

Haciendas

DEL MUNDO MAYA



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A VITAL AND INVISIBLE ECOSYSTEM

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CONSERVATION OF THE MAYAN BIOCULTURAL HERITAGE

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MARTES DE CHARAS: FIRST-YEAR ROUND

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The Yucatán Peninsula has long been a transformative destination for travelers.



From the enigmatic ruins of the ancient civilization to the lush, tropical landscapes, visitors often find themselves deeply moved by the region's thriving cultural tapestry. Historic figures such as Empress Carlota of México, the intrepid explorer John Stephens, the preeminent illustrator Frederick Catherwood, and the bold journalist Alma Reed have all had their lives profoundly impacted by their experiences in Yucatán.

Catherwood was mesmerized by the architectural grandeur of the Maya ruins, which he meticulously documented through his lithographs. These explorers' encounters with the Yucatán's majestic past have enriched their lives and broadened the world's understanding of the Maya civilization. Modern-day historians, archaeologists, artists, scientists, changemakers, travelers, and adventurers continue to follow in their footsteps, discovering personal and professional stimulation amidst the peninsula's wonders. The Yucatán Peninsula remains the place where the past and present converge.

Inspired by these examples and the deep transformations we observe in the Yucatecan communities and societies, we look forward to celebrating and dignifying this extensive land. We do not aim to work and establish ourselves here, but to weave bonds and take root; we do not desire only to visit places and gaze at astonishing panoramas, but immerse ourselves in the character of these people and penetrate the essence of their nature and environment.

In doing so, our initiatives have been touched by the temper and costumes of these people to learn something: the will to exist breaks through far beyond the generations.



“I come to Hacienda Cuzumal to dwell, to re-energize, and to reconnect with myself and my family. Here I can see clearly and get inspired.”

—Chef René Redzepi



Renewal and Tradition in *The Haciendas Spas*

By Las Haciendas / Paralelo 19

Set amidst some of the most stunning landscapes in the world, San José, Santa Rosa, Uayamón, and Puerta Campeche exude captivating magic. *The haciendas* in Yucatán, surrounded by terraces and gardens, evoke a profound sense of peacefulness. Once dedicated to sisal production, these historic properties have undergone meticulous restoration, transforming them into hotels that now represent elegance and tradition. They propose a singular opportunity to step back in time and experience México as it was in the XVII and XVIII centuries.

Hence, we extend a warm invitation to discover *The Haciendas Spas*. Nestled in the most iconic corners of the Yucatán Peninsula, these spas and ancient Maya wisdom seamlessly integrate with the fascinating panorama, as we aim to provide travelers with unique experiences that merge traditional medicine and modern innovations. *The Haciendas Spas* somehow breathe in harmony with the surrounding nature, providing a peaceful sanctuary for rejuvenation and relaxation.

The Haciendas Spas offer a variety of treatments with local ingredients such as *copal* and aloe vera, renowned for their revitalizing and calming properties. We invite you to enjoy a relaxing massage or rejuvenate your face with the *melipona* honey facial—a divine elixir from the Maya world with magical restorative properties—after touring the pre-Hispanic sites or taking a stroll in Mérida. Our treatments and massages combine ancestral wisdom with contemporary techniques, for we aspire to restore inner connection and promote balance and well-being for our guests.

HEALING AND WISE HANDS

One of the notable features of *The Haciendas Spas* is their therapists, many of whom are natural healers, holders of the ancestral healing legacy known as *sobada*. This ancient massage technique has been passed down through generations. It allows them to harness the power of touch to heal and alleviate muscular pains, treat various ailments like digestive issues, improve circulation, and promote a deep connection with nature. Employing their hands as healing instruments, these therapists provide more than just massages, they bestow transformative experiences that nourish both body and spirit.

The spas at *The Haciendas* are deeply integrated into the development of local communities and contribute to socio-economic growth. Its birth resulted from a collaboration with The Haciendas del Mundo Maya Foundation. Together, we assembled a team to provide spa services, with women from the communities who possessed these skills and were eager to join the therapist team.

This initiative facilitated the way for today; nowadays, residents of their communities occupy nearly 80% of the posts created by *The Haciendas*. So, spas represent authentic sanctuaries that thread history to furnish an unparalleled experience. We offer more than just wellness retreats, they represent the history that intertwines with the magnificence of wildlife. Through

our emblematic Maya *sobada*, healers practice purification ceremonies and rituals. Each corner extends an invitation to escape the hustle and bustle of modern life, allowing guests to cherish moments of calmness and self-discovery.

At Hacienda Santa Rosa, you can enjoy treatments made with natural ingredients, freshly harvested from the botanical garden dedicated to the local flora and fauna promotion and conservation. Meanwhile, at the spas of haciendas Uayamón and San José, the sounds and aromas of the enclosing nature nourish the experience. Our spa at Hacienda San José stands out for its charming treatment rooms built in Mayan-style houses. Hacienda Puerta Campeche, located in the capital of Campeche, is an example of such contemporary expressions of vernacular architecture.

Allow our therapists to guide you on a journey of serenity and rejuvenation while immersing in the exquisite natural beauty. Pamper yourself and uncover the marvel of genuine renovation. We invite travelers who prioritize nature, sustainability, and holistic well-being to come here and live this encounter.

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A VITAL AND INVISIBLE ECOSYSTEM

By Carlos Galindo Leal / TAE



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As the human population has grown along with its consumer appetite, the planet's ecosystems have been transformed, often deteriorated and even lost. If this has happened with the ecosystems that we gaze at and appreciate before our eyes, what will happen with those that we neither notice nor understand—the invisible ecosystems? In recent years, we have realized the importance of marine ecosystems and how we have impacted them. For the vast majority of human beings, it is more straightforward to identify the destruction of a jungle than that of a barrier reef or seagrass bed. Nevertheless, the consequences of these losses significantly affect the species that live there as much as us.

HIDDEN ECOSYSTEMS

Aquifers are one of these invisible ecosystems. There are small and large ones, with slow or fast flows, impressive underground rivers, or tiny cracks that act as sponges. However, aquifers are not only water reservoirs, but aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems on which our sociocultural ecosystems lie.

In the Yucatán Peninsula, there is one of the largest aquifers in the world with unique features. It extends over more than 2,000 km², covering the states of Campeche, Yucatán, and Quintana Roo, as well as parts of Guatemala and Belize. It includes the most extensive system of underground rivers worldwide. Upon this large calcium platform, water appears through wonderful circular windows known as cenotes, from the Maya *ts'onot*—"hole with water."

It is estimated that there are around 9,000 cenotes on the peninsula, a giant proportion of which form the extraordinary "ring of cenotes", a half circle with a radius of 90 kilometers and centered in the town of Chicxulub. This spectacular formation is related to the impact of the Chicxulub asteroid. This meteorite hit Earth around 65 million years ago and caused the fifth mass extinction in the Cretaceous, resulting in the loss of 75% of species.

Cenotes, besides being the source of life for residents and favorite places for recreation, are also essential for an extensive community of species, many of them endemic to the aquifer. Some of the distinctive fish of cenotes are the catfish, Yucatecan *guayacón*, southeastern mojarra, little sardines, Yucatecan molly, etc. A tremendous diversity of crustaceans also lives in these aquatic ecosystems.



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In the dry season, cenotes are distinguished from afar by their lush vegetation including enormous fig trees or black amate trees (*Ficus*), known locally as *álamos*, which extend their roots along the walls until they reach the water. It also includes capirona or Pau-Mulato and *mandimbo* or bastard cherry. These species produce a considerable amount of fruit at the end of the dry season that supports more than 50 species of birds and many mammals. They are considered “keystone species” that support much of the community.

In addition, these oases in the middle of the dry jungle contain other important species such as *ramón*, trumpet tree, *ceiba*, and *guano* palm. The refuge of these species provides environmental conditions of humidity and temperature in the cenotes and their area of influence that attract a prominent number of butterflies, beetles, bees, wasps and bumblebees, toucans, owls, New World orioles, *charas*, frogs and toads, turtles, crocodiles, and boas constrictor, bats, and monkeys. To date, more than 1,400 species of plants, fungi, and animals associated with cenotes have been recorded through citizen science.



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The disturbance regimes of the peninsula are associated with hurricanes, fires, droughts, and floods that have occurred naturally since immemorial times. But now, human beings are the main disturbing factor on the peninsula. Historically, different activities have transformed the peninsula’s jungles. More recently, agriculture, pork farming, tourism, and disorderly real estate development have altered Yucatecan landscapes.

A PENDING INQUIRY

What happens to invisible ecosystems like the aquifer? How do we measure their health or deterioration? The health or ecological integrity of an aquifer is a measure of the stability and resilience of the processes related to its water quality and quantity and its integrated ecosystems. The aquifer is not only the water that runs beneath the ground. Unique ecosystems rely on the aquifer, ranging

from magical cenotes to mangroves and coastal *petenes*, fed by groundwater that travels enormous distances. The aquifer has been the basis of sociocultural ecosystems that have developed on the peninsula for more than 10,000 years, including the great Maya civilization. The well-being, culture, and economy of present and future dwellers lean on the health of the aquifer.

It is essential to reverse the deterioration of the aquifer and its dependent ecosystems, starting with the elimination of pollution from various sources and the restoration of its ecosystems. Human being’s strength is narrowly attached to this wonderful and imperceptible ecosystem.

To learn more, visit:
www.claudiayrobertohernandez.org

Conservation of the Mayan Biocultural Heritage Through Youth-to-Youth Leadership

By Baktún Pueblo Maya

Cultural Mediators and Promoters is a youth leadership program dedicated to university students who, eager to acquire practical experience, serve as mentors so that high-school students become promoters of their cultural legacy. This way, Baktún supports the conservation of Mayan biocultural heritage and collective well-being.

This Baktún Pueblo Maya program, established in alliance with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Intercultural Maya University of Quintana Roo, aims to develop personal, social, and life skills; rediscover and resignify their cultural patrimony; and nurture identity among Mayan youth. There is a premise behind it: if they can promote community participation, they will evolve into leaders and changemakers.

Two and a half years later, 32 university cultural mediators and 295 adolescent cultural promoters graduated; during this period time, they received accompaniment, mediation, and mentoring. In this process, training cultural mediators is fundamental. The curriculum focuses on developing human, professional, community, and cultural abilities, nurturing self-confidence, socio-emotional, cognitive, and communicative skills. It fosters leadership and project management, promotes social awareness and participation, and enhances their sense of belonging and cultural identity.

Training sessions (180 hours) were conducted in person and virtually. Baktún organized meetings, community

experiences, learning, and listening circles along the way. These committed mediators took on the role of active agents to propagate and advance culture within their communities.

With more than 197 hours of complementary accompaniment through calls, messages, or video calls with coaches, technology apps also played a key role in this initiative. This modality allowed flexibility and expansion of learning beyond face-to-face sessions, thereby maximizing the training impact.

“The program changed me completely. It taught me how to build community. Before, I was a loner and spent a tough time trying to talk to new people, but here I learned that, although we are different, we share interests and challenges that can help each other. I greatly value the coaches’ support and patience even beyond the program.”

La Esperanza, Quintana Roo, mediator.

Community cultural project prototypes by field

EDUCATION	GASTRONOMY	TOURISM	CRAFT	TECHNOLOGY	AGROECOLOGY
Educational intervention and experiences	Economical, healthy and traditional dining room	Tour and experience in <i>meliponario</i>	Collectives to preserve the three types of embroidery	Web page for the sale of crafts	Backyard chicken production
	<i>Chaya tortilla</i>	Tour experience in the town Señor	Recycled embroidered notebooks	Community museum	Garden nursery
		Rental of traditional cabins with decolonizing food	Blanket bags embroidered with native flora and fauna	Pet care product based on traditional organic medicine	
			Creation of handmade accessories		



“K ojéel ba’ax in k’áato’on yéetel k múul meyaj kaajal, k táan óoltik ti’al ma’atan u tubul k maya t’aan, ti’al u kaniko’ob u t’aan le paalalo’ob le maya t’aan bey xan le inglés, meentun tu ka’ap’éel k’abéet, yaan ti to’on u yits’atil le t’ano’ob, k ojéel tsikbal-ka’ansaj yéetel ajsaj túukul te kuxtala’. Bejla’e’ k taal te much’tal ti’al u’uy tuláakal tuukulo’ob, ti’al much’ kaambal yéetel ch’a’muuk’ ichil to’on.”



“With our community project, we want to preserve our language. We want children to learn English but also Maya because both languages are useful for them. We also know mediation, socio-emotional skills, and life skills. Today we came to this meeting to listen to all the ideas, learn from everyone, and get inspired by others.”

Dziuché, Quintana Roo, mediator.

THE RISING ENTHUSIASM

The community participated in the organization of festivals and celebrations that honored cultural diversity and encouraged dialogue among different generations. These so-called *cultural caravans* played a central role in connecting the 12 participant communities and disseminating the revalorization of local heritage. They served as the core of the project’s integration and implementation.

Mediators and promoters managed focus groups to gather valuable opinions and perceptions from the community, so the activities and events were aligned with local needs and expectations. What is more, community workshops from these groups offered opportunities for steady learning and energized participation in the preservation and promotion of their culture.

Another notable achievement was the creation of 15 prototypes of community cultural projects oriented to motivate entrepreneurship. This initiative highlights the projects’ potential to contribute to the region’s economic development.

EVOLUTION NEVER CEASES

The program culminated in the graduation of both cultural promoters and mediators. At this event, we recognized and celebrated their significant contributions to the flourishing of culture in the Yucatán Peninsula.

Furthermore, mediators also accomplished a certification issued by the National Council for Standardization and Certification of Labor Skills (CONOCER, by its Spanish acronym) by the México Secretary of Labor and Social Welfare. It provides them with formal recognition of their pedagogical mediation skills and capabilities.

By obtaining this certification, they validated their academic training, strengthened their professional profile, and improved their scope and job prospects. Establishing a network among young participants is also part of the mission. It constitutes a strategic channel to communicate employment alternatives and project financing calls. This bond broadens their horizons and allows them to build valuable practical experience. Hence, Baktún prepares them to face the challenges of the contemporary world with confidence and resolution, while fostering a deeper sense of pride in their culture and biocultural heritage.

This project has demonstrated that cultural training is not only educational but also transformative. Through various activities and events, it has helped to regenerate the cultural fabric of the region. This project highlighted the importance of community partnership in the conservancy and celebration of the cultural prosperity of the Yucatán Peninsula.

The *Milpa* in the Yucatán Peninsula

Tasting Mayan Flavors and Cultural Heritage



By Las Haciendas / Paralelo 19

Mayan cuisine has never been more dynamic and vigorous than today. Inspired by the *milpa* tradition, the five chefs from *The Haciendas* use local ingredients to drive their talent and creativity in presenting a renewed gastronomic proposal, where age-old techniques share the spotlight equally with contemporary culinary perspectives. On the Yucatán Peninsula, the *milpa* has endured as a timeless cultural heritage, reaching back millennia to show how humans and the environment have interacted harmoniously via observation and sustainability.

In the *milpa* system, four structural elements provide the dietary and nutritional components of the Mexican people: maize, beans, chili pepper, and local squash. It goes beyond just being a source of food. The *milpa* is in the essence of the Maya civilization, one of the most prominent cultures in human history. Since crop rotation and traditional agricultural methods mitigate climate fluctuations and soil deteriorating disorders, the *milpa* can adapt to a myriad of climatic and environmental conditions.

By incorporating elements of the *milpa* into their menus, our chefs integrate traditional ingredients of Mexican agriculture into modern gastronomy. They experiment and discover mixtures that observe classic ingredients, merging the millennial soul of the *milpa* with contemporary gastronomic creativity. This approach not only seeks to delight the palate but also honors the rich cultural heritage of the *milpa* and its deep connection to México's culinary identity.

Adjusting this proposal to *The Haciendas'* restaurants, within the natural cycles of Maya culture, means approaching the *milpa* as a system of balanced coexistence between human beings and the land. The intergenerational transmission of wisdom around the *milpa* reinforces Maya cultural identity and strengthens community ties. Through its practice, communities weave and profound their bonds with nature, preserve cultural traditions and food security, and promote economic and social development.

In this context, chefs like Claudia Domínguez, resident chef of Hacienda Temozón, find stimulation and connection with the *milpa*. Claudia shares her experience: "The *Milpa* Menu takes me back to my childhood when I learned to make *tortillas*, as my father brought products from the fields or the *milpa* itself. This affinity with my roots is the core of my cooking practice: transforming something relatively simple into exquisite dishes. As we combine the techniques of the haciendas haute-cuisine with our home-style recipes, each menu is defined by the chef's creativity. So we prepare unique dishes that reflect our culinary heritage and celebrate Mother Earth,

blending techniques and flavors that fuse the finest of our culinary seeds with contemporary gastronomy."

The Haciendas' chefs are proud heirs to a millennium-old lineage. Ingredients are carefully selected along with local *milperos* and farmers, who cultivate products using traditional techniques and respecting the natural land cycles. Our chefs invite travelers to immerse themselves in the *milpa's* heart. Thus *The Haciendas* extends a fascinating invite: let its flavors ignite your senses, and discover a bond that flies way beyond the table.

MILPA SYSTEM AT THE HACIENDAS

It is food sovereignty pillar

It constitutes a mutual balance with nature

It is based on Mayan people's tradition

On your plate, you enjoy a diverse and cultural experience from the *milpa* and Yucatecan gastronomy



06
CHEFS

01
MILPA

Families harvest up to 28 products in the *milpa*: maize, chili pepper, beans, pumpkin, lentils, fruits, tubers, cucumber, etc.



The *Haciendas* are supplied with this variety of local products and thus create a local economy



05
THE HACIENDAS

02
BACKYARD

Families can harvest up to 88 products in their backyards: fruits, chili peppers, vegetables, medicinal plants, forage, etc.



Families obtain, vines for baskets, honey, *huano*, and curative plants in their *milpas*



04
"EL MONTE"

03
ANIMALS

Families raise chickens, turkeys, ducks, rabbits, pigs, sheep, and cattle



Doña Estela Martín Pech

SPA THERAPIST AND SOBADORA

By Paralelo 19 / Las Haciendas

Nestled in the heart of Yucatán, Temozón lies as a sanctuary of serenity. As we delve into the essence of this community, we immerse in Doña Estela's life. Estela is a renowned sobadora whose journey aligns with the rich cultural heritage of local medicine while embracing modern innovations. She was one of the pioneers in creating the spirit of *The Haciendas Spas*, using it as a space for incubating entrepreneurial skills and ensuring sustainable income. Doña Estela joined the spa in the late 90s when the hacienda operated as a hotel. Her experience and career have established her position as one of the most recognized therapists among our guests.

How did you begin your path as a sobadora and traditional medicine practitioner?

I am from Sihunchén, near Temozón. I have three daughters and three sons. As a child, I learned to live off the land and the *milpa*. I woke up early from my hammock and went with my father to the field to help him. I moved to Temozón when I married, but as a healer, I have practiced for over 30 years. My grandmother, Paulina Balam, bestowed me with this knowledge. She was a renowned sobadora and midwife. I accompanied her to healing sessions she offered in the community. She allowed me to listen to what the ancients did to heal people and explained what she did to relieve them. People of all ages and different communities used to visit her.

What memories do you have of learning this ability from your grandma?

I have always been enthusiastic about learning and exploring new things. My adventure began by assisting pregnant women with massages to aid them during pregnancy. I also started delivering my services to alleviate bone alignments

and digestive discomforts. I have inherited the techniques and the knowledge of therapeutic plants and herbs from the *traspatio*, which we use to prepare teas and oils with healing properties. What prides me more is that the knowledge handed down by my grandma has been passed on to my daughter. Witnessing the continuity of our family's legacy inspires me and reinforces my commitment to promoting our ancestral wisdom.

How did you manage to join a project where you are a model for women?

When the hacienda began operating as a hotel, *The Haciendas'* staff, along with the Haciendas del Mundo Maya Foundation, invited women from the community to join the formation of the spa team and training sessions to become spa therapists. The training lasted several months and I was 50 years old back then. We started as spa therapists and I cried with emotion. I have been a sobadora and a professional therapist for 32 years. With formal training, we transitioned into certified therapists, which allowed us to be recognized and operate professionally.

What role do traditional practices play in *The Haciendas Spas*?

They play a paramount role in helping our guests feel rejuvenated and bonded to our ancient customs. These methods complement modern spa treatments seamlessly, providing a holistic and natural approach to relaxation and well-being. Our traditional practices are deeply rooted in our identity and heritage. At the spa, we not only propose modern treatments but also strive to share these cherished traditions with our clients.

How does working at the spa benefit women in the community?

I can talk about my daughter Claudia, who delivered her services at the spa. This opportunity allowed her to support her family, ensuring her children have school supplies. The same has occurred to other women who have worked at the spa or are currently employed there. Holding revenue grants us independence as women. When my husband



fell ill, performing as a therapist at the spa permitted me to care for him and purchase his medications. So, it expands our horizons by exposing us to new places, languages, and people.

How would you describe the experience you provide for well-being?

My wish is to leave our guests completely revitalized and rejuvenated. It brings me immense pride knowing that many guests specifically return seeking my services. We extend a warm, personalized approach tailored to their needs, ensuring they feel nurtured and embraced from the beginning. As a Mayan woman, I am a custodian of our cultural heritage. My commitment to ancestral practices and traditional medicine constitutes a holistic approach to well-being and raises a profound connection between guests and the cultural legacy of our region.

What is the most significant lesson you have learned?

The importance of listening to those who seek my help. Each individual has unique pains and issues, making it essential to discern which areas of the body require attention. Through careful touch, I can identify discomfort and tension in muscles, enabling me to provide more effective assistance. Furthermore, I have realized the significance of patience because every person is different and requires personalized care. The key is to listen, empathize, and treat each person with care and respect.

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SUSTAINABLE CRAFTS FOR FAIR LOCAL ECONOMY IN MICHOACÁN

By Ensamble Artesano

Ensamble Artesano is a non-profit initiative that offers market access to more than 5,000 artisans from all over the country, organized in more than 400 artisan groups and collaborating with more than 80 allied organizations and more than 17 strategic partners. It promotes horizontal value chains, prevents undesired migration, and avoids the loss of craft knowledge within artisan communities. Fundación Haciendas del Mundo Maya and Taller Maya manage the platform. México Territorio Creativo, Design Week México, and Estafeta participate in the initiative.

This joint effort aims to impact the generation of decent revenues for artisans through a fair trade scheme. At the same time, these actions help to consolidate a sense of identity within the artisan network for its professional, social, and cultural prosperity. In addition, it seeks to promote learning communities led by artisans. It is fundamental since identifying and promoting community leadership shall result in a transformation process wherein more voices stand for themselves.

NATIONWIDE ENDEAVOR

Fundación Haciendas del Mundo Maya's effort to preserve and disseminate artisan work goes beyond the Yucatán Peninsula, its commitment has extended to artisan communities throughout the country. Michoacán Capsule showcases how art and culture can engine change and social development while generating tangible and long-lasting impacts in the communities that host them.

As a consequence of the program, Ensamble Artesano and artisans from Michoacán have gained many valuable lessons. Activating the economy of artisans in Michoacán passes for the preservation of ten representative artisanal techniques. Also, Michoacán Capsule has promoted the visibility and commercialization of Michoacán's collection as well as the whole Ensamble Artesano's offer in México. The estimated economic impact is significant and it considers raw materials, labor, and indirect costs.

Michoacán is one of the most diverse and prosperous Mexican states. Grand and antique multi-ethnic traditions have been born in its territories. Those cultural expressions integrate part of our collective identity as a diverse nation. Among this plurality, the artisan sector is an elemental pillar of its cultural, social, and economic singularity. Therefore, Ensamble Artesano implemented a specific project in these vast lands.

Ensamble Artesano has established accurate requirements in the chain value and aggregate value to secure the success of the project: 1) regularization in the integration of files, 2) compliance with timely deliveries, 3) co-responsible participation throughout the process is guaranteed by a letter of commitment, 4) innovation in the design proposals, and 5) commercial viability.

Michoacán Capsule is aware of the transformative potential and impact of the artisanal activity. So, in coalition with several organizations such as Coppel, Kellogg's, Fundación Haciendas del Mundo Maya, Estafeta and the Javier Marín Foundation, and other preeminent stakeholders, Ensamble Artesano has undertaken this ambitious project to contribute to the social and economic fabric through collaborative craft work.

The schedule of activities is rigorous and detailed. From the approach of the project in August 2023, through the approach with artisan groups in September, to the dissemination and commercialization of the collection between February and June 2024. All of this ensures a smooth and successful process, where each stage contributes to the final goal.

The purpose is to articulate and boost Michoacán's artisan sector. To achieve so, the initiative has included more than 270 artisans, 36 artisan groups, and 14 allied organizations. It is possible through the creation of an unpublished collection curated by the renowned artist Javier Marín.

Ensamble Artesano's pieces are indispensable for tourists and art lovers: more than a souvenir of their trip to this country, it is to bring culture alive and support not only fairness but also a sustainable economy. Each piece of handcrafted design invites us to be part of a story of resilience, tradition, and pride and is also an invitation to reaffirm the importance of culture in building a fairer and more prosperous future for all.

"Laboring with your hands and giving shape to your imagination brings satisfaction, but people don't know how it works... If you want to get ahead and continue in this beautiful profession, you need to know the process. If people understand it, they can value and pay a fair price for these pieces."

Fernando Solís from Zinapécuaro, Michoacán; negative clay, sgraffito, low and high relief.



Step Into the Realm Where Love Stories Come to Life

Enchanting Venues for Proposals

So you can have unforgettable experiences in Yucatán.

Immerse yourself in our curated collection of dreamy properties where romance reigns.

Hacienda San Pedro Ochil
Hacienda Tekik de Regil
Hacienda Tamchén
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By Taller Maya

ENTRELAZADO COLLECTION: WEAVING MODERN DESIGN AND ANCESTRAL CRAFTSMANSHIP

In the depths of the Yucatán Peninsula, artisans weave dreams—each thread tells a story, and each knot unites an ancestral past with the present. *Entrelazado Collection* is an homage to the prosperous Maya textile tradition and an inspiration for sustainable and ethical fashion.

Using brocades and mottles, Taller Maya and the iconic Mexican fashion designer Denisse Kuri tell the story of a legacy passed down through generations. Denisse has worked alongside textile artisans in various regions of México for 14 years. So, she has forged a deep relationship with communities in Puebla, Chiapas, Tlaxcala, and Veracruz.

Entrelazado is a fashion display of elegance wherein history and modernity meet in dialogue. This way, it constitutes a tribute to the enduring Maya textile heritage, an example of proactive commitment to sustainable clothesmaking, and a bridge between ancient and modern fashions. The silhouettes evoke traditional costumes with a contemporary twist, adopting the daily life needs and style of today's women.

Celina Carreño, a backstrap loom expert at Los Laureles workshop, believes that “each design and color is unique. Embroidering each blouse was a challenge, but with love and dedication, quality work was achieved.” This testimony is echoed by all the craftswomen who participated in *Entrelazado*. This collection honors the handwork and

cultural diversity of México and proudly displays it to the world.

This collection is not only a window into the talent of these women, but also a mirror that reflects their beliefs, traditions, and cultural heritage. Each piece reaffirms their identity and culture because it is an active dialogue with their roots.

Furthermore, it is a celebration of tradition and innovation. It is the story of a people's reinvention while keeping their culture and identity alive in the face of ever-changing circumstances. Therefore, it is a tribute to human skill and creativity.

Hand embroidery elaborated at the Flor de Amapola workshop in Tixcaltuyub, Yucatán, is essential for the collection. There, ten women embroider figures and patterns—living expressions of their idiosyncrasy and delicate sensitivity.

On a Maya backstrap loom in two workshops, 22 women from Los Laureles and Quetzal, Campeche, wove the canvases that make up the ensembles. Those women fill each fabric with a mastery that nourishes their identity and culture.

The brocades, *paimanes*, and mottles adorning these garments are the result of the talent and dedication of the artisans from the Yucatán Peninsula. Every stitch and detail is a piece of art and reflects a deep respect for tradition and a commitment to artisanal excellence. *Entrelazado* is more than a series of garments, it is the result of a collaboration based on mutual admiration and passion for textile art. It is the synergy between craftswomen and Denisse Kuri, who have pooled their talents and knowledge to create remarkable and worthy pieces. A celebration of tradition and an innovation symbol—so is the story of those individuals who desire to reinvent themselves. Culture is movement and transition, thus they move and transit.

These artisanal activities are fundamental for such communities' creative and socio-cultural development, thereby encouraging women to reconfigure their personal and collective identity. A story lives in each piece of garment, and as they weave, an active dialogue takes place with the cultural heritage passed down through generations.

Entrelazado is not just a fashion collection, it is a living tale of creativity, meaning, and artistic expression. It is waiting for us to discover it in the stores and Taller Maya's social networks. Approach us and discover how each garment invites you to embrace Mexican history, culture, and heart.



Taller Maya is a collective Mexican design brand that collaborates with artisanal social enterprises in the Yucatán Peninsula and guarantees commercial conditions through a fair trade model.



Entrelazado

TALLER MAYA × DENISSE KURI



Discover the 14 Entrelazado outfits made by 32 Mayan craftswomen who enrich this collection with tradition and culture.

Available in stores and online.

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Martes de Charas: First-Year Round

By Daniela Pérez / TAE

Transformación, Arte y Educación began hosting public talks in March of 2023 under the title *Martes de charas*. The chara is a Yucatecan bird from the peninsula, known as *chel* in Mayan communities. One of the main chara's characteristics is its calling style; in a way, it mimics speech. *Martes de charas* was named in honor of this unique blue-winged species' ability to articulate sounds, and each first Tuesday of the month we hold a public space where artists and professionals from the art field can exchange their artistic endeavors and projects.

Yet, why should this be of particular interest? Well, it is simple. Mérida is a city with various artistic and cultural "islands" that may only benefit, at this moment, from building bridges to shorten the distance between them or from generating connections of reciprocity. We hope to provoke fruitful reflection, debate, and creative proposals to reflect on urgent matters in today's world. In this way, *Martes de charas* has provided a platform for gathering, exposing, and sharing contemporary research and production art practices.

A ONE-YEAR STORY

We kicked off by extending an invitation to colectivo amasijo, a collective of women artists who collaborate with other women in different places in México. They initially came together because of the desire to actively reflect on the origin and diversity of our food, and provide narratives that portray how close they are to the land, showing us ways towards regeneration through language, culture, and territory.

Next in line was Patricia Uh, an artist from the community of Tecoh (only 45 minutes outside of Mérida), who reflected on ideas such as a critical vision of schools as colonizing entities, alongside the relevance of embroidery, oral history—without the need of interrupting devices such as a recorder in between—and the role that family plays in



education at large. Furthermore, Patricia specified how community-based work, where authorship is put aside, has set a fundamental impact on her own practice, including the opening of a space called *iin ki kalante*, in honor and with respect to knowledge derived from a particular cultural ecosystem.

While caring for ways in which the *iin ki kalante* project—as an educational practice—maintains distance from possible forms of institutionalization, the artist Gerda Gruber has sought to subtly infiltrate conventional and unconventional educational spaces through her projects during decades in Yucatán. They are both able, perhaps quite intuitively, to imagine and continually demonstrate outstanding capacities for offering answers to questions such as Tania Solomonoff's: how much does a bee's life impact mine?

If some of these artistic practices are or are not part of a rigorous state of idleness, perhaps such a definition is closer to Ana Bidart's take regarding her sensible forms of constant observation that also derive from specific activation.

Today the Maya territory is pretty diverse and its artistic and aesthetic manifestations hold a social component. Mérida continues to grow at unequal rhythms. An artist like Robin Canul has taken extraordinary leadership documenting how the local landscape is changing every day: we are shifting from the jungle to an industrial landscape. Inwards from the city, we lack the perspective of the tremendous impact: small economic reliefs that at the same time undermine the territory. Both citizens and travelers of Yucatán are equally responsible for guiding our active roles, which most likely are multiple.

Learning to read and approach this diversity with keen levels of awareness is fundamental to the continuity of this *Martes de charas* program, which offers something simple yet constant and thorough to the current conditions. Be they artists—like Per Kirkeby—who passed by this territory during a specific time and with profound reflections, or others who are currently here to stay, some whose families are direct heirs of the millenary culture on site, the truth is that we can find inspiring and alternate forms of learning from all.

Overall, we have joyfully encountered a series of fertile surprises during this first year of *Martes de charas*, including the participation of an artist like Jorge Pardo. While inexhaustibly seeking “problems” for his work as a personal and professional challenge, in his generous appointment at Casa Palomeque he underlined that the visual component is not the most essential in an artwork, although outside it seems it is.

LESSONS BY A CORDIAL BLUE-WINGED BIRD

Regardless of the variety of strategies, criteria, or methods, as well as the trajectory in turn, what remains is that most of these artistic practices and approaches to art involve incubating processes that are worth supporting and accompanying, as the philanthropist and collector Catherine Petitgas said in her participation.

TAE will cheerily continue to play a bet in favor of the heartfelt sound of a chara, or the melodic composition from Cuban pop that Marco Castillo shared with us through his touching video *Generation* (2019), in favor of a thought-provoking space for art.





YOUTHS AS CHANGEMAKERS IN HOKOL VUH

By Fundación Haciendas del Mundo Maya

As young people from our communities, we recognize ourselves as changemakers. In the Yucatán Peninsula, we design and implement intergenerational collective actions for community transformation, honoring local identity, personal and community life, and professional vocations. Our collaboration in Hokol Vuh, thanks to the support of the Haciendas del Mundo Maya Foundation and the training we obtained in Baktún Pueblo Maya through the Mediadores Culturales Program, allowed us to practice our professional skills and promote our pride for the Maya culture.

Hokol Vuh is a feast for the senses because we celebrate cultural and culinary richness. As youths, we actively participated in its design from our professional training,

contributing to weaving the ancestral wisdom of the communities. As we strive to create positive impacts in our contexts, our voice was heard in this collective cultural and gastronomic event. Also, we shared our knowledge with different disciplines like arts, education, and language.

It was a significant experience that strengthened our professional training and expanded our possibilities as changemakers. It permitted us to see ourselves as promoters of our culture and innovation. At the same time, now we can recognize the talent in our communities. So, we are precursors that weave bonds between diverse social environments and contribute to sustainable economic growth.

“Let us celebrate the richness of each identity between communities. We are wind. We are the seeds for change and growth across intercultural spaces.”

Poema Juventudes



JUNE



SUMMER SOLSTICE

June 20

In Chichén Itzá, the light from the sun, at sunrise, only illuminates the North and East façades of the main pyramid, while the South and West sides remain in darkness.

JULY



TUNICH CRAFT FAIR AT DZITYÁ

Late July-early August

Dzityá's artisans offer their best products, which include stone, wood, textiles, and jewelry, as well as fair activities. Just minutes north of Mérida.

AUGUST



FESTIVITY OF SANTO DOMINGO, UAYMA, YUCATÁN

August 4

This *fiesta* is thrown in honor of Santo Domingo. The most important artisan activity in this municipality is pottery, so a trip to Uayma is always a good idea and a *fiesta* just makes the trip all the more enjoyable.

SEPTEMBER



FESTIVITY OF THE CRISTO DE LAS AMPOLLAS, YUCATÁN

September 14

Festivities in honor of the Christ of the Blisters in the Cathedral of Mérida started in 1644 and since then it has been one of the main religious festivities in the city.



FESTIVITY OF THE BLACK CHRIST OF SAN ROMÁN, CAMPECHE

September 15-30

Several joyful pilgrimages flood the neighborhood while a fair with mechanical games takes place in the surroundings. The celebration of the most revered saint of the city attracts a crowd of over 50,000 people.

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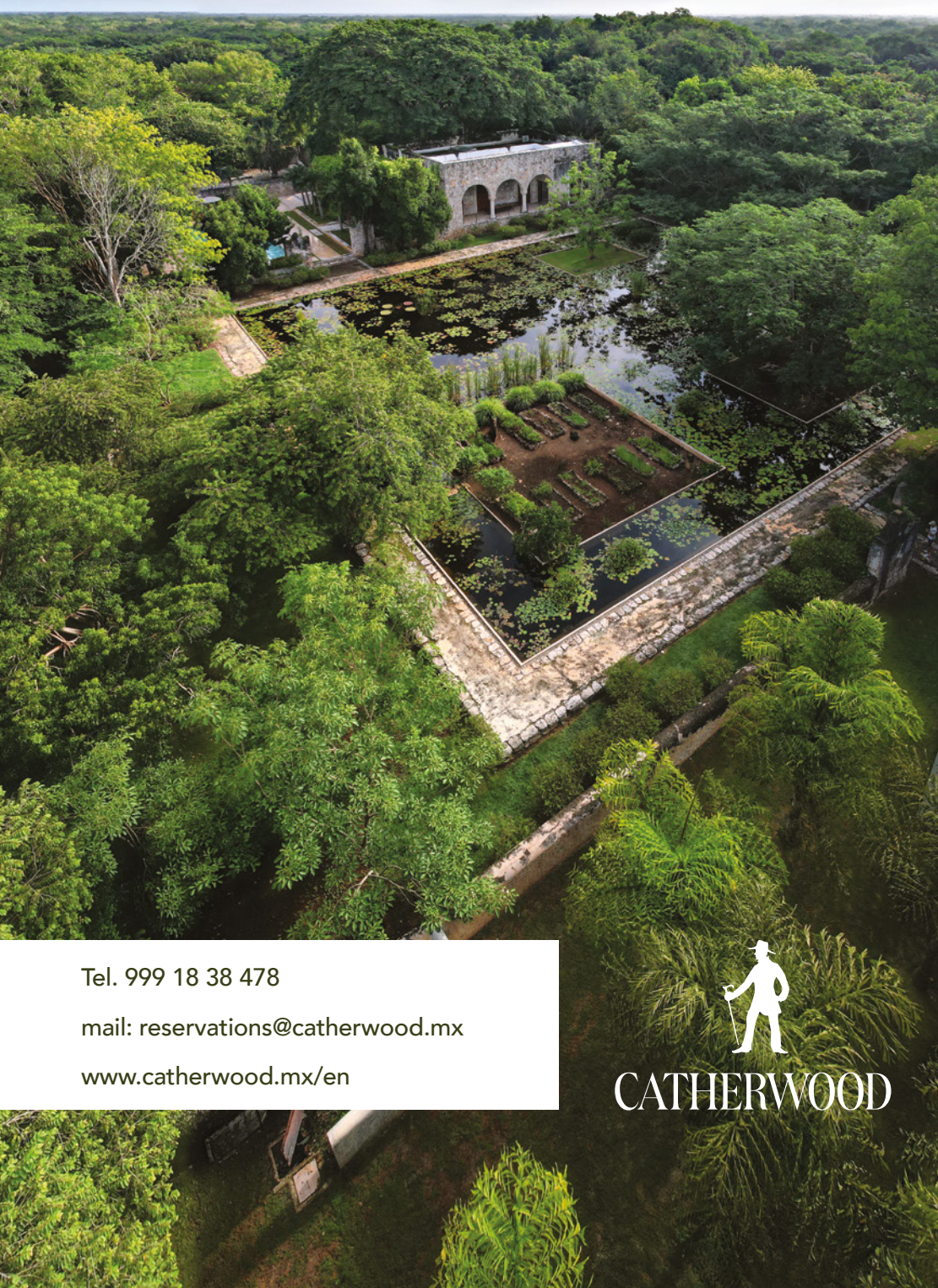
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