

Vivo Resorts: “All the benefits of Airbnb but with commissions”

By Cindy Sosroutomo - Wednesday, July 11, 2018

TORONTO — Most people compare Vivo Resorts, a gated community in Puerto Escondido, Mexico of luxury condos and private homes, to Airbnb. But Vivo offers one thing the popular online marketplace does not: commissions to travel agents.

Opened in 2010 just nine miles from downtown Puerto Escondido along the Oaxacan coast, Vivo operates a similar model as Airbnb: it rents out privately owned rooms to the general public. But the main difference, one that benefits agents in particular, is the 10% commission it offers on every booking, which is probably why Vivo is gaining traction among the trade.



The US\$200 million upscale development is experiencing huge growth in recent months, proving that demand for rental homes is at an all-time high. From Aug. 1, 2016 to July 31, 2017, the destination saw 350% annual growth, which owner Cary Mullen, a former Canadian Olympic downhill skier and World Cup champion, attributes to Oaxaca’s rising popularity.

“Oaxaca is an emerging destination known for its authentic, off-the-beaten-path appeal,” he said. *“Puerto Escondido was selected as the location for Vivo Resort due to its investment potential and its ideal spot on a pristine stretch of beach at the southern tip of Mexico.”*

Boasting consistently warm temperatures, low rainfall and low risk of hurricanes, Puerto Escondido is making a case for itself as Mexico’s latest hotspot. Flight volume to Puerto Escondido airport has increased by 300% in five years, and this trend is expected to increase from 185,000 air passengers in 2015 to 1.1 million by 2025. Moreover, the local population is expected to grow by 50% over the next 10 years, and more than US\$50 million has been set aside for infrastructure, upgrades and development.

All this is great news for Vivo Resorts, which is located approximately 60 miles from Huatulco International Airport and nine miles from Puerto Escondido Airport, and currently comprises 10 private homes and 110 condominiums. An additional 20 condos and four private homes are under construction and set for completion by year’s end, and at full-build there will be 114 private homes and up to 600 condominiums.

In the fall season there are 6,900 room nights available, 5,700 in winter months, 7,000 room nights in spring, and 2,900 room nights in the summer. The luxury condos occupy more than 75 acres of prime beachfront with the brand new, four-storey, \$7 million Vivo Clubhouse at its centre featuring the Senses Spa by Elaina, farm-to-table Oaxacan fine dining, a sports lounge, fitness club and yoga studio, events pace, business centre and library, kid’s club, general store, infinity edge pool with swim-up bar, a family pool with waterslide as well as two tennis courts and two pickle ball courts (set for completion in Q4 2018).

The luxury resort is resonating with Canadians, particularly those looking to escape the winter months. According to Mullen, over 50% of people who stay in holiday rental accommodations at Vivo are North Americans (with the other 50% being Mexican locals). Even more impressive, the Canadian representation for holiday condo and villa ownership at Vivo is much higher at 80%.

“As a Canadian and Winter Olympian, I know not only too well the benefit of being able to get away from it all and having a relaxing holiday by the ocean,” said Mullen. *“When we found our resort space it was like we had found heaven on earth.”*

Though snowbirds comprise much of Vivo's clientele, Jacqui Hickmann, Account Manager at dHzmedia, which represents Vivo Resorts in North America, says that the focus now is on short-term travellers.

"We're currently talking with WestJet to hopefully increase access to Puerto Escondido with direct flights," she told Travelweek, something she said would be *"huge"* for the destination. Currently, guests would fly into Huatulco then take a shuttle to Vivo, a journey that takes approximately an hour.

Hickmann also said that while bookings today are made by independent travel agents, Vivo is making a big push in the trade sector and is working to connect with larger groups like Transat.

As for the comparisons with Airbnb, Hickmann says it's inevitable but not necessarily a bad thing. *"With Vivo Resorts' self-service apartments, you get all the benefits of Airbnb but with the added benefit of commissions,"* she said.

Agents can book through Vivo's sales team at rentals@vivoresorts.com or by calling **1-888-236-2876**. For more information go to <http://www.vivovacations.com/>.