



**Los Arcos
(The Arches)
on the malecón**



**Looking towards
the gay beach
and Blue Chairs**

PUERTO VALLARTA

Ransack your unconscious for scenes and smells of the Garden of Eden. That's what you feel find arriving in the seaside resort of Puerto Vallarta. Once an isolated fishing village set against the backdrop of the lush Sierra Madres mountains, Puerto Vallarta is now one of the top gay vacation destinations in Mexico. Once you set foot in the warm waters of Banderas Bay, you'll never want to leave.

Corey Giles

the world first took notice of Puerto Vallarta in the mid-1960s when director John Huston filmed *Night of the Iguana* here. Burton was having a much-publicized affair with Elizabeth Taylor, and the paparazzi put the spotlight on Puerto Vallarta. Burton and Taylor fell in love with the then-isolated town. To this day you can tour their house, Casa Kimberley.

In the last 20 years gay travelers have come to know and love Puerto Vallarta as well. The gay area of town is known as Zona Romantica, on the south end, and is the oldest, quaintest part of the city. Here you'll find most of the gay-owned-and-operated business. Guys walking hand-in-hand is common, and rainbow flags welcome visitors.

Accommodations

The Zona Romantica and nearby areas offer plenty of great places to stay. Many gay travelers find these areas preferable to the new parts of the city to the north. There, in the hotel district and Marina Vallarta, big cookie-cutter resort hotels predominate. The Zona Romantica offers a number of well-appointed boutique hotels, B&Bs, and condominium-style lodgings. Most are gay friendly, and there are many that cater specifically to gay tourists.

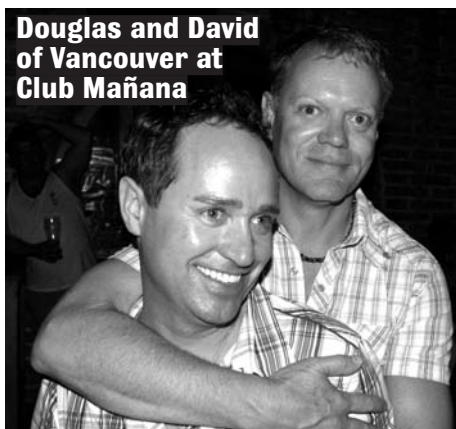
Boana Torre-Malibu (Amapas 325, +52-322-222-0999) is just a short walk from the gay beach in the Zona Romantica. Each attractive unit has a bedroom, two baths, a kitchen, and salon with balcony facing Banderas Bay. This is the "straight-friendly" condo-hotel with a romantic pool and a staff you will love. They can

book tours, day cruises, and even horse-back riding at their mountain ranch.

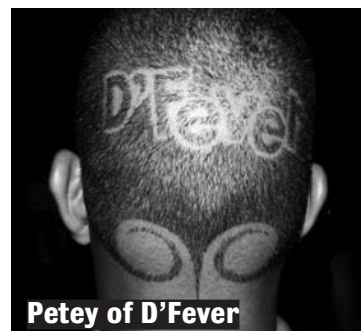
Blue Chairs Resort by the Sea (Malecón 4, Playa Los Muertos; 866-514-7969) is right next to the gay beach. This is a four-star hotel with the Blue Sunset Rooftop patio/bar and the famous restaurant on the beach where hot men gather in droves to sip cool drinks in the sun. The gay tour desk will get you going on your next adventure, and make sure you check out the Dirty Bitches Show, bingo, karaoke, and more.

Gay-owned and staffed, the **Hotel Mercurio** (Francisca Rodriguez 168; +52-322-222-4793) offers an unbeatable location with outstanding service and value – with a gourmet breakfast to boot. There is a romantic pool in the open courtyard and 28 modern rooms offering all the conveniences.

**Douglas and David
of Vancouver at
Club Mañana**



**Man's best
friend
outside the
Coffee Cup
on R. Gomez**



Petey of D'Fever

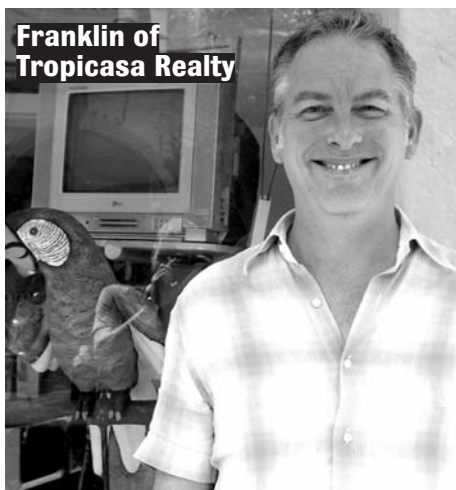
Gerardo & Dan enjoying drinks at Encuentros



**Ever-so-sweet Javier
of Boana-Torre Malibu Hotel**



**Franklin of
Tropicasa Realty**



**Lonely Life Guard at
Los Muertos Beach**



**Jason at the
Blue Sunset Rooftop Bar**

**Paragliding on
Los Muertos
Beach**



**Mike and Benoit of
Casa Benito at Club Mañana**

Casa Benito B&B (Amapas 325; +52-322-222-0999) is a brand new gay bed-and-breakfast. The house is three levels, each room with a king-size bed and private bath. There's a private rooftop terrace with pool, and guests have full access to Boana Torre-Malibu. Your host Benoit is on hand with friendly and personal service.

Vallarta Cora (Pilitas 174; +52-322-222-6234) is a men-only hotel with 14 rooms and a busy bar. There's a jacuzzi and wet steamroom on premises, a public shower zone, and a video area. A giant TV overlooking the pool plays music videos nightly. This is an attitude-free haven, and there's a backroom and clothing-optional area tucked in the rear. Check out the new terrace for private sun-worshipping.

Overlooking the bay and just one block from the beach is the **Abbey Hotel** (Pulpito 138, Olas Altas; +52-322-222-4488). This four-star facility has 54 rooms and suites, with a massage spa, pool, and open-air restaurant on the main level. The friendly staff are always on hand to lend assistance and help with tour info.

San Franciscan Hotel & Gym (Calle Pilitas 213; +52-322-222-6473) is a boutique hotel with gym on-premises offering luxury at affordable prices.

Conveniently located within walking distance of the gay beach, restaurants, and cafes, **Casa Cupula** (129 Callejon de la Igualdad; +52-322-223-2484) offers an intimate setting along with gourmet food, tempting cocktails, two pools, a gym, luxurious rooms, and a stylishly sophisticated modern design.

New to Puerto Vallarta, in the exclusive Conchas Chinas enclave, **Los Castillos** (Paseo de Los Corales 136; +52-322-226-7470) offers superb views of Banderas Bay. Three serene villas feature Mexican palapa-style design and three infinity pools, all making for a luxury boutique-hotel experience.

Dining

Make sure to stop in at **Cafe Bohemio** (Rodolfo Gomez 127) for a romantic outside dining experience. Your hosts Chris and Sol serve up an exquisite menu of Mexican and international food. A daily two-for-one happy hour runs from 5 to 7 p.m., and then later from 11 p.m. to midnight.

Coté Sud (Francisca Rodriguez 155, upstairs) serves up mouthwatering traditional cuisine from the south of France. Relax with your dinner while enjoying a bird's eye view of Olas Altas, the main street in the Zona Romanica.

Up the steps at **Banana Cantina** (Amapas 147) you'll find contemporary Mexican cuisine and international dishes in a stylish and comfortable environment. The staff here is very efficient and friendly.

Encuentros Pizza Bar and Lounge (Lazaro Cardenas 312) is a contemporary hideaway that is like being at home. Enjoy a delicious drinks menu and the tastiest pizza in Puerto Vallarta.

Across from the beach next to the Plaza Lazaro Cardenas you will find **D'Fever Cafe** (Lazaro Cardenas 155-2). They serve up a great breakfast menu, along with lunch and traditional cafe offerings. Enjoy the music and the ambiance on the street-side patio.

Coffee Cup (Rodolfo Gomez 146) is the place to be for your first coffee of the day, or last. A trendy stop for locals and travelers alike, you'll make friends here fast – perhaps over the best soy chi latte you'll ever sip.

Cafe San Angel (Olas Altas 449) serves crepes and sandwiches in a sidewalk setting.

Kit Kat (Pulpito 120) features an Asian-influenced menu with sidewalk seating and a friendly vibe.

Mama Dolores (Olas Atlas 534-B) is a popular spot with a Mexican and American menu. Sidewalk dining provides a great spot for people-watching.

Apaches Bistro (Olas Altas 439) is right on the main street in the middle of it all. Stop in and sample the sumptuous food.

Picnic Restaurant and Bar (Pulpito 150, at Olas Altas) serves up a great all-American goodies in a bright and inviting space overlooking Olas Altas.

Shopping & Services

Some say gay boys are born to shop. Puerto Vallarta offers massive opportunities. You'll have no trouble finding gifts to bring home. Besides shops of every kind, beach vendors are plentiful. You'll be enticed to buy many hand-crafted items and tourist-oriented goods. And the serv-

ice-sector thrives, too, from massage, to laundry, to doctors, and helpful concierges.

If looking good and feeling your best while on the beach is important, go to **Blu By Len** (Olas Altas 513). Len is a New York-trained master cosmetologist and offers cuts, coloring, manicures, pedicures, facials, body treatments (we're talking mud wraps, salt scrubs, and volcanic sand scrub), not to mention waxing services wherever they may be required. Len is opening a new salon near Marina Vallarta, as well.

Liquid Men (Ignacio L. Vallarta 245 and 333-2; and Paseo de los Cocoteros 85, Paradise Plaza Shopping Center) carries everything Diesel and more, as well as offerings from the hottest upcoming Mexican designers. You'll find everything from beach attire to the latest in fashion and club wear. Wander in and shop in air-conditioned bliss.

Visit **SeaMe Sunglasses** (Amapas 114-B) and avoid unnecessary squinting! SeaMe will keep your eyes shaded in designer sunnies from the all over the globe.

Xocodiva Artisan Chocolates (Rodolfo Gomez 111) actually provides food for the gods. Go to heaven with truffles, molded chocolates, gourmet nuts, brittles, and other confections.

Blue Massage Spa (Olas Altas 411) can be your personal refuge for total relaxation. Centrally located on Olas Altas, the men at Blue Massage will treat you right. Walk-ins are welcome, with home service also available.

Christopher Wynn Designs (Pulpito 146) is replete with treasures from all of Mexico that you'd ache to bring back home with you. It's an interior designer's delight.

Cassandra Shaw Jewelry (Basilio Badillio 276) is an elegant new addition to Puerto Vallarta, with outstanding original hand-crafted designs and art.

Sol y Luna Art Gallery (Lazaro Cardenas 230) truly is art for the uninhibited. Wander in and enjoy the erotic and exotic male form by many international artists such as Randy Cooper, Victor Vera, Abraham Jorge, and others.

PVRPV (Francisca Rodriguez 152; +52-322-222-0638) is one of the largest and



most popular Puerto Vallarta vacation rental and concierge services. Visit their office to book your space on the popular gay cruises aboard their comfortable and classic sailboats for a full day of music, good food, and exceptional service.

Boana Torre-Malibu (Amapas 325; +52-322-222-0999) offers a friendly and reliable concierge service as well. Gloria is the best!

Attractions and entertainment

Beyond the multitude of gay offerings there's a wide variety of local attractions. Each and every night at 9 p.m. there are fireworks on the beach downtown, and there's a replica **Pirate Ship** (+52-322-223-0875 for reservations; Marigalante.com.mx) that sets sail daily on a tour of the bay, as well as a swashbuckling dinner cruise in the evenings.

The Malecón is a mile-long boardwalk with many sculptures and statues inspired both by the sea and the city's Catholic heritage and glitzy Hollywood connections. The historic Lady of Guadalupe Cathedral stands tall in the center of downtown, and is open to visitors.

Nightlife

Puerto Vallarta's gay nightlife offers a wide variety of clubs, bars, and martini lounges to satiate any appetite. Most of the night time destinations are all in the historic Zona Romántica.

Clubbing starts late in PV and goes to 8 a.m. at some locations. Follow the local custom and enjoy a brief afternoon siesta before heading out for a full night of drinks and dancing. Take care when leaving the clubs late. Make sure to travel in groups, or get the club to call a cab.

Club Mañana (Venustiano Carranza

290) continues to reign as queen of the Puerto Vallarta scene. This former hacienda has been meticulously transformed by its Los Angelino owners into a world-class act. Drag shows and international comedy routines are hosted on the main stage. Across the pool, there's a showroom for strip entertainment, and the dancing goes all night long outdoors or inside in air-conditioned comfort. It gets slammed here every night of the week.

Looking for a gay men's-only "gentlemen's club"? **Antropology** (Morelos 101, Plaza Río, Zona Centro) is the study of men, and this is where you'll want to be. From 9 p.m. to 4 a.m. there are continuous male dancers on the bar and in and around the club. Don't be shy, boys – the dancers love your attention.

Garbo (Pulpito 142) is a gay-owned-and-operated piano bar with live entertainment and known for its wide jazz repertory. Friends and regulars often meet here to enjoy a cocktail before heading to the clubs. Garbo is open daily from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Blue Sunset Bar (Malecón 4, Playa Los Muertos) is located on the roof of the Blue Chairs Resort and is well-trafficked for its nightly parties and regular events. Sunday nights are Dirty Bitches, not to be missed.

Sama (Olas Altas 510) is a chic, elegant, upscale venue with freshly renovated seating inside and an outside sidewalk patio. Famous for its appletini and chocolate martini (really, really good), owner José is always around to insure great service.

Apaches (Olas Altas 439) was one of the first martini bars on Olas Altas 10 years ago. It's a great place to meet people – like a gay Cheers, but Puerto Vallarta-style, with outdoor patio and minimalist indoor seating.

La Noche (Lazaro Cardenas 257) is one

of the newer venues on the cocktail scene. It's a classy and sleek setting, and the dim lighting enhances the romance.

Also relatively new is **Stereo** (Lazaro Cardenas 267). This is a tiny yet modern cocktail bar, and plays host to annual events and parties for the younger crowd.

One of the first gay clubs in Puerto Vallarta was **Club Paco Paco** (Ignacio L. Vallarta 278). Now under new ownership and gay management, things are looking up here.

Plasma Labyrinth (Piño Suarez 235) is famous for its labyrinth that ends up in the men's room. Greatly priced libations lubricate things in the dimly lit hangout.

Events

Latin Fever is an annual circuit party event hosted by Will Georges and Gilles Belanger around Thanksgiving week. The 10th Latin Fever just occurred in late November, and their annual weeklong New Year's Eve bash starts on December 26 and finishes up on January 1, 2008.

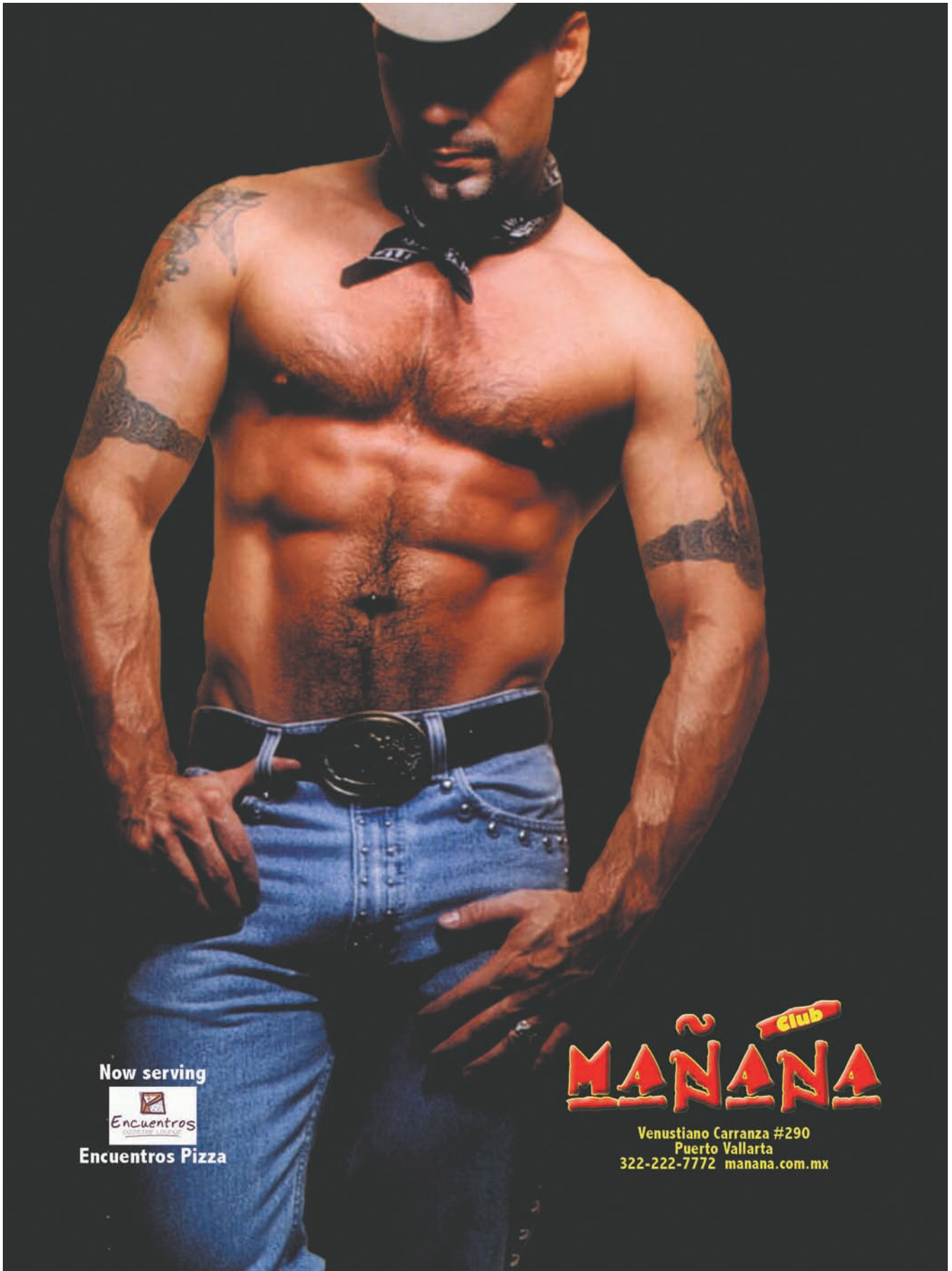
Vallarta Fever is yet another hot offering brought to you by Club Mañana. The event took place this past November 22 to 25 throughout several venues in Puerto Vallarta. Many big headline acts were brought in, such as Crystal Waters and Inaya Day.

The **Arco Iris** folks (see below) are behind several events during the year as well. The **2008 Bears' Week in Paradise** is January 27 to February 3, while the **Summer Paradise Party** gets thrown every September.


Travel packages

Gay Mexico's travel experts **Arco Iris** (800-765-4370; Arcoiristours.com) pro-

Continued on page 53



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**Hot buns at Blue Chairs
(the gay beach)**



Some skin at the Blue Sunset Rooftop Bar



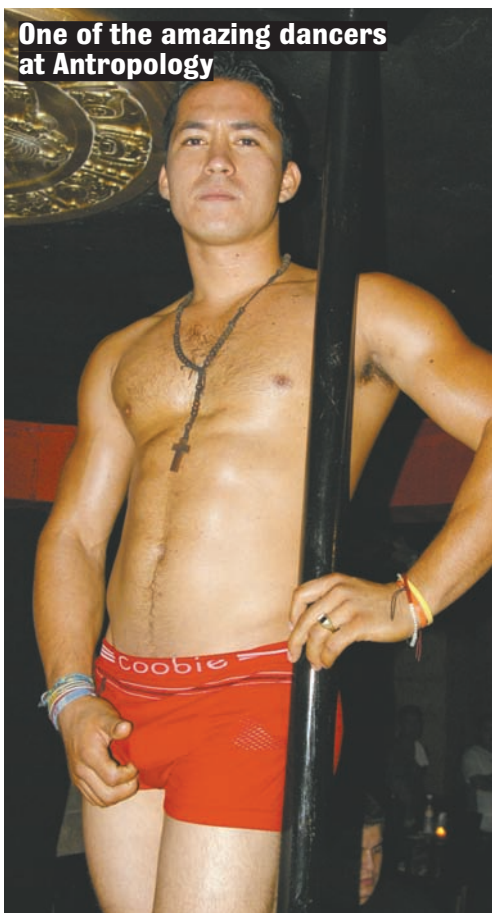
**Cuties cozying up in the
hot tub at Vallarta Cora**



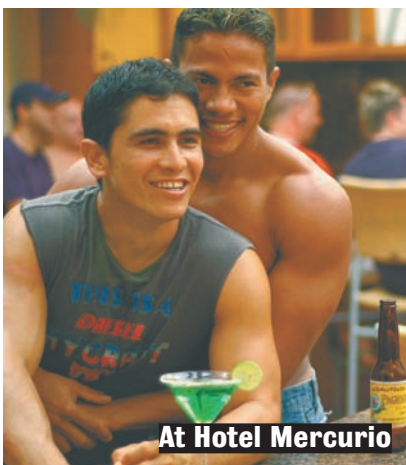
**In the middle is Sergio with
friends at the Blue Sunset
Rooftop Bar**



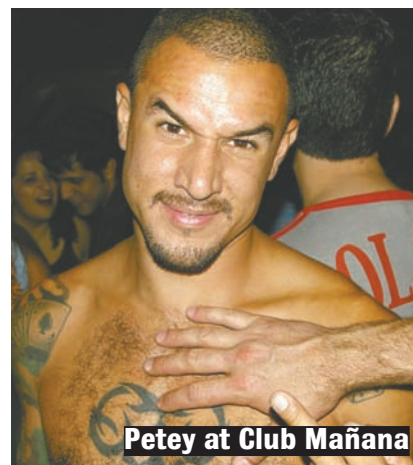
**One of the amazing dancers
at Antropology**



At Hotel Mercurio



Petey at Club Mañana



Len in action at Blue By Len





DJ spinning some tunes at Club Mañana



José with one of his talented dancers at Antropology



Dinner on the beach



Puerto Vallarta Mexico, continues to be the **#1 Gay tourist destination** in Latin America and remains a hot real estate market offering something for every budget and every **fantasy...**

What are you looking for?



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PUERTO VALLARTA

ACCOMMODATIONS

- 13) Abbey Hotel**
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- 1) Boana Torre-Malibu**
Casa Benito B&B
Amapas 325
011-52-(322)-222-0999
- 2) Blue Chairs Resort by the Sea & Blue Sunset Bar**
Malecon 4, Playa Los Muertos. (866) 514-7969
- 3) Hotel Mercurio**
Francisca Rodriguez
168 011-52-322-222-4793
- 4) Vallarta Cora**
Pilitas 174
011-52-(322)-222-6234
- 5) San Franciscan Hotel & Gym**
Calle Pilitas 213
011-52-(322)-222-6473
- 6) Casa Cupula**
129 Callejon de la Igualdad
52-322-223-2484
- ## EATING OUT
- 7) Café Bohemio**
Rodolfo Gomez 127
- 8) Cote Sud**
Upstairs on 155 Fca. Rodriguez
- 9) Banana Cantina**
Amapas 147
- 10) Encuentros Pizza Bar and Lounge**
Lazaro Cardenas 312

- 11) D'Fever Café**
Lazaro Cardenas 155-2
(At the end of Lazaro Cardenas)
- 12) The Coffee Cup**
Rodolfo Gomez 146
- 14) Kit Kat**
Pulpito 120
- 15) Mama Dolores**
Olas Atlas 534B

SHOPPING & SERVICES

- 18) Blu By Len**
Olas Altas 513
- 19) Liquid Men**
Ignacio Vallarta 245
- 20) Xocodiva Artisan Chocolates**
Rodolfo Gomez 111
- 16) The Blue Massage Spa**
Olas Altas 411
- 25) Sol y Luna Art Gallery**
Lazaro Cardenas 230
- 26) PVRPV**
Francisca Rodriguez
152 011-52-(322) 222-0638
- 27) Tropicasa Realty**
Pulpito 145-A
011-52-322-222-6505
- ## LATE-NIGHTLIFE
- 30) Club Mañana**
Venustiano Carranza 290
- 31) Antropology**
Morelos 101, Plaza Rio, Zona Centro



- 32) Garbo**
Pulpito 142
- 34) Sama**
Olas Altas 510
- 35) La Noche**
Lazaro Cardenas 257
- 36) Apaches**
Olas Altas 439
- 37) Club Paco Paco**
Ignacio L. Vallarta 278
- 38) Plasma Labyrinth**
Piño Suarez 235



Puerto Vallarta Mexico



EACH UNIT HAS:

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vide complete travel packages, including airport pickups: they aim to set up your entire trip from start to finish. Their Puerto Vallarta site (Pvmex.8m.com) is offering oodles of info.

Real estate

Some visitors fall in love with Puerto Vallarta and end up staying. The real-estate market continues to grow each year, and there's professional help if you want to negotiate it.

Wayne Franklin (better known as Franklin) of **Tropicasa Realty** (Pulpito 145-A; +52-322-222-6505) knows the market and offers superb service for those interested in owning a little piece of paradise. All the agents at Tropicasa are seasoned and have either held real-estate licenses in other countries or have had their own brokerages, providing clients with the benefit of their extensive experience. All members of the company are affiliated with AMPI, the Mexican Board of Realtors.

World Star Realty Real Estate and

Investment Services (Olas Altas 463), **Rainbow Realty** (Calle Malecón 2), and **Timothy Fuller & Associates** (Rodolfo Gomez 122) are other realtors serving the gay community, the latter specializing in luxury real estate.

Getting around

Puerto Vallarta streets are narrow cobblestone and give you the feeling of old world charm. The sidewalks are narrow as well; take care to watch your footing. Getting around is simple, with shopping, restaurants, and bars being within easy walking distance of most of the hotels in the gay part of town, Zona Romantica. Want to beat the heat? Take a cab – they are plentiful, and the cost is minimal.

From the airport, taking a cab is the easiest way to get into town. When you come out of the airport you will find taxi drivers waiting, and every one of them will try to get your attention and even help you with your luggage. Save your money and say “no, gracias”; these drivers must pay airport fees and will charge you around \$25 U.S. Head over to the other side of the

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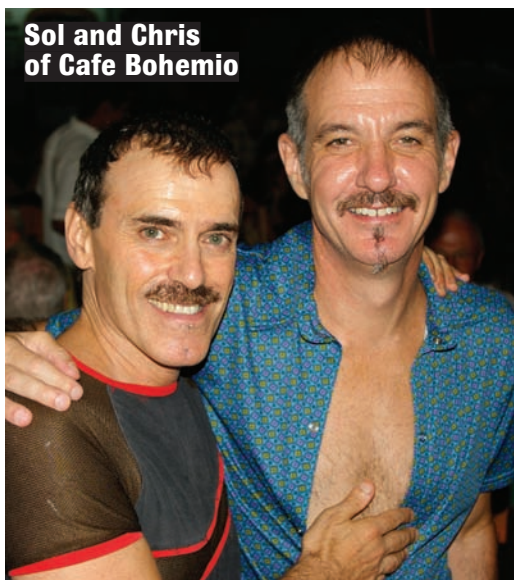
**Diva at the
Blue Sunset
Rooftop Bar**



**Phil
at Club
Mañana**



**Studs at
Club Mañana**



**Sol and Chris
of Cafe Bohemio**



**Friendly staff at
Liquid Men Clothing**

highway by way of the overhead walkway to the left of the airport building. There are always local yellow taxis waiting. Negotiate the rate *before* you head off; it should be 70 to 80 pesos to the Zona Romantica.

Buses run north and south for those who want to explore further out, and renting a Jeep or Volkswagen convertible is easy and affordable. Most hotels have excellent concierge service, and can point you in the right direction. Looking for a day on a secluded beach? There are many local fishing boats you can charter to take you across the bay. Ask your concierge to recommend one for you.

The beaches along Banderas Bay are warm and inviting, even at night. But it is not recommended to be on the beach past sunset. The government is strict about enforcing this curfew as they are dedicated to keeping crime out of Puerto Vallarta. This includes drug use. And be warned: accepting a solicitation for drugs or sex on the streets could land you in a tight spot.

There are many vendors on the beaches offering vacationers everything from food and drink, to pipes, sarongs, blankets, masks, wood carvings, and more. If you want take home a souvenir make sure your vendor is displaying a license, and feel free to haggle. Not interested? Simply say “no, gracias” – it’s only polite.

There are many bank machines throughout Puerto Vallarta for your use. Make sure to use only those ATMs that are located in bank branches; ATM fraud is common.

Most locals have learned some English, so getting along without any Spanish is easy. But it’s always appreciated when the effort is made to speak in Spanish. Some helpful phrases can go a long way.

On the web

Our website (Guidemag.com) has more Puerto Vallarta links and photos. Other sites worth checking out include **Gay Guide Vallarta** (Gayguidevallarta.com), **Discovery Vallarta** (Discoveryvallarta.com), and **Virtual Vallarta** (Virtualvallarta.com), whose print incarnation, *Vallarta Lifestyles*, a quarterly mag that includes restaurant reviews, a real estate section, and info on tours, activities, shopping, and art galleries. A window onto Puerto Vallarta’s rich history can be found at PuertoVallarta.net/fast_facts/history.php. ▼