



TRAVEL / HOTELS

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## This New Mexican Mansion Boasts a 20-Seat Cinema and an Underground Speakeasy

It nestles on a 50-acre estate once owned by an Italian duchess.

By NICK SCOTT 



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Its underground speakeasy has a clandestine entrance and a set of decks which can be occupied by a resident staff DJ on request. Its 20-seat cinema has 4K surround sound – and a popcorn machine. Its rooftop terrace boasts a vast pool plunge and 360-degree views of the ocean and the surrounding jungle canopy. Its indoor fitness studio has a virtual, on-demand personal trainer.

Hotel Esencia's new mansion doesn't do things by halves: in fact, even the word 'Mansion' doesn't quite do justice to the newly renovated second 'Main House' to Hotel Esencia – the former home of Italian duchess Rosa de Ferrari, transformed into a 50-acre, 29-room private hotel estate by Silicon Valley entrepreneur, design buff and Hollywood producer Kevin Wendle.



ground speakeasy  
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A five-minute walk from the white sands of Xpu-Ha beach (widely considered the most impressive stretch of the Mayan Riviera), the four-suite mansion is located midway between Tulum and Playa del Carmen, around 50 miles south-west down the coast from Cancun. It's a place where up to eight guests can hang out in blissful seclusion and privacy – whilst still being a short walk from the main hotel's spa, and culinary draws such as Taiyo's Mexican-tinged sushi, Mistura's seafood tacos and Beefbar's certified Japanese Kobe beef.

All suites feature offer oversized windows (to ensure maximum enjoyment of the tropical surrounds), en-suite bathrooms with double sinks and walk-in wardrobes. Expect some tense coin-tossing, though, before one lucky couple makes their way to a master suite whose light-drenched bedroom features an adjacent office, plus a terrace whose hammock offers a pulse-slowing view over the main pool area below and the mansion's lush surrounds. Oh, and there's its own pool: one you slip into inside the bathroom but which extends outdoors and off the side of the building.



pool – one of the property's three

A true labour of love, conceived by Wendle, in close association with his friend Giancarlo Valle – a New York-based design company with whom he also worked when it came to his personal residential projects in New York and Rhode Island – the entire 12,000-square-foot space is an aesthete's treasure trove. When he opened the main hotel, Wendle, seeing Hotel Esencia as a home-away-from-home, transplanted a generous portion of his mid-century furniture, decorative objets and artworks to the property, and the mansion has received its fair share.

These harmonise elegantly with creations specially commissioned for the Mansion by Canadian artist (and regular loyal Hotel Esencia guest) Marcel Dzama. Usually a ink and watercolour specialist, Dzama here has fashioned ceramic tiles with custom drawings of animals, including peacocks and turtles, found in the region (local fauna and wildlife also feature on the striking murals found in the subterranean spaces).



ion is a repository of artworks, furniture and objets from owner Kevin Wendle's private collection  
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A private helicopter service is available for whistle-stop (or more in-depth) visits to Tulum and Mayan ruins (including Chichén Itzá, Bacalar and Coba) as well as mostly untouched island Cozumel and the buzzy capital Yucatán, Mérida. Jaunts to the outlying islands of Isla Mujeres and Holbox are also available: but they entail a full day away from a laid-back, gloriously appointed mega-mansion where the only thing on your mind bar sybaritic pleasure will be who to bring next time.

***Rates for The Esencia Mansion start at around £16,500 a night, including private round-trip transportation, personal concierge, daily in-villa breakfast and resident chef***

***See below for more pictures of The Esencia Mansion***



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