



QUERENCIA

THE STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE IN CABO

“I have never had a site to work with like this before.”

— TOM FAZIO, GOLF COURSE ARCHITECT

By Mark Pazdur, Publisher

LOS CABOS, MEXICO: Baja California has an engaging blend of Mexican and American cultures that has always appealed to me. I think the amalgamation of Mexican and American cultures complement one another and create an out of the ordinary lifestyle.

The Los Cabos area incorporates two distinctly different towns: Cabo San Lucas, known for its lively, and sometimes rowdy, nightlife; and San Jose del Cabo, with its laid back atmosphere and more traditional Mexican feel. The combination of these polar opposite towns has created a setting offering something for everyone.

You can dine at Nick-San offering some of the best sushi in the world (rivaling Nobu in New York City) or sink your feet into the sand and grab a bite at a taco stand on the beach.

It's easy to see the area's appeal. Los Cabos is often referred to as the city where the “desert meets the sea.”

Querencia, situated at the beginning of the famous tourist corridor near San Jose del Cabo, is an ultra-private golf community with an unusual Tom Fazio design. Members enjoy a clubhouse village offering a full service spa, salon and barber shop, tennis and paddle courts, kids

and teens' clubhouses, and a fitness center with a million-dollar view.

Late last year, I sat down with Jorge Carrera, CEO of Querencia, to get a pulse of the international real estate market. “Fortunately, high-end developers in the greater Los Cabos area did not build an enormous amount of spec homes before the market slowed,” explained Carrera. “Querencia, El Dorado, and Palmilla, among other few, are the highly upscale communities offering golf in the area. That's it! If Cabo has one good sales year, a big chunk of available inventory will quickly disappear.

“At Querencia, we only have three developer homes for sale and around eight member homes up for resale. We are not in the high volume business. More importantly, it is building the right community rather than selling a massive number of homes. The majority of our buyers are Americans,” said Carrera.

“Our market has definitely been impacted by the financial crisis. In 2008, we saw clouds building on the horizon, but we were still in the carryover of sales from a very strong 2007. By 2009, we started to feel the negative impact of the economic downturn and it was clear

the crises was real. The worst of the recession and the 'hard bottom' hit in 2010. Sales were at a standstill.

"Last year, positive signs and trends developed. This year, we expect a continued slow and steady upward trajectory," predicted Carrera cautiously.

Querencia has retained a stable, slightly growing membership and has continued to add amenities. The membership initiation fees have remained steady, and dues increased only around six percent in the last five years.

Real estate pricing and construction costs have always tilted in Mexico's favor. "The dramatic price drops in real estate in America has narrowed the gap," conveyed Carrera, "but, no destination can match our culture and climate. We average only six days of rain per year and offer nine months of picture-perfect weather of balmy temperatures, low humidity, and few bugs.

"One additional benefit of purchasing in Mexico now is the favorable exchange rate—approximately 13.5 pesos to one US dollar [up from 11 pesos a couple of

months ago]. It changes the dynamics. Almost all of your general cost of living expenses are paid in pesos, labor taxes, and utilities. Currently, the strong dollar against the Mexican peso can generate significant savings if you are looking to build a home in the area."

STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE IN CABO REDEFINED

Querencia's ownership has worked diligently to transform Querencia from a golf club into a community offering everything that today's modern families are looking for.

"It is not just about golf. Our beach access [with the club's association with Club Ninety-Six], and the soon to come Querencia Surf Club, walking trails, wellness programs, spa amenities, and incredible kids' clubs have raised the bar in Cabo," expressed Carrera. "I have a great feeling of satisfaction on what we have accomplished. We are not talking the talk, but we walked the walk. Our amenities are available now." *(continued)*



"Querencia offers everything today's modern families are looking for."

— JORGE CARRERA



(Below left) The club's spa for women includes a dressing area with dark cedar lockers, hot and cold plunge pools, a sauna, steam rooms, private patios for sunbathing and a full service salon. (Below right) Querencia's Yoga Pavilion is an ideal location to start your day, on a healthy note, with morning stretching.





The Clubhouse Village, perched on a hilltop overlooking the Sea of Cortez and Fazio's golf course, is modeled after a Spanish village with a series of club buildings encircling a plaza. Nice touches include: *The sound of water.* There are eight fountains both indoors and out—no matter where you are, the relaxing sound of water surrounds you. *The pleasant smell of flowers.* The fresh scent of blooming huele de noche flowers (jasmine) permeate the air. *The hand carved woodwork* in the Q Bar and Q Restaurant—offering an example of the artesian culture in Mexico. *The signature artwork* throughout the clubhouse buildings—the vibrant work of David Villaseñor from Guadalajara brightens the atmosphere.



(Left) The Q Bar interior design is a mix of Mexican and Tuscan architecture. (Above) Offering a more formal dining atmosphere, the Q Restaurant includes a wine grotto storing wines sourced from around the world.

FEROCIOUS BRIDGE TOURNAMENTS

Querencia has a diverse membership base of over 250. About 75 percent are Americans, 15 percent are Mexicans, and 10 percent are from all corners of the world [with a growing number of Canadians]. During the season, from November through May, the social calendar is always full. Thursday is usually poker night and the club is notorious for its ferocious bridge and mahjong tournaments. One of the more unusual golf events is The Alamo Cup. The format is similar to the Ryder Cup and pits Americans ver-

sus Mexicans in a fun, respectful tournament. “The competition has really heated up over the last three years,” said one of Querencia’s members. “Pride is on the line.”

UNDERSTANDING FAMILY DYNAMICS

“Our family amenities raise the bar for golf communities around the world,” stated Carrera. “We realize teenagers don’t want to mingle with adults, but have their own space. So, we built two free-standing buildings within our clubhouse village: one for kids and one for teenagers.”

“We want to help simplify your life.” — ARTURO PONCE DE LEON, HEAD ARCHITECT

The Kids Club has a wading pool with water depths from ankle-deep to about three feet. An added convenience at the pool is a wireless intercom system for food service so parents don't have to walk over to the restaurant. The club's interior is decorated with three-dimensional, hand-painted clouds on the ceiling, furnished with bean bag chairs, and chalkboards built into the walls, plus a TV lounge for the younger kids to watch their favorite movies.

The Qube is the place for teenagers to hang out. Rock music plays in the arcade packed with full-size arcade games, including air hockey, basketball, Guitar Hero, Let's Dance, ping pong, and foose ball. There is a private screening room with oversize couches, a flat-screen television, and ceiling-mounted, surround sound speakers. The outside patio, with a half kitchen, is ideal for parties.

CREATING YOUR OWN CUSTOM HOME

For those looking to customize their home, Querencia offers a complete range of design and construction services. “We want to help simplify your life. At Querencia, we

hospital grade water and a specially designed air conditioning filtration system,” concluded Ponce de Leon.

FAZIO'S TAKE ON QUERENCIA

“Although the Los Cabos area is the fishing capital of Mexico, golf is a big deal here,” said Tom Fazio. “There are a lot of fine courses, both public and private. I believe Querencia is the ‘best in breed.’ The private community has the finest clubhouse, best golf course, and the best location. It is centrally located and within a short drive to the lively town of Cabo San Lucas, the more traditional Mexican town of San Jose, and only 20 minutes from the convenient Los Cabos airport.

“I knew Querencia would be a special place,” extolled Fazio. “The club sits on a large site. During my first visit, I was blown away. The mountains are off to the east and the ocean is just to the west. The land form is long and linear. Several of my holes almost feel as if you can touch the ocean, and, as you weave your way up the foothills, the views get grander and grander. I have never had a site



The Qube at Querencia is a club for teenagers to get together and enjoy games, music, and their favorite programs on a flat screen television. The Kids Club is a fun place for younger children to socialize with their peers.



are here to take care of the whole picture, we are not just a design center,” said Arturo Ponce de Leon, head architect at Querencia. “We are able to offer a complete support team, one-stop shopping, and help control your building costs. Your construction timelines are shortened by having all source and engineering needs under one roof, and we provide you a comfort level that the work will be done right. Our experience is extensive and no job is too complex. We are working on a home for one of our members who has severe allergies. His ‘green house’ will include

to work with like this before. At the highest point on the golf course, you are up about 800 feet with unbelievable views of downtown San Jose and the Sea of Cortez. Querencia leaves an indelible impression.

“I have heard the concerns about traveling and living in Mexico. I continue to travel in the country and enjoy taking my family with me. Cabo is a safe destination. Look at where it is on a map. There is almost a natural barrier dividing it from the rest of Mexico because it is located at the tip of the Baja Peninsula,” said Fazio. *(continued)*

"It simply is the best to sit out on our back veranda and admire the panoramic views of the ocean, mountains, and glorious sunsets." — TOM McCLOSKEY, MEMBER



THE FAZIO CONNECTION

In the late 1970s, Tom and Bonnie McCloskey were busy raising their children in West Palm Beach, Florida. "My wife has always been an avid golfer and, over time, we became good friends with Tom and Suzie Fazio," explained McCloskey "We eventually moved out West, but our friendship has endured all these years. Four years ago, we were chatting with Tom and I asked for his recommendation of a warm weather private club we could join.

"Fazio recommended his course in Cabo, and although I was familiar with the Cabo lifestyle, I hadn't heard of Querencia. I flew down for a site visit and instantly fell in love. I was impressed with the beautifully maintained grounds, the pretty topography, and the friendly staff," continued McCloskey. "I met with Jorge and was confident in his vision for the community. I like the fact Jorge is from the area and lives on property.

share special moments in life together is icing on the cake.

"I have owned real estate in Baja for over two decades and, when Querencia opened, I remember calling my wife Cherie and excitedly explained how we must buy a home there. We couldn't be happier," exclaimed Jordan.

"Our community is well run, every staff member knows your name, we have hit critical mass to be a financially viable club, and we live in an area that is safer than most places in America.

"Cherie and I spend summers in Aspen, Colorado, and the rest of the year at Querencia. We are lucky enough to tee it up four to five times per week. Even with the amount of golf we play, I am still an average golfer," said Jordan in wry amusement.

UNCERTAIN TIMES, CREATE OPPORTUNITIES

"There are impediments to purchasing real estate in Mexico," insisted Jordan, "but, it should not deter you. In relative terms, for a nominal amount of money, you can belong to Querencia, one of the premier golf communities in the world with some of the finest weather in the world.

"The communications infrastructure is modern, there are non-stop flights from most major hubs to Los Cabos, and Querencia is only 20 minutes from the airport on a new highway. Living at Querencia is like being in my office in Aspen, but having it sunny and 80 degrees every day." ■

Getting to Querencia: Mexico's Baja California Peninsula, a long finger of land, extends over 1,200 miles south from San Diego to Los Cabos. It is bordered on the north by California, on the west by the Pacific Ocean, and on the east by the Sea of Cortez, with Los Cabos at the bottom tip. Most major carriers fly from their hub airports to Los Cabos Airport (SJD). Flight time from Seattle is four hours; Los Angeles and Phoenix, two hours; and Houston and Dallas, two and one-half hours. Passports are required in Mexico, cell phone coverage is excellent, and US dollars are accepted everywhere.

For more information on Querencia, you may phone toll free (888) 236-2229 or visit loscabosquerencia.com.

To contact Jorge Carrera, CEO of Querencia, please e-mail him at jcarrera@loscabosquerencia.com.



"Our membership literally comes from all over the world to enjoy the conveniences of a grand resort—but, in a private club setting. All of our club's amenities are completed and ready to enjoy.

"We purchased one of the clubhouse villas in the middle of this amazing natural environment," commented McCloskey. "It simply is the best to sit out on our back veranda and admire the panoramic views of the ocean, mountains, and glorious sunsets."

FRIENDS JOINING FRIENDS AT QUERENCIA

William Jordan and Tom McCloskey have one special connection at Querencia. They are best friends and own villas next to one another. "It really is a dream scenario," explained Jordan. "Living at Querencia and being able to