



Dominicus Palace junior suite

LA ROMANA

Resort area in Dominican Republic offers round-the-clock fun and pampering

BY JERRY SOVERINSKY

WITH MILES OF PRISTINE BEACHES, several world-class golf courses, an American-style casino and a rich assortment of full-service resorts, La Romana on the Dominican Republic's southeast coast is the ideal vacation spot for honeymooners, families, watersports enthusiasts, outdoor adventurers and golfers.

Warm, tropical weather (average year-round temperatures range from 78 to 88 degrees), natural beauty and some of the Caribbean's most gracious, friendly hosts ensure that one's time in La Romana is well spent and rewarding.

La Romana's tourist facilities are first-rate in every respect, so even your most sophisticated

clients' experience should exceed expectations. Here's a peek at some of the best La Romana has to offer.

Casa de Campo (www.casadecampo.com.do) features more than 7,000 acres of resort paradise teeming with every conceivable

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Casa de Campo suite

luxury and indulgence. With 300 immaculate hotel rooms and 150 private villa homes, the property provides unparalleled comfort for discriminating guests.

Guest rooms are divided into superior, luxury and suite categories. Superior rooms are clustered around the hotel lobby and pool and contain either a king-size bed or two doubles, mahogany furniture, walk-in closet, wireless Internet and a private terrace overlooking gardens.

Luxury rooms overlook hotel grounds or one of the golf courses. In addition to the superior room amenities, luxury rooms have upgraded furniture and fabrics, Serta pillowtop bedding and a separate dressing and vanity area.

Suites offer all of the luxury room features plus a separate living area, king-size canopy bed and a deluxe master bath featuring marble tile, whirlpool tub and separate shower. A

sleeping sofa and separate bathroom make these accommodations the premier family option.

For the most privileged environment, consider one of Casa de Campo's villas. Each of these exclusive units has a living room, dining room and full kitchen—all replete with sumptuous interiors—as well as a private garden with pool or whirlpool. Villa guests receive maid service eight hours each day, use of a four-passenger touring cart and (for villas with three or more bedrooms) valet service. Every villa is unique, both in furnishings and setting; for a selection of available properties, visit the company's website.

Casa de Campo's world-class facilities include three championship golf courses, a pristine beach, tennis, shooting center, equestrian center (with polo!), fully equipped fitness center, spa, watersports, upscale shops and

designer boutiques and supervised children's areas. Altos de Chavon, a re-created 16th-century Mediterranean village, is also onsite.

The resort offers both all-inclusive and EP pricing; on either type of plan, guests can dine at Casa de Campo's numerous top-notch dining venues. Contact Premier World Marketing (res1@pwmonline.com, 800-336-5520) to book clients at Casa de Campo.

La Romana's **Sunscape Casa del Mar** (www.sunscapecasadelmar.com.do) caters to a predominately American crowd. Service and facilities are not as luxurious as Casa de Campo, but nevertheless suitable for four-star clients. More than half of Sunscape's 751 guest rooms have been recently renovated—meticulous conversions that created clean, comfortable spaces with modern conveniences.

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Additional Information on Travel to La Romana

Flights: La Romana is served by three airports. La Romana International (LRM), the most convenient at less than a 20-minute drive from all La Romana resorts, is served by **American Airlines** (www.aa.com), **American Eagle** (www.aa.com) and **USA 3000 Airlines** (www.usa3000.com).

Santo Domingo International Airport (SDQ) and Punta Cana International Airport (PUJ), each a 90-minute drive from La Romana, offer additional carrier options, including **Delta Air Lines** (www.delta.com), **Northwest Airlines** (www.nwa.com), **United Airlines** (www.united.com), **JetBlue Airways** (www.jetblue.com), **US Airways** (www.usairways.com) and **Spirit Airlines** (www.spiritair.com).

Resources: For further information on La Romana, see www.explorelaromana.com, or call the **La Romana-Bayahibe Hotel Association** at 809-472-9565.



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DESTINATIONS

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The resort offers three room categories: deluxe, club and club suites. Accommodations are available with either garden or ocean views. Deluxe rooms include a king or two double beds, balcony or terrace, shower and tub in bathroom, cable TV and minibar.

Club rooms provide upgraded amenities that extend to toiletries and minibar selections; guests in these rooms are also treated to

welcome food and drink, Sunscape T-shirts, discounts on phone and laundry, room service and DVD player.

Suites offer all amenities and furnishings of the club rooms with the addition of a separate living room, extra bathroom and second balcony. At 700 square feet, the suites are more than double the size of deluxe and club rooms, which measure 347 square feet.

Sunscape guests can enjoy two pools, a

separate children's pool, two spas, beauty salon, fitness center, tennis, seven restaurants and seven bars. Included in rates are daily shows at the outdoor theater, windsurfing, kayaks, snorkeling, merengue lessons, bicycling and supervised children's activities. Guests pay extra for golf, fishing excursions, scuba diving and motorized watersports, all of which they can book through the resort.

A beachside dining experience is also available at an additional charge, and romantic

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Things to Do

La Romana has attractions and activities to suit all travelers, from history buffs to those who seek the high-stakes action of a casino.

Altos de Chavon (www.altosdechavon.com) is a replicated medieval Mediterranean village within Casa de Campo, with restaurants, shops, a gallery and an archaeological museum.

Book tee times for your golfing clients at any of Casa de Campo's three Pete Dye championship courses (players need not be overnight guests of the resort to play).

The new championship course at **La Estancia Golf Resort** (www.legr.com, 809-689-7027) was designed to take advantage of breathtaking natural vistas. Recommend to clients who golf there that they dine at the nearby Italian restaurant **Vecchia Caserma** (www.vecchiacaserma.com, 809-813-6405), which presents hearty, home-cooked fare in a beautifully rustic setting.

Tropical Tours (www.tropicaltoursromana.com.do, 809-523-2028) operates privately guided ATV tours, catamaran sailings and snorkeling and scuba diving trips, among other programs.

At night, send your clients to the brand-new **Casino Dominicus** (www.casinodominicus.com, 809-554-8917), a bustling venue with complimentary shuttle service to and from hotels.

couples should opt for it at least once during their stay. For \$90, they'll have a private candlelit dinner at a seafront table.

For reservations at Sunscape Casa del Mar, contact Angela Encarnacion (sales@sunscapecasadelmar.com.do, 809-221-8880).

Viva Wyndham (www.vivaresorts.com) comprises two adjacent resorts: the Dominicus Beach (DB) and the Dominicus Palace (DP), which combined have nearly 900 rooms, bungalows and suites that serve a majority European clientele.

DB offers standard rooms, superior rooms, oceanfront bungalows and garden-view bungalows. Standard rooms are in three-story buildings and contain a queen-size bed, satellite TV and balcony. Superior rooms are similar to standards, but have a king bed or two queens. Thatched-roof garden bungalows feature a king bed or two queens in addition to the amenities of a standard room; oceanview bungalows include a small fridge. During my recent stay, most rooms at DB appeared dated and worn, though certainly functional.

DP's accommodations are a noticeable upgrade from DB's and are categorized as superior rooms and junior suites. Superior rooms offer two queen-size beds or one king, balcony, satellite TV and minibar. Junior suites have all those amenities, plus a living area.

The two resorts share many facilities and services, including beautiful, well-kept beaches, tennis courts, archery, spa, windsurfing, sailing, bocce court, basketball, aerobics, evening entertainment, dance classes and several restaurants. Guests at DP gain all-inclusive access to the resorts' four restaurants and two buffets, while DB patrons pay a supplemental \$10 fee to dine à la carte. Both resorts are kid-friendly, though couples will also feel at home here. Book through 800-WYNDHAM.

Take note: DB guests may be subject to sounds from the nightly entertainment, even in their rooms, whether they want it or not. The shows in the resort's attractive theater are enthusiastic and well attended, but those seeking romance or solitude might become annoyed at their pounding music, from which there appeared to be no escape during our visit. ■



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