

Read the reviews of Small Distictive Hotels written by Fodor's

Hotel Grano de Oro

San José

Fodor's Review:

Two wooden houses on San José's west side -- one dates from the turn of the 20th century, and the other from the 1950s -- have been melded together and converted into one of the city's most charming inns, decorated throughout with old photos of the capital and paintings by local artists. A 2007 remodeling has turned the public areas into glitz and elegance, but head up to your room for the old coffee plantation feel for which the hotel is still known. Each room in the place is different, and although you can't go wrong with any of them, the older house's rooms are the nicest, especially the Garden Suite, with hardwood floors, high ceilings, and private garden. A sumptuous restaurant (\$\$\$\$), run by a French-trained chef, surrounds a lovely indoor patio and bromeliad-filled gardens. The hotel's sundeck has a view of both the city and the far-off volcanoes.

Member Reviews & Ratings:

Great Value!

Posted by jhusser from Alexandria, Louisiana on 12/28/06

My husband and I stayed in the Vista de Oro suite on our honeymoon, and it was PERFECT! One wall of the room was windows that overlooked San Jose. It was beautiful at night. The jacuzzi was right next to the windows, making it very romantic. The best part was the food...it was all excellent...easily the best waffles i've ever put in my mouth!

We liked Hotel Grano De Oro

Posted by Jane from Boston on 4/23/06

Stayed here last week w/ husband - very nice rooms and nice staff!

Villa Caletas

Punta Leona

Fodor's Review:

On a promontory south of Punta Leona, this collection of elegant rooms sequestered in the jungle has amazing views of the surrounding foliage and sea below, making it one of the area's most remarkable hotels. Freestanding suites and villas are gorgeous, but rooms in the main building are far inferior; if you can't afford a villa, at least get a deluxe room. Victorian, French colonial, and Hellenistic motifs are combined throughout, with Ionic columns, varied artwork, cookie-cutter trims, and cane chairs. The infinity-edge pool seems to flow into the spectacular sea behind it, but is rather small. The closest beach, Playa Caletas, is small, rocky, and unfit for swimming. Staff is friendly and attentive

Resort Florblanca

Central Pacific

Fodor's Review:

Named for the white flowers of the frangipani trees, this collection of luxurious villas sits right on the beach. Secluded at the northern end of Santa Teresa, the handsome and spacious villas have an Asian feel, especially in the outdoor Balinese-inspired bathrooms and sunken tubs. Most villas have one air-conditioned bedroom with a king-size bed; two-bedroom villas have a second room with twin beds. Only three villas have sea views, so request one of these when you book. A dojo for yoga classes faces the

ocean, and a massage therapist is on staff to work out your kinks. The only TV is in a comfortable lounge. Two pools flow into each other in front of Nectar, the hotel's restaurant.

Casa Turire

Turrialba

Fodor's Review:

Set near sugar plantations and overlooking an artificial lake, this timeless hotel looks like a manor house that has survived mysteriously intact from the turn of the 20th century. In fact, it's the product of more recent imaginations. From the royal palms that line the driveway to the tall columns and tile floors, Casa Turire is an exercise in elegance and attention to detail. High-ceiling guest rooms have hardwood floors and furniture, small balconies, and bright bathrooms with tubs. The central courtyard is a civilized spot in which to relax after a day's adventure, and the restaurant serves reasonably priced international cuisine. The master suite is exceptional, built on two floors with a huge wraparound balcony.



Peace Lodge

Volcán Poás

Fodor's Review:

These rooms overlooking the misty forest of La Paz Waterfall Gardens seem like something out of the *Lord of the Rings*, with their curved, clay-stucco walls, hardwood floors (note that all but the top floors can be noisy due to creaky footsteps), stone fireplaces (gas), and four-poster beds made of varnished logs, complete with mosquito-net canopy. They are proper abodes for elfin kings, especially the spacious, grottolike bathrooms with two showers, a whirlpool tub, tropical gardens, and private waterfall. Most hotels settle for a room with a bath. Peace Lodge gives you a bath with a room. And as if that weren't enough, you can soak in your second whirlpool tub on a porch with a cloud-forest view. Being able to explore the waterfall gardens before they open is another perk; room rates include admission. The cuisine here is a couple of notches below the accommodations.

Member Reviews & Ratings:

Amazing!

Posted by Janer1 from California on 11/15/06

From the moment we stepped into the reception area we were in heaven. The staff was exceptionally nice to my kids, the room was fabulous, the waterfall gardens were awesome, I just can't say enough! My hubby and I plan on going back....solo!

La Paz Waterfall Gardens

Volcán Poás

Fodor's Review:

Five magnificent waterfalls are the main attractions at La Paz Waterfall Gardens, on the eastern edge of Volcán Poás National Park, but they are complemented by the beauty of the surrounding cloud forest, an abundance of hummingbirds and other avian species, and the country's biggest butterfly garden. A

concrete trail leads down from the visitor center to the multilevel, screened butterfly observatory and continues to gardens where hummingbird feeders attract swarms of those multicolored creatures. The trail then enters the cloud forest, where it leads to a series of metal stairways that let you descend into a steep gorge to viewing platforms near each of the waterfalls. A free shuttle will transport you from the trail exit back to the main building, if you prefer to avoid the hike uphill. Several alternative paths lead from the main trail through the cloud forest and along the river's quieter upper stretch, providing options for hours of exploration -- it takes about 1 1/2 hours to hike down the waterfall trail. (Enter by 3:45 to give yourself adequate time.) The visitor center has a gift shop and open-air cafeteria with a great view. The gardens are 20 km (12 mi) northeast of Alajuela, and are a stop on many day-long tours from San José that take in the Poás volcano or area coffee tours.