

170 GIFTS THEY'LL BRAG ABOUT TOWN & COUNTRY

DECEMBER 2019/JANUARY 2020

HOW TO CELEBRATE

(DESPITE IT ALL)

America's
FAIRYTALE
WEDDING

FAMILY
SCANDAL
A HOLIDAY
SURVIVAL GUIDE

XMAS in EXTREMIS

\$15,000 Trees!
\$12,000 Turtledoves!
Status Desserts!
Giuliani vs. Giuliani!



Is Santa a Jedi?
**KERI
RUSSELL**
on all the
STAR WARS
Secrets



T&C TRAVEL

WHERE TO PARTY IN 2020

A GLOBAL PLANNING GUIDE

BY SARA CLEMENCE

Celebrate! Take your pick of castles and camps, ranches and resorts, islands, superyachts, museums, and more. (Here, at the Whitney Museum in New York.)

THE GLOBAL PARTY

Celebrate like fashion players in *Mexico*

CONVENE AT THE "CLUB" ON THE CARIBBEAN

The 50-acre **Hotel Esencia**, on the Caribbean coast between Tulum and Playa del Carmen, was built in 1993 as an Italian duchess's retreat. Now owned by entertainment mogul and entrepreneur Kevin Wendle, it has become a favorite of the fashion set: Jason Wu was wed here in 2016, Aerin Lauder took it over for a product launch, and event planner Bryan Rafanelli treats it as his private clubhouse: "I get there and never leave." The decor blends Mexican, Mediterranean, and Midcentury Modern, and there are 40 suites and three villas. You might cover the new presidential suite for yourself, or bestow it on your own VIP: It has a wraparound terrace and a private stretch of beach. Should you want your guests to do more than lounge on the sand and give toasts on the lawn, the ruins of Tulum are a short, champagne-stocked yacht trip away.

A Bryan Rafanelli party setup at Hotel Esencia.



Fashion designer Jason Wu and Gustavo Rangel's Esencia wedding.

HOST A BLOWOUT IN **BAJA**

Cabo's southern tip has long been party central for its convenience, its resorts, and the allure of sea and desert. **One&Only Palmilla** is the classic, but just opened on a swimmable stretch of the Sea of Cortez is the **Four Seasons Los Cabos at Costa Palmas**—ideal for big blowouts of 150 guests or more, with a three-bedroom presidential villa for a host base. **Villa Turquesa**, in the hillside Pedregal area, fits the bill for a smaller event; it sleeps 20 adults and eight children and was built for entertaining: 10,000 square feet of outdoor space (terraces, an infinity pool, a palapa for dining, and a putting green), with 180-degree views of the Pacific. It's like having a party in the sky.

PLAY A TYCOON ON THE **PACIFIC**

Once tycoon Sir James Goldsmith's personal 2,000-acre retreat, **Cuixmala** is an ochre-hued Moorish fantasy with a cupola that fronts a private beach on a stretch of the Pacific called, not for nothing, the Virgin Coast. The privacy explains why *tout le monde* has jetted here (the list is too long to print). The 38 all-white rooms are spread out over lush terrain between the main house, casitas, and multisuite villas. There's horseback riding, lagoonside picnics, beach barbecues, birdwatching, and an epic golf course, El Tamarindo, up the coast. Make the main event a candlelit affair on the beach with fireworks over the water.

DO Arrange for a dedicated on-site travel concierge—for everyone's scheduling conundrums.

DON'T Surprise people with physical activities. Send detailed itineraries ahead of time.

WHO TO CALL

Event planners who contributed to this article appear on page 108 and work globally. We also recommend these Mexico travel specialists: Zach Rabinor for Cuixmala, Hotel Esencia, and much more (ZACH@JOURNEYMEXICO.COM), and Julie Byrd for Los Cabos (JULIE@CABOVILLAS.COM).