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Right: The outdoor terrace of a villa at Punta Dominical's Canto del Mar features a palapa and views of the point for which it is named.

Below: Each of the fully furnished villas features South Pacific-style decor.



Punta Dominical, Costa Rica

Friends and family warned her about buying a vacation home in a foreign country, but Debbie West likes to take chances. The 52-year-old avid skydiver from Girdwood, Alaska, recently retired from accounting to dabble in real estate investment. Now she and her husband, Dave, travel the continent in search of new places to invest and sky dive. They have settled in Destin,

Fla., Breckenridge, Colo., and most recently, Punta Dominical, Costa Rica.

"We did a lot of research on the Internet before we went down to Costa Rica," says West, who checked out other developments in the country before landing in Punta Dominical, an adventure-driven destination on Costa Rica's southwest coast. "When I saw the property, I was ecstatic," says West. "I fell in love with the area, the people and the prices. I'm hoping this will become my little place."

The Wests purchased a villa in Canto del Mar, one of three oceanfront communities within the 1,000-acre development. When completed in September, their villa will be one of 38 furnished two- and three-bedroom residences, priced from \$339,000. Built into a hillside overlooking the Pacific, the villas feature palapa-roof terraces, some with plunge pools. The adjacent Kiana Resorts will function as a resort community, offering 26 furnished two-bedroom villas, priced from \$400,000.

A restaurant, spa, four pools and a 24-hour concierge are part of the plan. For those seeking to build their own home, Punta Dominical offers Las Olas, a collection of 16 sites (priced from \$300,000) within walking distance of the beach and hiking trails.

While designed to be luxurious, Punta Dominical focuses on preservation and has set aside 80 percent of the acreage as untouched jungle. The area serves as a launching pad to explore the nearby Osa Peninsula, a vast tract of land considered to be one of the most biodiverse places on the planet. Visitors who explore the rainforest and deserted beaches might spot several endangered species, including tapirs, jaguars, sea turtles and howler monkeys, along with 375 bird species. West says, "This is a place for those who really want to get away, whether you come for the surfing or the turtles." **KIM FREDERICKS**



Punta Dominical
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