



RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

H O T E L
**PUNTA
ISLITA**
GUANACASTE • COSTA RICA
hotelpuntaislita.com

supported by *Grupo Islita*



By choosing Hotel Punta Islita, you have become a patron of the arts, a supporter of local communities, and a champion for the local environment!.

Please take a few minutes to learn more about how **RESPONSIBLE TOURISM** is integral to the Islita experience.

“When it comes to our planet, we are all stakeholders. Understanding our role in this process is not only enriching, but fosters a caring attitude that permeates every aspect of daily life. If we care, we are enthusiastic. If we care, we are passionate. And we are thus better suited to alleviate poverty, reverse environmental degradation, and celebrate the cultural differences that color the fabric of human experience.”

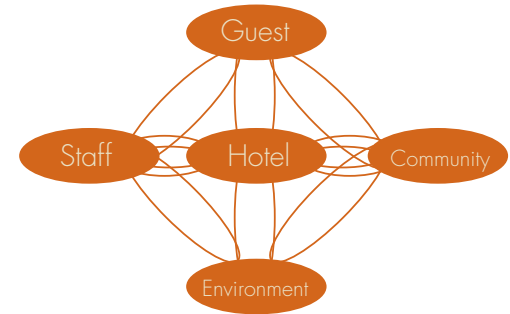


Eduardo Villafranca
CEO Grupo Punta Islita



Hotel Punta Islita opened its doors in 1994 in an economically depressed area formerly over-exploited by unsustainable cattle ranching and wood extraction. The surrounding tropical dry forest had been stripped, access to education was limited, and professional opportunities were inexistent.

Today Hotel Punta Islita's sphere of influence is not only a globally-recognized travel destination but a thriving region characterized by a healthy natural environment and a dynamic collective of travel professionals and community micro-entrepreneurs.



Hotel

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Hotel Punta Islita has obtained tangible benefits from its social investment. The high quality of the staff and the manifest authenticity that permeates the visitor's vacation experience have been critical to Hotel Punta Islita's success. Rendering local culture visible and accessible has turned Hotel Punta Islita's uniqueness into a valuable differentiating element among similar destinations in Costa Rica. It has also garnered the attention of key international media and has earned global recognition as a responsible tourism leader.

Awards

- *Investor in People-Tourism for Tomorrow Awards, World Travel & Tourism Council*
- *Most Excellent EcoResort, Condé Nast Traveler Magazine*
- *Caring Luxury Award, Small Luxury Hotels*
- *Gold List, Condé Nast Traveler Magazine*
- *Best 500 Hotels in the World, Travel+ Leisure Magazine*
- *Reader's Choice Award, Travel + Leisure Magazine*



Spillover Effect

Almost 50¢ of every dollar spent at Hotel Punta Islita stays in the local communities as salaries, contributions, taxes, social benefits, and local purchases.

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Staff



Hotel Punta Islita sponsors complementary education, professional training, scholarships & student loans, and English as a Second Language programs. Other initiatives include an employee credit union and the Islita Day Care Center. Over 85% of Hotel Punta Islita's staff are local men and women who have found their professional calling as managers, sous-chefs, bartenders, spa therapists, tour guides, landscapers, and maintenance and security professionals.

Alonso Bermúdez was raised in the neighboring Coyote community, joining Hotel Punta Islita in 1999 as a Front Desk Clerk. Over the years, Alonso excelled in the professional development programs sponsored by the Hotel. By 2002, he was promoted to Resident Manager. His outstanding performance as administrator and leader earned him an appointment as General Manager in 2006.



Community

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Hotel Punta Islita is set among nine small rural communities with a total population of about 1300. By providing specialized training, access to finance, favoring the purchase of regional goods and services, and encouraging guests to patronize local businesses, there has been a steady growth of micro-enterprises including seafood processing plants, restaurants and cafes, retail stores, furniture workshops, and tour operators.

Hotel Punta Islita's purchase-local policies have jumpstarted an entrepreneurial cycle that has resulted in more than 20 local micro businesses including transport services, restaurants, a seafood processing plant, a motorbike repair shop, and a growing chain of providers of goods and services.



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Islita Open - Air Contemporary Art Museum



The 2003 inauguration of the Islita Open-Air Contemporary Art Museum is the most visible manifestation of the Punta Islita Responsible Tourism Model. It features the collaborative work of established Costa Rican and international artists with emerging local talent. Brilliant murals and intriguing sculptures grace the very walls and open spaces that conform the village's infrastructure in a bold outdoor display of identity.

Today, there are more than sixty men, women, and youngsters involved in one of the seven community art groups. Their original pieces are proudly displayed and sold at the Casa Museo.

Environment

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Prior to the hotel's involvement, the area's tropical dry forest had been stripped due to unsustainable cattle ranching, indiscriminate hunting, and slash-and-burn agriculture. Alternative economic and professional opportunities, in tandem with environmental awareness programs and infrastructure improvements, have been key to reverse environmental degradation.



Hotel Punta Islita holds a four-leaf rating from the Costa Rican tourism board's Certification in Sustainable Tourism program (CST).

This initiative evaluates travel services companies according to their level of compliance with responsible tourism practices.

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Guests



“What we do is completely original. We create unique art to be sold to the guests. It is important for us, as women, to have our own bit of money.”

*-Cecilia Aguilar
Leader of the Señoras del Papaturro
Art Group*



Savvy travelers from all over the globe are keenly interested in culturally and naturally rich destinations. They increasingly want immersion experiences that are both authentic and environmentally sound. A socially healthy backdrop helps the visitor feel genuinely welcome and safe to explore our planet’s varied human fabric and bio-diversity.

An expanding model

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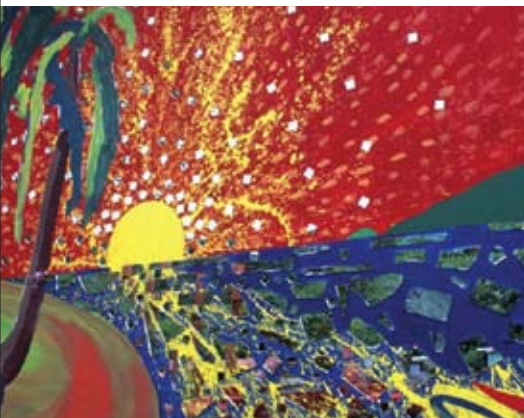
El Silencio Lodge & Spa is a planet-friendly sanctuary for soft adventure and inspired wellness. Silencio, Spanish for “silence”, is befitting of a destination where daily stress is hushed and the sound of nature blooms.

Immersed in Costa Rica’s spellbinding central volcanic valley, El Silencio features five hundred private acres of carbon-offsetting tropical cloud forest, hidden waterfalls, premium suites and amenities, a forest-embedded Spa, and tantalizing local flavors.

- The *Villafranca-Zurcher Foundation*, led by Hotel Punta Islita, fosters and channels the collaboration of like-minded individuals, associations, private industry, and government entities to promote Responsible Tourism practices.
- Hotel Punta Islita’s parent company, Grupo Islita is an active member of the World Heritage Alliance, a joint initiative of the United Nations Foundation and Expedia Inc., to promote conservation, sustainable tourism, and economic development for communities located in and around World Heritage sites as declared by the United Nations.

www.worldheritagealliance.org





Seven Guidelines for the Responsible Tourist:

- Learn about your destination's culture.
- Adopt water -energy conservation guidelines.
- Minimize waste and encourage recycling.
- Consider carbon-offsetting programs.
- Enjoy nature without leaving a "footprint".
- Patronize local services and purchase locally produced goods.
- Participate in local volunteer programs that foster conservation and/or human welfare.

The leading Costa Rican developer of responsible tourism destinations and initiatives.

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Ventas&Reservaciones: reservas@hotelpuntaislita.com • www.hotelpuntaislita.com



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