Viva has put in place several smart water conservation measures including:

- The use of low-flow sink faucets and dual flush toilets, which save thousands of gallons of water per room each year
- Drought-tolerant, water-efficient landscaping.

- All waste water will be treated with constructed wetlands, a minimally energy-intensive system that relies on indigenous plants and soil to purify wastewater to near drinking water quality. This extremely safe and proven technology is becoming an accepted standard in the United States. Reclaimed water will be used to recharge toilets as well as for irrigation.

Energy

We reduce greenhouse gas emissions by:

- Being net-energy neutral: Playa Viva will produce all of its electrical energy using photovoltaic panels. Being connected to the municipal electrical power grid will allow us to sell excess power back to the grid during normal sunlight hours, and buy back power at night, thereby using the grid as our virtual battery. In this way we remain net energy neutral without relying on expensive, toxic and unreliable batteries.
- All hot water is provided using passive solar heating techniques.
- Using energy efficient lighting and Energy Star-rated appliances throughout, as well as occupancy sensors and lighting control systems to minimize energy use while providing a comfortable environment.
- Purchasing green tags/energy certificates.
- Providing waste management via guest room recycling, "back-of-the-house" recycling, and eco-friendly hotel cleaning products.
- Producing our own biodiesel from locally available coconut palm oil to power a small fleet of biodiesel cars, trucks and/or tractors.
- Providing an optional towel and linen exchange program.
- Designing buildings that enhance natural day lighting and air flow.

Materials

Playa Viva is being created with a judicious and creative use of materials.

- New woods harvested from local palm tree groves and sustainably-managed forests.
- Use of recycled, salvaged and local building materials.
- Eco-friendly materials throughout, including recycled content carpets and low-VOC paints for improved indoor air quality.
- Furniture created by local artisans using the "leftover" wood from the bungalow construction.
- Recycle up to 75% of construction waste, diverting it from landfills.

The landscape which was once coastal forest was destroyed by slash and burn agriculture, and replaced by coconut groves. Playa Viva is committed to restoring 80% of our land to coastal forest and wetland, bringing back mangroves, beautiful hardwood trees and a variety of indigenous flora and fauna. We are working to create clean energy, clean water and building with sustainable, local materials.