

RESORT & HOTELS OVERVIEW

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Already known for its expansive all-inclusive resorts in Punta Cana/Bavaro and Puerto Plata/Playa Dorada, the Dominican Republic (DR) hosts an impressive collection of luxury boutique and special interest hotels that cater to all tastes and budgets.

Appealing to Special Interests

New hotels and resorts specializing in unique activities or lifestyles are appearing throughout the country.

The recently opened **Xtreme Hotel** in the kiteboarding capital of Cabarete is a boutique hotel that caters to the sport's followers. Its amenities are designed with the extreme sports lifestyle in mind.

Families with teenagers will be attracted to **Club Med's "The Ramp,"** which opened at the resort in March 2005. The Punta Cana-based resort refers to The Ramp as the "ultimate teenage lounge" and was designed for teenagers aged 14 to 17. No adults or younger siblings allowed. The Ramp features not only a skateboard and rollerblading ramp, jukebox, telescope, refreshments and hammocks, but also provides a safe environment where this age group can hang-out away from mom and dad.

Appealing to small luxury hotel enthusiasts

Small boutique hotels are quickly becoming a sought-after vacation option and the DR has several to choose from.

A member of "Small Luxury Hotels of the World" (SLH), **Casa Colonial** in Puerto Plata opened in early 2005. This heavenly boutique hotel draped in white has been a passionate project of Dominican-owned VHR hotels. The hotel is already becoming known among the celebrity circuit, its Presidential Suite a favorite with Donatella Versace.

Following suit, the **Sivory** in Punta Cana opened its doors in January 2006. Also a SLH, the exclusive boutique is set on a divine private white sand beach and offers its guests exquisite gourmet food, a wine cellar stocked with 8,000 bottles and the Aquarea spa and wellness center. At the same time, the legendary Punta Cana Resort & Club opened its **Tortuga Bay Hotel**. Nestled into the expansive resort property along a pristine area of shoreline, the boutique features exceptional rooms all personally decorated by Dominican native and co-owner, Oscar de la Renta. The Tortuga Bay also contains a private restaurant, pool and fitness area accessible only to guests staying at the boutique.

Appealing to families, friends, wedding parties and other groups

More and more family reunions, bachelor parties, girls-weekends and weddings are being planned away from home and outside the borders of the United States. The Dominican Republic has several villa-type options with multiple bedrooms, private swimming pools and even a dedicated maid or butler. Sounds expensive, but when looking at a per-person price, a villa is often more cost effective than booking several hotel rooms. In addition, this option keeps the group closer together.

Casa de Campo in La Romana is a 7,000 acre resort along the shores of the Caribbean Sea with three golf courses designed by Pete Dye, making its villas perfect for a golf get-together.

The **Sea-Horse Ranch** is an exclusive villa resort in Cabarete with large private yards and access to a variety of sports including kiteboarding and windsurfing. The resort's Equestrian Center provides several horseback riding styles on seven miles of bridal paths. Lessons are available for beginner to advanced riders.

Also on the north coast in Cofresi, **Sun Village Resort & Spa** is perfect for couples getaways, destination weddings and honeymoons. The resort offers suite-rooms in the property's main buildings and villas along private cul-de-sacs. No matter the sleeping accommodations, all guests have easy access to the resort's seven swimming pools and exquisite golden beach. Ocean World Adventure Park and Marina is located right next door, providing entertainment for the wedding party. Also in the same area is **Hacienda Resorts** offering 89 luxury villas with many additional amenities.

Appealing to the future

Over the next two years, more than a dozen hotels or resorts are planning grand openings from coast to coast. The most dramatic of these are two luxury mega-resort complexes with real estate opportunities, all on the scale of Casa de Campo.

To the south of Punta Cana, the \$500 million project of **Cap Cana** will feature three Jack Nicklaus Signature golf courses, a mega-yacht marina and three miles of private beach located on 25 million square miles.

To the north of Punta Cana, **Roco Ki** will also have a mega-yacht marina as part of an Aquatic Sports Center. Its golf course is designed by Nick Faldo and the resort is operated by Westin.

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