

Hotel Marina El Cid Spa & Beach Resort Opens Phase Two Features New Suites, Convention Center, Spa

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Hotel Marina El Cid Spa & Beach Resort announced today the completion of a \$50-million expansion, with the opening of 150 new luxury suites, gourmet restaurant, 13,000-square-foot Maya-inspired spa, beachfront bar and state-of-the-art convention center.

The 342-room Hotel Marina El Cid is located midway, or 15 minutes, from the Cancun International Airport and the chic shops and restaurants of Playa del Carmen. Spanning 617 acres, the deluxe all-inclusive resort is set along 1,969 feet of beachfront on Mexico's Riviera Maya on the Yucatan Peninsula. Junior, one-, two- and three-bedroom suites are dispersed in 11 low-rise buildings overlooking a magnificent, 22,000 square-foot, freeform pool. Along with the new convention center and spa, Hotel Marina El Cid has four restaurants, four bars, 120-slip private marina, business center and comprehensive activities program.

SUITE ESCAPE

Like the entire resort, the new junior suites mix Mexican Colonial and contemporary architectural design. Each 586-square-foot suite is elegantly appointed with dark wood furnishings, granite countertops and brushed stainless steel accents. Sliding glass doors open onto an expansive private terrace with Jacuzzi and vibrant tropical gardens or the Caribbean Sea just beyond.

Designed for couples and young families, each suite includes a king bed, Murphy bed and kitchenette with stove and microwave oven. Oversized baths feature marble floors and walls as well as a large shower with comfort bench. Other in-room amenities include luxury bedding and linens, wireless Internet access, satellite TV, air conditioning and a mini-bar stocked with snacks and cold beverages. For easy meals and late-night treats, room service is available 24 hours daily.

To accommodate larger groups and families, Hotel Marina El Cid offers luxurious 2,397 square-foot, three-bedroom suites. One- and two-bedroom suites also are available, spanning 1,108 - 1,873 square feet respectively. Every two- and three-bedroom suite includes a spacious living and dining area, fully equipped kitchen, wireless Internet access, television in each bedroom plus a 42-inch plasma TV in the living room, and private terrace with Jacuzzi.

CREATIVE NEW CUISINE

Serving gourmet Mexican cuisine, the newly expanded Hacienda Arrecife celebrates the traditional hacienda in grand style with bright fuchsia walls and colorful, hand-painted, original Mexican art and handcrafts. The expansion doubles the poolside restaurant's occupancy to 220. Beneath soaring, 20-foot ceilings, diners sample fresh local cuisine. A new buffet and freshly prepared, a-la-minuta bars serve healthy breakfasts and international luncheon fare. Gourmet dinners are available a la carte accompanied by a selection of more than 100 different tequilas.

At the new Scaramanga Moon & Beach Lounge, guests enjoy cocktails and carpaccios on the resort's white, sandy shores. Scaramanga is as unique as its name. The outdoor lounge serves brunch, starting daily at noon, from ice-filled, wooden buffets, hand-carved in the shape of canoes. The inventive menu features fresh fruits, tropical drinks, and ceviches, made from a savory assortment of fish and pico de gallo salsa. Guests linger all afternoon and into the early morning, dancing under the stars or relaxing in hammocks and Bali beds, while taking in the cool ocean breezes, live music and convivial atmosphere.

With four restaurants, Marina Hotel El Cid offers an array of dining options, from casual to gourmet. El Alcázar is a favorite for romantic dinners and special occasions. Located off the lobby, this fusion gourmet restaurant boasts elegant, minimalist décor. Diners enjoy a creative blend of Asian and Mediterranean cuisine. Oenophiles sniff, swirl and swallow, choosing from more than 50 different wines, including classics and emerging labels from around the globe. La Marina serves up fresh seafood and stunning sunset views overlooking the turquoise waters of Puerto Morelos Bay. Situated on El Cid's private marina next to the resort, this intimate, open-air restaurant serves savory dinners. New in 2008 are daily a la carte lunch and dinner specialties infused with Mediterranean flair. Guests dine indoors or al fresco at the casual La Alhambra, adjacent to the lobby. A popular choice for families, this sun-drenched restaurant offers an expanded and ever-changing gourmet buffet and a-la-minute dishes to please all palates, from salads, sandwiches and pizza to sushi, chicken and roast beef.

Among the other food and beverage services: a martini bar with premium brands and live entertainment, gourmet coffee station and afternoon teatime, all in the lobby. Outdoors, guests enjoy a swim-up bar as well as beachside and poolside food and beverage service.

EL COCAY SPA

The new, oceanfront El Cocay Spa rejuvenates mind, body and spirit with massage techniques based on Maya legends. Both the treatments and décor reflect the Mayans reverence for Nature. Oils and lotions blend herbs, fruits, seeds, flowers and other organic ingredients to foster a lingering sense of wellbeing. El Cocay's decor features native stone floors and walls in soothingly muted hues. Oversized windows provide calming ocean views for guests indulging in Maya mud wraps, massages, mineral scrubs and facials.

The 13,000-square-foot spa offers one-of-a-kind treatments, 8:00 a.m. -- 8:00 p.m. daily. The revitalizing Tuunich Sacred Stones Massage, for instance, uses warm stones and special oils to restore vitality in keeping with Maya traditions. For total rejuvenation, guests opt for the 80-minute, four-hand Kukulcan Body Massage in the spa or in a private, beachfront Palapa hut. This therapy is a tribute to the Maya legend of the Great Quetzalcoatl, the leader who transformed himself into Kukulcan, the god Mayans worshiped for centuries. During the treatment, massage therapists interpret the walk of the jaguar, the movement of the snake and the flight of el cocay, the firefly, for total relaxation of the mind and body to let the spirit soar.

No Maya spa would be complete without the traditional Temazcal Sacred Bath, the ancient steam treatment to purify body and spirit. Located in the Zen Meditation Garden outside El Cocay Spa, the dome-shaped Temazcal seats up to eight people in a wood-paneled, circular room heated by volcanic stones. Guests relax to the gentle chant of drums and flute melodies, as a specially trained Shamán prepares a therapeutic blend of herbs, teas and scented waters to pour over the hot stones. The cleansing steam and soothing aromas stimulate circulation, accelerate metabolism and detox the body. Afterwards, guests take a refreshing dip in the plunge pool outside the Temazcal or refuel with fresh fruit, nuts, and an assortment of beverages available in El Cocay's relaxation lounge.

Rounding out the Maya-inspired rejuvenation, the spa houses a hair and nail salon, men's and women's hydrotherapy areas, and an oceanfront fitness center. The high-tech, air-conditioned gym offers the latest LifeFitness cardio equipment, including treadmills and rowing and step machines, as well as free weights, spinning area and yoga and tai-chi classes. El Cocay's boutique features original crafts and artwork by Maya tribes in nearby villages. Proceeds provide economic support to native communities, underscoring El Cid's commitment to preserving the region's culture.

CONVENTION CENTER

Located next to the spa, the new Hotel Marina El Cid Convention Center provides a dramatic setting for meetings, conventions, reunions and special events. The state-of-the-art Convention Center offers 7,500 square feet of flexible indoor function space. Its marble entry welcomes visitors through massive wooden doors in mahogany and bamboo hues. The expansive lobby has a private reception area and registration desk for convenient group check-in. Beneath its 16-foot ceiling, the Gran Salon provides a majestic setting for conferences, large executive dinners and celebrations, accommodating up to 400 people theater-style. For smaller gatherings, the Salon subdivides into six separate breakout rooms.

The Convention Center is equipped with the latest audio, video and computer technology, including high-speed, wireless Internet throughout. It offers first-class services and amenities, including state-of-the-art business center and full-service banquet facilities, providing customized menus and services to meet the needs of each event.

Additionally, Hotel Marina El Cid features 5,382 square feet of outdoor function space for informal meetings or intimate outdoor receptions against a backdrop of vibrant tropical gardens or the Caribbean Sea.

After a long day of meetings, attendees can unwind with a traditional Maya massage at El Cocay Spa or retreat to the oceanfront, adults-only day lounge with mega Jacuzzi, pool and plush mattresses surrounded by swaying palms. High-speed, wireless Internet is available in guestrooms, as well as in the hotel lobby and the pool area. Entertainment, tours and planned group activities make for meetings, reunions and incentive trips to remember.

CULTURAL, ECO EXCURSIONS, ACTIVITIES

Situated in the heart of Riviera Maya in the bohemian town of Puerto Morelos, Hotel Marina El Cid puts cultural and ecological wonders within easy reach. Less than 500 yards offshore lays the protected Puerto Morelos National Reef Park, home to the world's second largest reef system. The on-site Pronotours, El Cid Resorts' official travel and tour company, takes guests on diving and snorkeling trips through clear turquoise waters for up-close views of exotic sea life, including brightly colored fish, sea turtles, stingrays, purple sea fans and coral.

For cultural excursions, Pronotours' bilingual guides take guest to the ancient Maya temple of Chichen Itza, recently named one of the new wonders of the world. Another tour goes to the Maya pyramids of Tulum. Dating from 564 A.D., the walled city is one of the best-preserved coastal Maya sites.

At Xcaret Ecological Theme Park, guests enjoy colorful botanical gardens and jungle preserves, home to jaguars, spider monkeys, toucans and other rare, native wildlife. Among the activities here: dolphin swims, zip-line canopy tours, diving and snorkeling in water-filled caves called cenotes, horseback riding, hiking and biking. A Maya village recreates the daily life and traditions of the ancient Yucutan inhabitants, while a nighttime spectacular in the Grand Tlachco theater features folkloric dancing, musical performances and pre-Hispanic ball games.

Travelers find myriad diversions in and around Hotel Marina El Cid too. Most activities take place around the 22,000-square-foot pool with waterfall, children's area with slide, in-water lounge chairs and swim-up bar. From guestrooms or the lobby, the beach is within a few minutes' walk. Besides soaking up the sun and playing beach volleyball, guests enjoy a variety of water sports. Boogie boards, hobby cats and paddleboats are available on-site. From the resort's state-of-the-art marina, guests arrange deep-sea fishing expeditions, bay cruises, snorkeling and diving tours, and catamaran excursions to the pristine shores of Playa Maroma.

Hotel Marina El Cid's comprehensive Kid's Club offers such supervised activities daily as snorkeling lessons, Spanish and Mexican cooking classes, Mexican games and more. The teen program features supervised trips to Cancun's popular nightspots as well as windsurfing lessons, kayaking tours and bike trips to Puerto Morelos, a charming fishing village and home to artisans and merchants selling local foods and handmade goods at weekly markets and craft fairs. Activities change bi-weekly for added variety. There are babysitting services too and even a doctor on call.

For more information on Hotel Marina El Cid Spa & Beach Resort, visit the Web site www.elcid.com. For reservations, call toll-free 1-800-525-1925 or 1-888-733-7308.

About El Cid Resorts

The Hotel Marina El Cid Resort & Spa is one of six hotels owned and operated by El Cid Resorts. Four hotels are located in Mazatlan along with a 27-hole championship golf course, full-service marina, and a destination management company. Another hotel, El Cid La Ceiba Beach Hotel, is in Cozumel. El Cid also owns and operates construction and real estate companies affiliated with Century 21.

For more information, contact Sharlet Brennan or Noel Perkins, YPartnership, 407-875-1111 or Sharlet.Brennan@ypartnership.com, noel.perkins@ypartnership.com

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