

FORTUNE

LIFESTYLE • INSIDE LOOK

Inside the new Waldorf Astoria hotel in Cancun

BY RACHEL KING

January 14, 2023 at 9:00 PM PST



The property is situated on 100 acres of Mayan coastline 19 miles south of Cancun's popular hotel zone and north of Riviera Maya.
COURTESY OF WALDORF ASTORIA CANCUN

Hilton recently opened the doors to its second Waldorf Astoria hotel in Mexico, marking the 200th Hilton property overall in Latin America and the Caribbean.

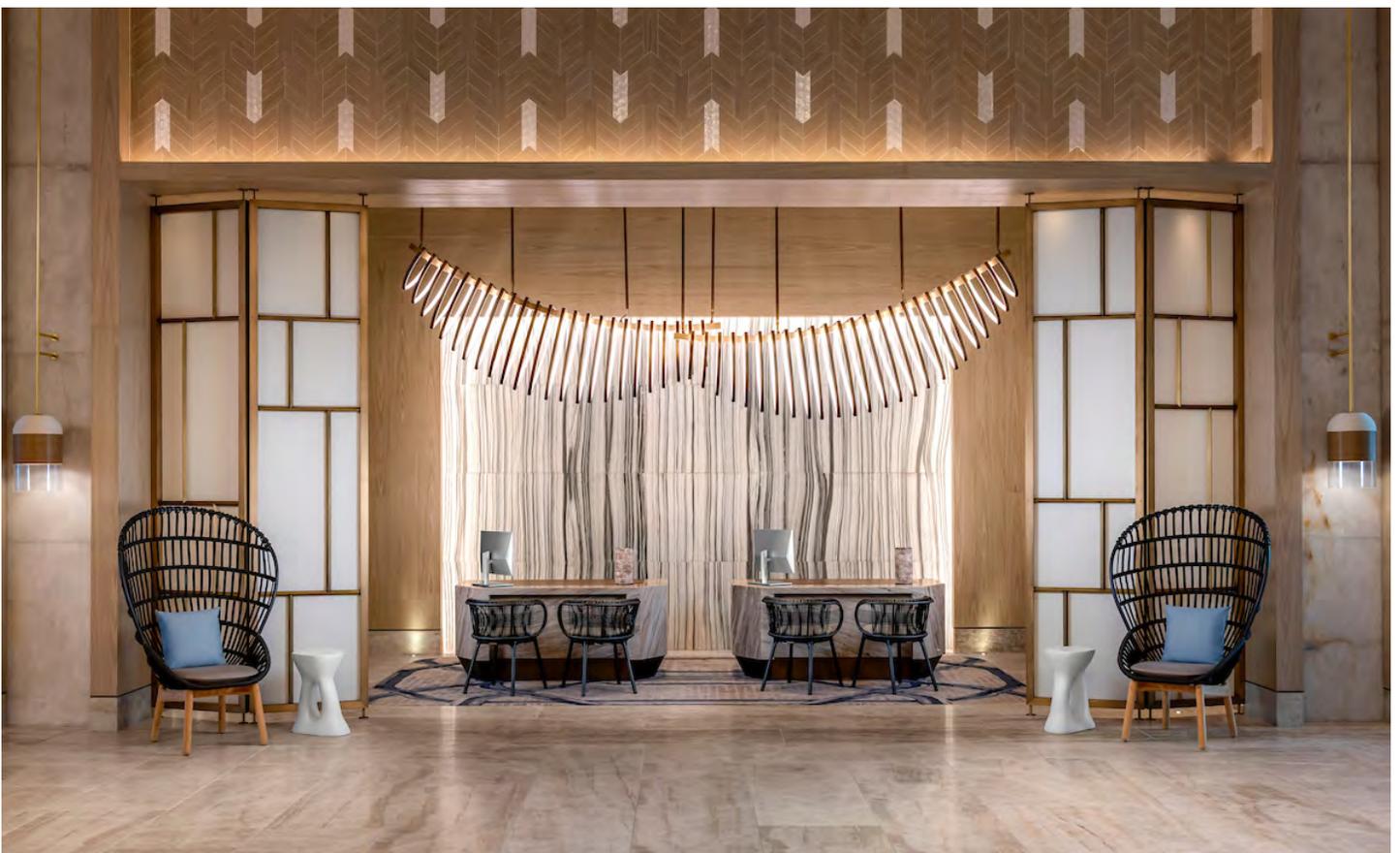
The 173-room luxury resort stands apart from other Cancun hotels in more ways than one. The first would be in a geographical sense as it is more secluded and 19 miles south of the party scene of Cancun's famous hotel zone. Just north of the Riviera Maya, the property is situated on 100 acres of Mayan coastline, on a secluded stretch of beach with a mangrove nature preserve in between the resort and the highway. That said, it's still convenient for visitors, being located just 10 miles from Cancun International Airport.



Managed by Hilton and owned by Parks Hospitality Holdings, Waldorf Astoria Cancun is a secluded oceanfront resort, located just 10 minutes from the international airport.

VICTOR ELIAS PHOTOGRAPHY FOR WALDORF ASTORIA CANCUN

But more crucially, it is levels above and beyond what most tourists think of when they think of hotels and resorts in Cancun. Much of that credit should go to Hirsch Bedner Associates (HBA), one of the world's largest hospitality design firms. The resort's interiors were designed as an interpretation of Cancun's natural wonders, with reliance on materials such as textured glass, inlaid pearl shell accents, metal trim, cove lighting, and illuminated crystal to draw connections to nature while fostering a luxurious haven through modern lines, repetitive patterns, and undulating forms that mimic the sea.



Completed by hospitality design firm, Hirsch Bedner Associates (HBA), the resort's interiors offer a unique interpretation of Cancun's natural wonders, with a connection to nature drawn through modern lines, repetitive patterns, and undulating forms meant to mimic the sea.

VICTOR ELIAS PHOTOGRAPHY FOR WALDORF ASTORIA CANCUN

It should be noted the Waldorf Astoria Cancun is owned by Hilton, the parent company for Waldorf Astoria among many other hotel brands, and Parks Hospitality Holdings (PHH), which develop, builds, and operates hotels in Mexico's major tourism markets, notably Cancun and the Riviera Maya on the Caribbean and Los Cabos in Baja California along the Pacific Ocean.



Among standout details is the signature Waldorf Astoria Clock, paying homage to the landmark and centerpiece of the lobby at Waldorf Astoria New York. The tradition continues at Waldorf Astoria Cancun, with the clock, designed by HBA and created by Smith of Derby, serving as a focal point and meeting place for guests. VICTOR ELIAS PHOTOGRAPHY FOR WALDORF ASTORIA CANCUN

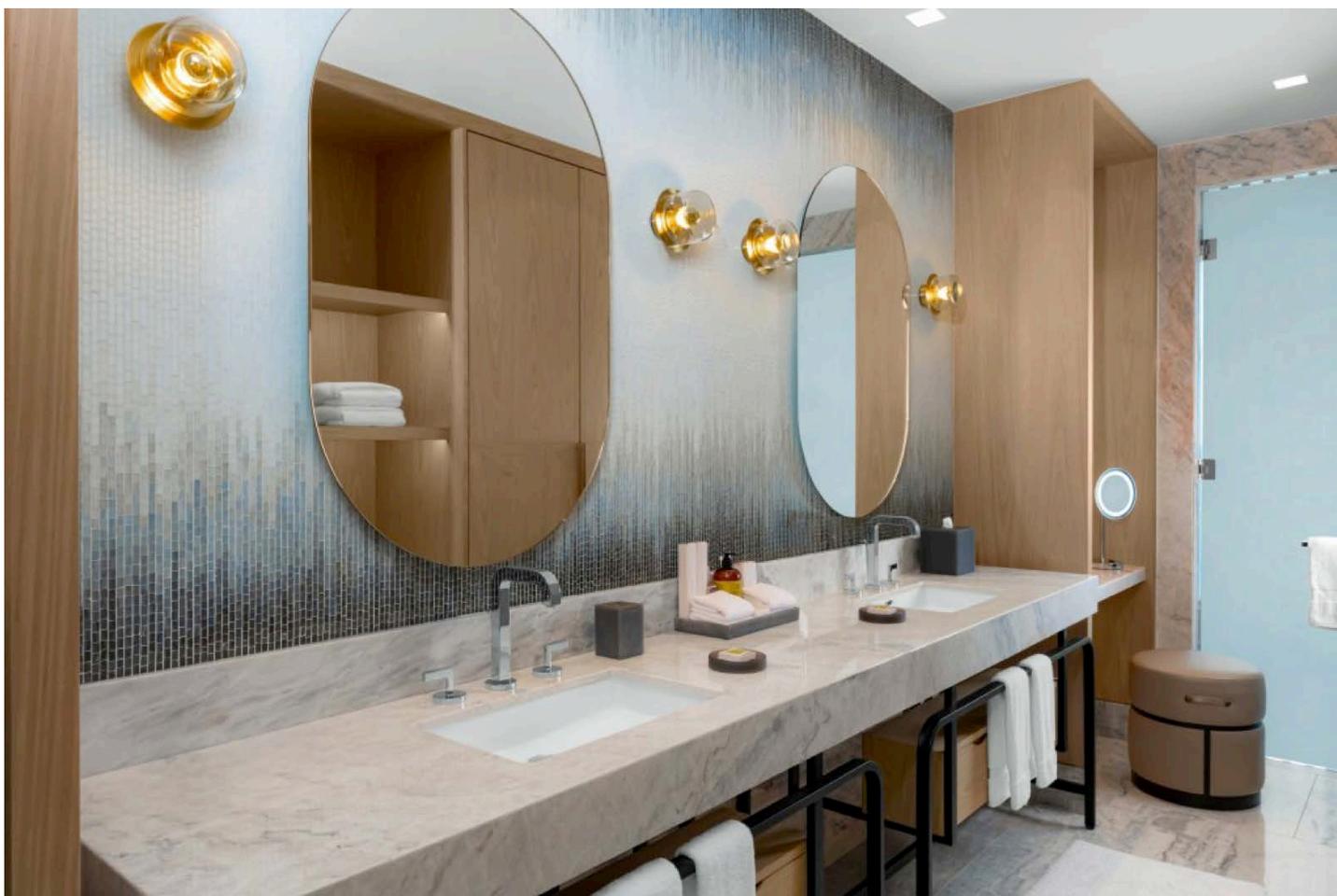
But there are nods to the Waldorf's heritage integrated throughout the hotel, starting with the signature Waldorf Astoria Clock, reflecting the centerpiece in the lobby of the historic Waldorf Astoria New York. The Waldorf Astoria Cancun clock, designed by HBA and created by Smith of Derby, is meant to serve as both a focal point and meeting place for guests. (There's also the Peacock Alley cocktail bar and lounge, also borrowed from its New York predecessor; the Cancun iteration was adapted with a tropical setting within the mangroves.)



Inspired by the dramatic shadows cast by abundant local flora, the guest room palette is fresh, calming and neutral, layered with supple textures and accented with warm metal tones and glowing light features. VICTOR ELIAS PHOTOGRAPHY FOR WALDORF ASTORIA CANCUN

The natural theme extends to the 173 rooms (including 34 suites), but with a lighter and much more calming palette, starting with an elegant art screen designed to filter natural light from the sunshine and the ocean while providing a sense of privacy for the sleeping area. The seating area features a rounded sofa, reminiscent of the lobby layout, and a plush area rug with a calming hue of blue.

The bathroom spans the entire length of the room, allowing ample natural light to flood the space, anchored by a vanity in front of a blue ombre mosaic wall. (And all of the guest rooms and suites offer oceanfront views.)



The bathroom spans the entire length of the guest room, allowing ample natural light to flood the space, which is defined by a dramatic wet vanity standing prominently in front of a blue ombre mosaic wall.

VICTOR ELIAS PHOTOGRAPHY FOR WALDORF ASTORIA CANCUN

The suites include more living and sleeping spaces—including dining tables and connecting guest rooms—while the presidential suite offers a dining area with seating for ten, a pool table, a library, a screening room, multiple balconies, and two plunge pools. And several select guest rooms, and one of the suites, also feature swim-up patios allowing guests direct access to a private outdoor swimming pool.



Many of the 173 rooms and suites feature private balconies with soaking tubs and ocean views.

VICTOR ELIAS PHOTOGRAPHY FOR WALDORF ASTORIA CANCUN

Between its proximity to the beach but, more crucially, the international airport, the resort is also a prime destination for corporate events and weddings, with more than 68,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor meeting space shared with the all-inclusive [Hilton Cancun](#) next door.

That includes a main and junior ballroom, and 12 meeting spaces spanning over two floors. Spaces such as the Azul Ballroom can accommodate events and parties of 60 to over 2,000, and for smaller intimate gatherings, the Waldorf Astoria Ballroom offers space for 30 to 380 attendees.



The spa design is defined by an indoor-outdoor connection, with a lobby space featuring a circular sunken lounge area leading out to a lush outdoor landscape. VICTOR ELIAS PHOTOGRAPHY FOR WALDORF ASTORIA CANCUN

It would be possible for visitors to come to the Waldorf Astoria Cancun without visiting much else outside of the property, and that really comes down to the culinary program. The hotel has five food and beverage venues, ranging from light poolside fare to world-class fine dining.

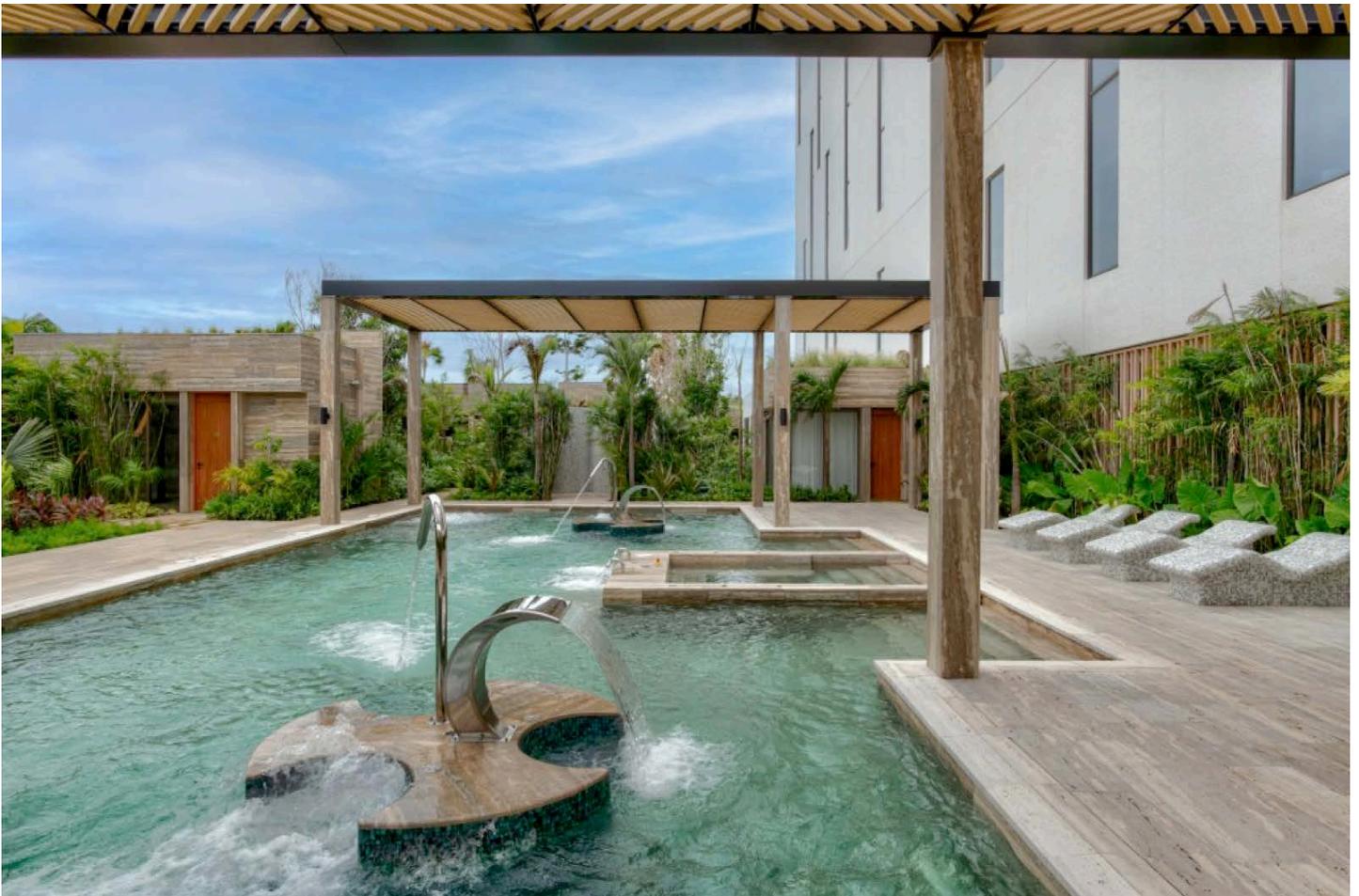


In the spirit of traditional Mexican recipes and cantina cooking, Jao was designed to link a relaxed form of luxury with al fresco dining. VICTOR ELIAS PHOTOGRAPHY FOR WALDORF ASTORIA CANCUN

Malpeque, the resort's flagship restaurant, specializes in local seafood and is centered around an open-flame grill. The entire experience is grounded by an energetic open kitchen, where each dish incorporates an element of smoke, char, or fire. Standout dishes from include baked scallops in the shell served with a chipotle-vermouth sauce and puff pastry casing, made with seasonally harvested ingredients.

Most guests will likely find themselves at Chaya more frequently, with a wide range of dishes—especially at breakfast—blending American and Mexican flavors and favorites, including enchiladas (that can be made vegan) and chilaquiles. Just next door, J'ao is much more focused on traditional Mexican cantina cooking, but with a high-energy vibe and a drinks program celebrating locally made beer, Mexican wine, and cocktails made from an expansive selection of boutique agave spirits.

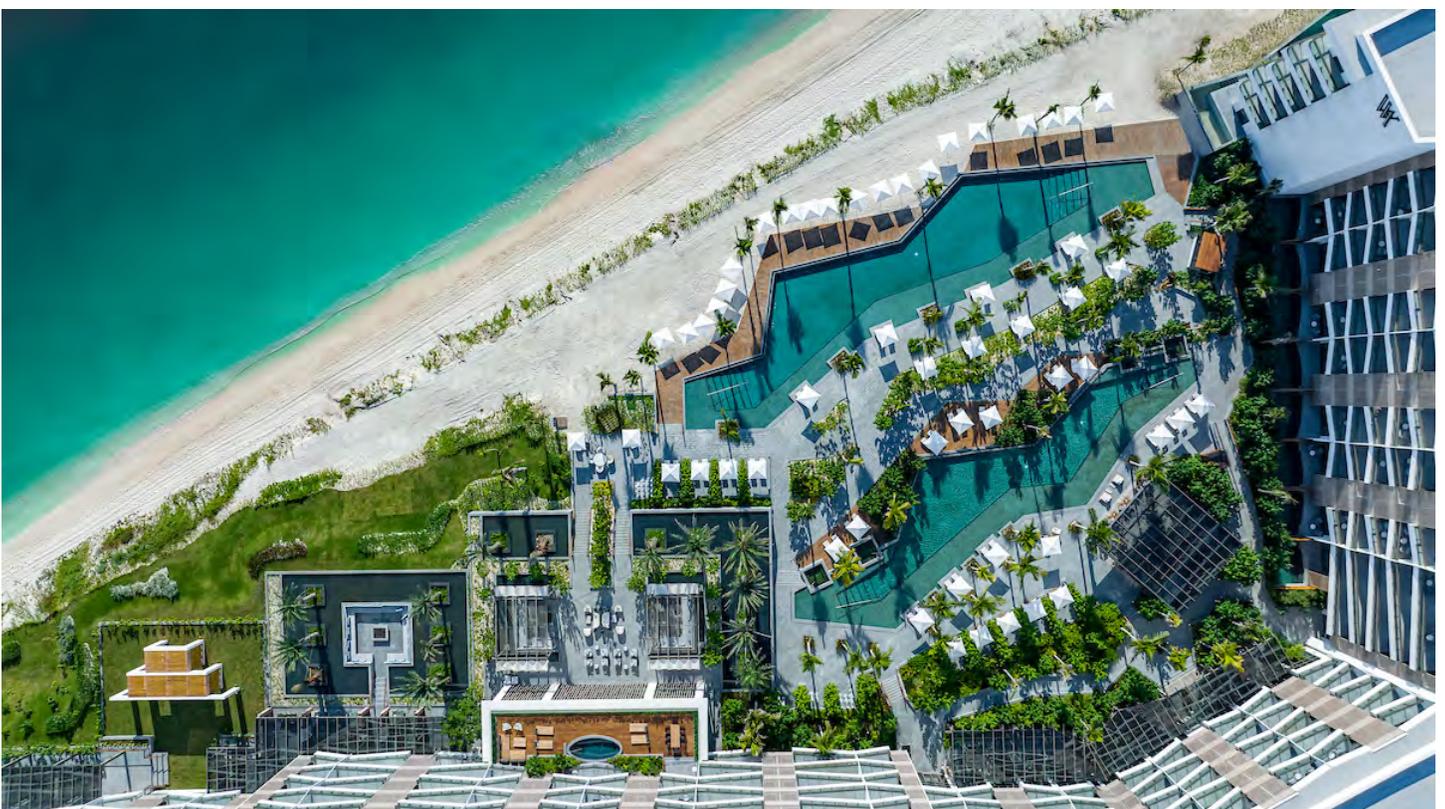
All three of the restaurants have indoor and outdoor seating, so guests can opt for alfresco dining with a view or comfortably inside with air conditioning.



With more than 40,000 square feet, the spa features 21 indoor and outdoor treatment rooms, a salon, sauna, extensive thermal area, outdoor spa pool and garden, and relaxation lounges.

VICTOR ELIAS PHOTOGRAPHY FOR WALDORF ASTORIA CANCUN

The opening of the Waldorf Astoria Cancun marks the latest marker in Hilton's ambitious roadmap in Latin America—particularly in Mexico where it has nearly 90 properties, including the hotel's sister property, the [Waldorf Astoria in Los Cabos Pedregal](#)—home to [El Farallon](#), one of the best restaurants in Mexico, perched on one of the most breathtaking settings in North America—as well as nearby resorts such as the [Conrad Tulum Riviera Maya](#), the [Hilton Tulum Riviera Maya](#), and [Motto by Hilton Tulum](#).



Behind a mangrove nature preserve, on a secluded stretch of beach, the hotel offers the blend of heritage and modern sophistication with an abundance of choices to create an ideal getaway.

VICTOR ELIAS PHOTOGRAPHY FOR WALDORF ASTORIA CANCUN

Rates for the Waldorf Astoria Cancun currently start at [\\$466 per night](#) for an oceanfront guest room with either one king bed or two queen beds.