

Advertisement

Report this ad



examiner.com

In Leisure: Food & Drink Travel Spa & Beauty Autos & Motorcycles



Marc d'Entremont International Travel Examiner

Read Bio



LEISURE / TRAVEL / INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

See also: international travel, costa rica, hotels, marc dentremont

An amuse-bouche of Small Distinctive Hotels Costa Rica

Like 36

Next: Tony-winning director debuts new 'A...

Use your → key for the next article

May 25, 2016 3:53 PM MST



Advertisement

FEATURED VIDEO



Couple Ran Up 6-Figure Hotel Bill in 14 Months



Resign tension, embrace infinity at Villa Caletas, Costa Rica

Marc d'Entremont

It begins with refreshing, moist hand towels scented with lemon grass and glasses of chilled passion fruit juice upon entering the lobby. A visitor becomes a connoisseur of this refreshing *amuse-bouche* that teases and soothes the senses. Scented hand towels and exotic juice blends transition the visitor from the tropical humidity of [Costa Rica's](#) lush countryside to an enclave of tranquility that is a Small Distinctive Hotel.

Nine boutique [hotels](#), each averaging fewer than 50 rooms, are members of the [Small Distinctive Hotels](#) of Costa Rica. Each is privately owned, several in the 2nd generations, unique in architecture and setting, luxurious with fine dining and backstories as distinctive as the properties. The *amuse-bouche – the tease* – is that all this comfort helps others; each property visited touched the human side in unexpected ways.

RELATED STORIES

Top five must buys in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and the best places to shop for them

📷 An amuse-bouche of Small Distinctive Hotels Costa Rica

Road trip weekend- head to the beach

📷 Panama Canal's new expansion locks ready to open and 'wow'

📺 Charlotte Discoveries: Ritz-Carlton's fresh summer bites, sips, tours and more

Report this ad

POPULAR in TRAVEL

County shuts down one of Ulster's top tourist attractions


Top five must buys in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and the best places to shop for them

Bank Holiday? Best get the BBQ sorted! 
Sponsored eBay

📷 An amuse-bouche of Small Distinctive Hotels Costa Rica

Road trip weekend- head to the beach


📷 Panama Canal's new expansion locks ready to open and 'wow'

The UK's biggest online selection of vehicle parts 
Sponsored eBay

📺 Charlotte Discoveries: Ritz-Carlton's fresh summer bites, sips, tours and more

📷 Top 10 must-eat foods in Jordan

New Koningsdam cruise ship sets sail in Northern Europe

Amplifon invisible hearing aids 
Sponsored Amplifon

Walt Disney World expands Epcot International Food & Wine Festival in 2016

Twenty really cheap eats on and off the Strip in Las Vegas

Discoveries: Ritz-Carlton's fresh summer bites, sips, tours and more

LEISURE HIGHLIGHTS



Buckin' Ohio offers thrilling rodeo bull riding entertainment

Rodeo events are not common in Cleveland but for those Clevelanders who enjoy cowboys, bronco busting and bull riding, you'll be happy to know that you don't have to travel far to experience a...



Want healthv.

Hotel Belmar – the burden of a name



Hotel Belmar – the burden of a name *Marc d'Entremont*

Craft cocktails are not usually associated with the world famous natural wonders of the Montverde cloud forests of Costa Rica. Quakers, cows, hostels and hikers come to mind first. But when you're Pedro Belmar, second-generation general manager of a famous family mountain retreat, continued success requires thinking out of the box. Or in this case not using

anything boxed.

In the Belmar's La Chispa cocktail the refreshing, earthy aromas of the rain forests are recreated.

- premium Sloane's Gin
- black tea syrup made from the hotel's organic garden
- cedar pine needle smoke
- fresh lime

Crushed ice quickly wets a cocktail glass, as local dry cedar pine needles are lite with a torch. Quickly the glass is inverted over the flame – should extinguish immediately – and rest on the needles

What's Popular

ADVERTISEMENT



Deposit £10 and get £20 Free when you join PokerStars.



20 Mysterious Photos That Cannot Be Explained



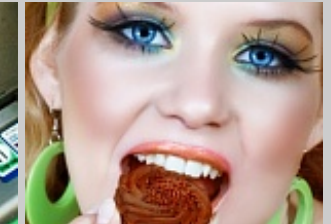
How To Get Paid £356 Everyday Without A Job In The UK



33 Celebrity Crimes That Will Defiantly Shock You!



How To Get Paid £356 Everyday Without A Job In The UK



Follow this one secret rule to lose weight...

TRENDING on EXAMINER.COM

'Alice' actress Beth Howland has died

Veterinarian who had to put animals down at shelter committed suicide

beautiful-looking skin? Eleven beauty tricks to steal from the kitchen

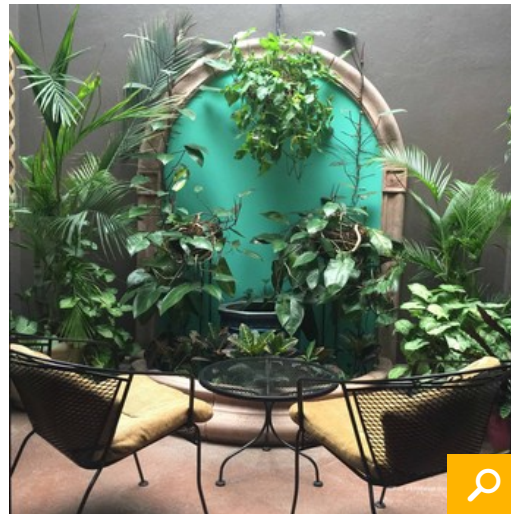
Nowadays, there are countless products recommended for a healthy and beautiful-looking skin. However, given how many natural remedies we have in our kitchen, it becomes clear that sometimes it is...

capturing the smoke. The cocktail is mixed. Upright the glass and pour into the captured smoke.

Sipping a smoky cedar scented La Chispa ensconced in the all-cedar Hotel Belmar overlooking forests tumbling down to the Gulf of Nicoya is all a tease – a visual amuse-bouche. It's the forerunner that everything good for the guest at a Small Distinctive Hotel should be good and sustainable for 21st century Costa Rica. It should be at your fingertips. "We're growing smaller," Pedro Belmar said with a faint smile, expressing a vision for the new look of success.

Hotel Grano de Oro and the House of Light

A blend of old, restoration and cutting edge, Hotel and Restaurant Grano de Oro is firmly established as San Jose's premiere property. Yet it's very design from the restoration of a classic Victorian colonial early 20th century mansion was to maintain the hospitality extended to houseguests in a spacious urban home. With understated elegance and graceful service, the exquisite cuisine of Executive Chef Francis Canal Bardot, has set the standard for three meals a day for a quarter century at Grano de Oro and San



Hotel Grano de Oro and the House of Light
Marc d'Entremont

NEXT ARTICLE

Tony-winning director debuts new 'Anastasia' musical at Hartford Stage in CT

Street dog comforts his brother at shelter: Just 3 days before they are euth'd

Police horse's leg injured in violent riot at Albuquerque Trump rally

Colleges NOT using the Coalition application for 2016-17

Bleeding dog abandoned on side of road with blanket, food and water

Trump says he's willing to debate Sanders, Sanders accepts offer

Josh Duggar begins life anew with family, job and wish for own reality series

Andrea Tantaros booted from Fox News - at least for now

The Season Finale of "Law & Order: SVU" - Startling and Life-Altering

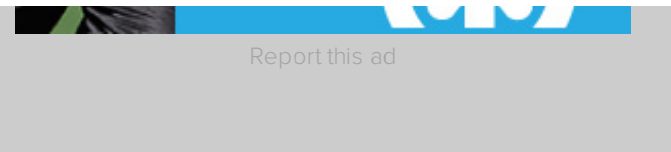
Advertisement

Every day is a good day for football

Catch the pass at examiner.com

Jose. Hidden gardens, art and the soothing sound of water fountains follow even into the rooms. A quiet private garden patio with fountain in room six was an opportunity to discover Casa Luz.

Nearly 20 years ago Grano de Oro founders Eldon and Lori Cooke were instrumental in creating the Asociacion Reaccion en Cadena por Nuestra Ninez and opened Casa Luz (“House of Light”) in San Jose. Casa Luz provides multi-year residential programs for abused teenage mothers and their children and a safe home. The program includes all necessary monetary, emotional and psychological support victims’ need. Just ask and the front desk will be pleased to discuss this significant humanitarian project while you enjoy the elegance of Grano de Oro knowing a portion of profits help support a house of light.



Peace Lodge – inside the Cloud Forest



Of course there’s a tropical garden with stone waterfall shower in the skylight ceilinged bath of the guest suite at Peach Lodge. After all it’s nestled within La Paz Waterfall Gardens. In 18 large individually decorated suites, guests luxuriate in river stone hot tubs on plant-bedecked balconies and within private courtyards. Rooms with massive wood



Peace Lodge – inside the Cloud Forest *Marc d'Entremont*

honed beds and river stone gas fireplaces open onto views of waterfalls and meandering free-formed trout ponds all designed to make you resign the tensions of the day – the trout may appear on the menu

as a real amuse-bouche.

Peace Lodge is an integral component of the privately owned La Paz Waterfall Garden, both the visions of Florida entrepreneur Lee Banks, which protects a plethora of local fauna and animals in this area of the forests and encompasses five stunning waterfalls. Peace Lodge and La Paz Waterfall Gardens are on-going eco-tourism success stories with exciting culinary news forthcoming.

Hotel Cuna del Angel – discretely guarding your health

It all starts with the bread. It's gluten free. It tastes good. It's whole grain bread with quality organic ingredients prepared by someone who understands proper techniques as in all good cooking and baking.

At Cuna del Angel, besides



practicality due to a family member's celiac disease, Tom York has every reason to prefer that his restaurant serve only organically grown and produced foods 100% gluten, GMO, and hormone free. Tom has been a devotee of healthy living spanning a decades long career. Many ingredients come from Tom's own farm, and much of everything else is locally sourced.



Hotel Cuna del Angel – discretely guarding your health *Marc d'Entremont*

Yet the tease is that a guest would never know their health is being guarded unless the menu is read in detail. Dishes from the classic continental repertoire such as flambé mango on vanilla sorbet and fresh snook with a creamy basil sauce are all components of a classic up-scale menu nutritionally balanced. The soft ambient lighting in the open walled palapa dining room overlooking the jungle and Pacific Ocean certainly are digestives in themselves. That's just one part, as readers will discover in upcoming articles, Tom plays in helping to preserve this cradle of the Angel.

Villa Caletas – gazing into infinity



Denis Roy emigrated from France with a dream somewhere in his head that materialized into creating a fantasy in Costa Rica. On over 700 acres of improbable,



Villa Caletas – gazing into infinity *Marc d'Entremont*

undeveloped coastal and mountain wilderness, using building methods that hearkened back to the days of

the pyramids, the multi building hotel, restaurants and spa complex of Villa Caletas and the Zephyr Palace emerged over a decade. A fusion of river stone castle and tropical Victorian, the 50 rooms range from stunning to awe inspiring.

Sunsets from the amphitheater are legendary, and views encompass forested hills and the Gulf of Nicoya from many angles. Yet those beautiful hills required total reforestation just a decade ago due to overgrazing. The lush peaks of today were barren, rocky and eroding into the clear Pacific below. Ecological restoration is ongoing and Villa Caletas spearheads major reforestation projects in the region.

That's why the many infinity pools dotting the complex become a metaphor for the group of Small Distinctive Hotel owners, managers and chefs this journalist interviewed during an eight-day tour. They were all rooted in reality, but liked to tease. My upcoming articles will let you in on some amuse-bouche recipes – the visions they see gazing into infinity.

Useful information



travelpenandpalate • 1 week ago





When you go: Juan Santamaría International Airport ([SJO](#)) is served by many airlines worldwide and within an easy 20 minute drive of downtown San Jose. **Getting around:** Costa Rica has an extensive inter city bus system and many toursit van options. The easiest transportation is renting a car. Costa Rica's road system is generally in good condition.

Disclaimer. The author was a guest of [Small Distinctive Hotels](#), [ENroute Communications](#) and [Revista Ander de Viaje](#).

[Hotel Belmar](#)

[Hotel Grano del Oro \(Casa Luz\)](#)

[Peace Lodge](#)

[Hotel Cuna del Angel](#)

[Villa Caletas](#)

Transportation within Costa Rica provided by [Toyota Rent a Car of Costa Rica](#). A Rav4 made Costa Rica's mountain roads, especially the few unpaved, safe and comfortable.

SUGGESTED LINKS

- › [Outside the windows of three Quito Ecuador hotels](#)
- › [Dining on the edge of serenity at El Crater, Pululahua](#)
- › [Think you know Cajun cuisine?](#)
- › [Hotel Nikopolis is luxury on the Greek Spice Route](#)
- › [Marrying trends with tradition in los dining](#)

 [Report this content](#)

SHARE THIS ARTICLE



[SUBSCRIBE TO AUTHOR](#)



YOU MAY LIKE

Sponsored Links by [Taboola](#)





New Policy in UK: If You Don't Have Life Insurance You Better Read This

Best Life Cover Quotes



5 Ways To Tell How Attractive You Are

LifehackLane



What Investors Need to Know about the Lloyds Share Sale

Hargreaves Lansdown



Historically Significant Moments in Our History That We Will Never Forge...

UberHavoc



These Last Photos Of Stars Before Their Death Will Haunt You

HyperTomb



Her Dress Dropped Jaws At The 2015 Met Gala

StyleBistro

MORE FROM EXAMINER

Promoted Links by Taboola



Spring Travel 2016: Getting to Know Hollywood Beach, FL



Dog found high on meth and heroin recoups as owner tossed in jail



4 Hacks To Get Your Home Ready For Summer Entertaining



Comment

Comments Community

fb **Recommend**

Start the discussion...

Be t



Rita Cellini Shaffer — I can understand how awful she must have
some of ...

✉ [Subscribe](#) [Add Disqus](#) [Privacy](#)

Advertisement

[Report this ad](#)



[/+ex](#) [ercom/posts"](#)
[target="_blank">](#)

COMPANY LINKS

- [About us](#)
- [OnTopic custom content](#)
- [The Rowdy](#)
- [Advertise with us](#)
- [Sitemap](#)