



Colonial Mayan Suite - April 'o8

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Created By: Anne on Cape Cod on Monday, May 5th, 2008

Colonial - April 2008 Trip Ocho



A remarkable gift – Savor every moment!

We spent a restless day awaiting word that our daughter had arrived safely in Spain. Once that call came, all of our pent up energy was focused on our trip to the Palladium the next day.

Dropped off the doggy. Not a happy camper. At 65 pounds he still thinks he's a lap dog.



Although I had set two alarm clocks, I was still nervous that we'd miss our flight so sleep was restless. Awoke around 2 am and was up for the duration. Our car and driver arrived at 3:30 am and whisked us to Logan for a 7am flight.

We flew Jet Blue which we very much enjoyed. They provide lots more leg room, individual screens with movies and TV. While headphones are free they will soon start charging so bring some along. The airline did not have the Tourist cards on board that are needed to get through immigration. I thought that this might slow us down once in the airport but it worked to our advantage as many other passengers took awhile to fill their cards out. We retrieved our luggage quickly, got the green light and were outside

within 15 minutes of landing, greeted happily by AGI with “Welcome to Paradise”.

New AGI Van



Yes, it really was happening! In about an hour we saw the welcoming arches of the Palladium and felt as though we were coming home!



We were the only ones checking in. The lobby was full of a large group of what appeared to be Spanish people checking out. The smiling receptionist greeted us warmly. (I wish I had written her name down. She was so kind.) She asked how many times we have been there and I said, “ocho”. She smiled and answered, “Well you probably don’t have any questions.” Then she laughed and said, “You probably know more than I do!” We were given our package with map, activities schedule, kids club schedule, a notice regarding the resort’s “Commitment to the Environment” and other helpful material. I suggest you read these materials, especially the Commitment to the Environment. Due to the resort’s diligence in this regard, they have earned the distinguished Distintivo H and Green Planet Awards.



After check in we were taken to our requested Mayan suite in building 30 on the Colonial side. While we love staying on the Kantenah side, on this trip we preferred the easy access this building has to everything. Our room in 3003 was perfect for us, and oh what a welcome we received!

Building 30



Proximity of Bldg. 30 to El Gran Azul



Part two – Savor every day

Our days

Rios had some health issues on this trip. They had emerged previous to our last trip in September which was a very quiet one. I didn't pressure Rios to return in April but he very much wanted to. He craved the warm sun, the aqua sea and the happy companionship found at the resort. We knew he would need a wheelchair to navigate the resort. This in itself was a great sacrifice for my independent husband but it was the only way we could have gone. I thank the resort for twice giving us the beautiful and, IMHO, most convenient room on the resort which was 3003.

When we arrived to our room we felt like royalty. The AC was already on as if to welcome us. There were fresh robes and towel art with rose petals on the bed.



Minutes after we arrived a beautiful floral arrangement was delivered along with succulent chocolate covered strawberries.(This was a “wish” from on the “wish list”) I must admit to over-indulging. I was starving and what better to over indulge in?



Rios rested more on this trip so that he would be able to enjoy the variety of nightlife. While he rested I took a walk to La Jarra, scoping out the new area near there for the Royal guests. It was tastefully understated and quiet with perhaps one person there.



They are in the process of building some new beach beds.



I walked by PattiM's room. She was literally steps to the beach.



Still a bit hungry from the long travels, I stopped by the Colonial beach bar and ordered some quesadillas as a snack and a white wine. I brought Rios a champagne and we sat on our beautiful deck, sipping and eating, taking in all of the beauty surrounding us.

That night was Mexican night in the buffet. We both commented on the variety of food, the Mexican décor and the fact that there appeared to be more spicy food than on our previous trips. (Another wish from the “wish list.”)

Rios usually looks forward to his one martini daily. That night we went to the Hemingways for both books and his martini. Felipe was our bartender and made an excellent Beefeater martini. He also made a beautiful cappuccino for me and talked about his family whom he only sees one day a week and his six year old daughter; his pride and joy.



We briefly topped by the Kantenah lobby bar to listen to some music. We got a warm welcome back from Alfred who keeps everyone smiling.



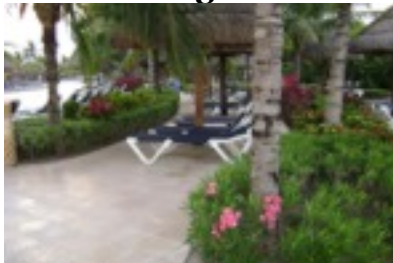
We returned to our room and listened to the lure of the jungle sounds and the sea. Our first day back in Paradise.

Part 3 – Savor every day

.Today was our first full day. I awoke and peeked out the door, debating if I were ambitious enough to go down to see the sunrise. It was COLD! Not cool, COLD! I put the coffee on and went back to bed. After a cup of good Mexican coffee I put on a sweater and some slacks and wandered down to the beach bar for cappuccino. There was another couple down there saying it felt like 30 degrees – that was an exaggeration but I was glad to have a sweater with me.

A good cappuccino warmed me up and I began my morning walk. Rios slept in on this trip so I had more time to wander before breakfast. I love the morning when the resort is waking up The sounds of the birds, the sea and very subtle music is intoxicating. There was a mild breeze which continued throughout the week. The cool mornings we had quickly turned warm and sunny.

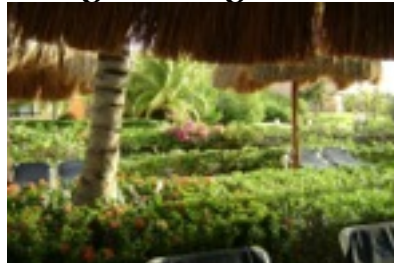
It is amazing how lush everything is looking.



White Sand pool



Even the mangroves are filling in after the three hurricanes the resort endured. The mangroves are federally protected and there is some interesting signage explaining their significance to the eco system.

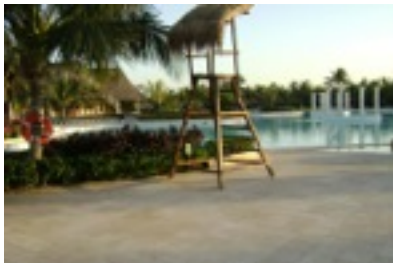


I always marvel at the beach here. It has shifted again since September. There are some bits of coral here and there and new areas of soft white sand. The resort has portable signs which they move around as the beach shifts. There are still plenty of sandy areas for swimming and coral areas for snorkeling. They just moved!

Looking north from White Sand beach. Note sign.



.There are some new lifeguard chairs at the two main pools.



We developed a new pattern on this trip. Rios would sleep a little later. I wandered, had a cappuccino (or two as the friendly beach bartender began making me two without my asking), wandered to breakfast. As we were eating later on this trip I noticed that La Hacienda was more crowded (after 9 am), thus there was a longer wait if you wanted a freshly made omelet or eggs. Service, on the other hand did not seem so suffer on most days. The

waiters and waitresses practically ran to help people. Rios had a favorite waitress “Kate” from Poland. She was always smiling and extremely hard working. She always stopped at our table to say something nice, even if she was not assigned to us. That reminds me that we also, like Patti, had “our table”. The staff could not have done enough to accommodate Rios in his wheelchair. The hostess always stopped what she was doing to open the door for us when we were leaving. Everyone was wonderful.

After breakfast we would go on down to park the wheelchair behind the animation hut on the Kantenah / Colonial side. This way Rios could make his way to “our spot” and he was close to a rest room. We walked by the kids club often and it was always busy. Lots of new equipment has been added and the schedule has expanded to 11 pm. There were lots of kids around this time but they were contained (except on one occasion later in the week) and we enjoyed adult only time.

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.Kids enjoying new pool equipment.



New kids club schedule

<https://home.comcast.net/~unofficialpalladium/Kids%20Club.pdf>

We always went to El Gran Azul for lunch. I quickly discovered paths that led to ramps and no stairs so we had our itinerary down early in the trip. There was always plenty to choose from for lunch. We often had freshly grilled chicken breasts made to order. I love the grilled veggies at this resort and the vast variety of salads that changes daily.

In late afternoon Rios would go to rest and I would wander to the internet room on the Kantenah side or take a walk. This night we were to meet Patti and John for dinner in Mare Nostrum. There was a slight mix up with the reservation but it was quickly corrected and no problemo. I think they would have seated us without a reservation. They were very accommodating.

. Rios ordered a Beefeater martini. The bartender came to our table with the gin they had in stock – something Spanish that Rios had tried elsewhere. It might have made a good gin and tonic but it was not appropriate for a martini so Rios politely declined. Nevertheless they sent not one but two martinis! We had a laugh about that! It occurred often that the staff try so how to please they send two of something.

As Patti was taking pictures with her new camcorder I did not take pictures of our wonderful meal. Rios had the Leek soup and pepper steak which he regarded as “very tasty”. I opted for the excellent salad bar and the grilled prawns over angel hair pasta. Delicious. Patti and John had the chestnut

soup and tuna in yogurt which they said was excellent. All had freshly made rolls and creamy butter. (I love the butter here.) Everything was yummy and beautifully presented. Jorge was our waiter and was outstanding. I usually find the portions big in the ala cartes so I declined desert other than a cappuccino. The others sampled the desert selection.



. Happy after a wonderful meal, we wandered over to Hemingways. We were to meet up with some people from here but we missed some people as we tucked ourselves into a sofa in the corner so Patti would be more comfortable. Rios had his Excellent Beefeater martini made by Luis. Jayne and Sean RI joined us. Their boys were in the sports bar. We had some good conversation before wandering to our haven in Paradise.

Awoke to another cool morning but it was warmer than the previous day. The smiling bartender at the beach bar handed me two cappuccinos without my asking. I love the staff at this resort! I sipped one while watching the sunrise. Here it was peeking through the clouds.



I decided to take a long walk over to the White Sand and Riviera sides. It never ceases to amaze me how there are always workers somewhere trimming, cleaning, planting. The resort is immaculate.



I walked the beach to White Sand



and then went over by the athletic fields. People were already out playing basketball and tennis.



I dropped by the Riviera lobby to say hi to Paula but it was still early and she wasn't in yet. I always leave some Easter eggs for her little ones. The boat was already out for an early morning tour.



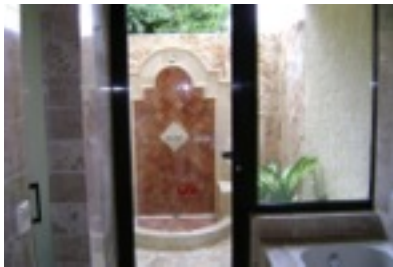
Wow, my feet are tired and now I realize I still have to get back! Rios is probably wondering what happened to me. I made my way to the beach and then walked along the beach back to our room. Rios was having a coffee and watching the news. The Pope was in the USA and the coverage was huge. We made our way to La Hacienda for another wonderful breakfast. This morning, the egg line was quite long as my morning tour got us there quite late. I debated on whether or not I wanted to wait and finally found enough other goodies to forgo my eggs today. Rios always loved the scrambled eggs, made different ways each day, i.e. with spinach, bacon, hashed potatoes as some examples. He also loved toast made with the variety of fresh breads. (Suggestion: It's a little confusing for some finding the butter! The butter is located with the condiments.) They have great butter. Not sure where it's from. Rios also enjoyed a freshly squeezed glass of OJ with his champagne. I was happy that the resort granted my "wish" and served delicious thick tomato juice at breakfast.

Satiated, we made our way to our spot on the beach. I noticed a lot of new plantings on the Kantenah beach. It's quite lush.



We had become friendly with a nice group from Canada. This was their third trip. Another couple always sat near us and recognized us from the forum. This was their sixth trip. They said they were also there in September when we were there and we all sat in the same spots! Creatures of habit I guess. Virtually everyone we talked to who had returned felt as if they were “coming home”. Some new people we met felt the resort was a wonderful value and said they would be returning. We heard lots of people talking about “casino night” the previous evening. It sounded like they had fun!

Lunch at El Gran Azul consisted of roast chicken, roast veggies and a very good mushroom soup which Rios enjoyed. Just the right texture! I just love the way they do chicken! After another lazy afternoon on the beach we went to shower and rest. Love that outdoor shower!



.Wednesday is seafood night. I wouldn't miss that. It seemed that they had an even larger variety of seafood than in September. Yummy lobster stew and all kinds of fish, seafood stews in addition to various meat and chicken dishes for the non-seafood lover. Davy was our waiter and he was superb. A very sweet and hardworking man!

After dinner we went to Hemingway's. Luis made a great Beefeater martini and I had another great cappuccino. Rios sorted through some books. There seems to be a very large assortment of books in German but he managed to find a good selection in English. We asked Luis what the makeup of the guests was. He said American and Canadians were in the majority followed by German, some French and Spanish. We had seen a very large group of Spanish leaving when we arrived. We then moved to the Kantenah lobby where Everado was holding court. He recognized us from September. He has a great sense of humor. (left from last Sept.)



There was some nice live music. We enjoyed another cocktail and then made our way through the jungle, savoring the night noises. Another perfect day in Paradise.

Another new day

Another beautiful day. As usual I headed down to the beach bar for a cappuccino. The smiling bartender asked “Dos?”. Rios had taught me to say, “por qué no”, “Why not?”, as we were often asked if we wanted two of



something.

This was the day I would meet Felipe Martinez Verde, the GM, for coffee. I also invited Patti M and John to come along. Before meeting Felipe I went to the lobby to leave off a small gift for LuLu (Estrada). She has received a well deserved promotion. As it was before 9 am I didn't expect to see her but when she heard me mention her name she came out beaming and we exchanged big hugs. She is such a sweetie and so dedicated. After leaving LuLu I walked over to the reservations dept. I had brought them some candy from Cape Cod. When I walked into Olga's office she hadn't expected me. I said, Olga, I am Anne on Cape Cod. Her face lit up with a huge smile and she came over and gave me a great hug. The staff here are so warm and wonderful! I just wanted to thank her for our perfect room and her staff for all of their hard work!

Rios and I had a nice breakfast. It was still early so there was no line to speak of at the egg station. We had “our table” and the service was outstanding. Kate raced by and then stopped and asked how we were. Other staff offered “Buenas Dias”, “Are you sure there is nothing more I can help you with?” Amazing. It's almost like I wish I needed something as they were so anxious to please.

After breakfast I accompanied Rios to “our spot” on the Kantenah beach, stopping to peek in the kids club.



and then went up to the Colonial lobby to meet Patti, John and finally Felipe. Felipe is such a warm and passionate person. I always enjoy meeting him. His great sense of humor keeps us laughing. I guess one must have a sense of humor to do his job and to do it as well as he does it. Hugs. Then coffees. Felipe shared with us the trials and tribulations of getting things done in Mexico. I asked him about the “beepers” for the ala cartes and he said “That’s another Thursday story”. Apparently it is very difficult to get vendors to deliver in a timely manner. Often times they will say “your order will be in on Thursday.” We laughed hysterically when Felipe said, “a bad day is when I have three Thursdays before noon.” Felipe then told us that the resort had its #1 busiest time over Easter in March when there were over 4,500 guests. Can you imagine? That’s like running a small city! He reiterated that they have a strict No Spring Breaker policy but if parents bring a full paying teen over 18 the resort cannot turn them away. The drinking age in Mexico is 18 and this is strictly enforced at the resort. Felipe filled us in on some plans including that they were currently installing DVD players in the Royal rooms. We had lots of laughs with Felipe. What an incredible sense of humor and he has such dedication to constantly making improvements to the resort. Always sad to leave my coffee visit with Felipe, I made my way back to the beach feeling warm and smiling. He invited us to have coffee with him anytime, as if he has nothing else to do! I made my way back to the Kantenah beach and Rios. We laughed about Felipe’s stories. Then I decided to take a walk towards the north end of the beach. It is nicer there since they moved the jet skis.



As was reported, the Royal area on the beach is practically empty and set back from the water so it does not detract at all from the beach for everyone else. I walked down to EDSS. The beach was clean. Debris had all been removed. It was very pretty. The section of the beach between the Palladium and EDSS is Federally owned and is home to a turtle sanctuary. Up until now it had quite a lot of litter so I was pleased to see it clean.

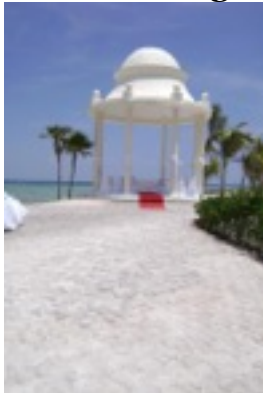


Then I went to La Jarra beach bar to get us some water and back to Rios until it was time for lunch. Lunch that day offered grilled chicken, roast pork with delicious roast veggies, chicken cordon bleu, various salads, rice and chocolate and vanilla ice cream. Rios felt like trying a hot dog which he said was very good. I had asked them to warm up a bun for me which they will do. Just keep an eye on it as if they get busy you may get a very well done bun! I was a bit annoyed at some person who was “yelling” at the very busy chef. He wanted the chef to drop everything and wait on him immediately. The staff work so hard. When I encounter the rare person with this attitude I really want to say something. (Patti M should have been there!)

After a scrumptious lunch I noticed they were making preparation in El Gran Azul for a wedding.



I decided to take a walk to the salt water pool. We knew on this trip that Rios would not be able to accompany me on my walks. He always loved walking to the salt water pool. I decided to be thankful that he was with me and that we were still sharing some happy memories. They were preparing for a wedding.



Looking north from path to saltwater pool. Note new plantings and extensive coast.



From White Sand north



Salt water pool post Dean



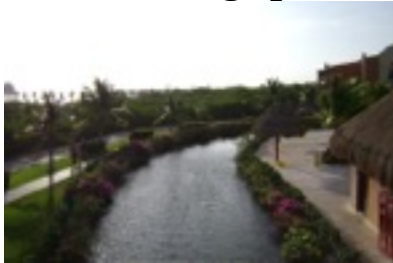
I made my way back along the beach, stopping at Colonial beach bar to get Rios a champagne. After a nice afternoon, he went back to the room for a rest. Rios always looked forward to “Gala” night in the buffet as there is such a vast selection of everything from roast beef, to spareribs, duckling, roast pig, roast chicken, grilled salmon.

While Rios rested I went to the internet room to check on email and say “hi” on the forum. I was happy to have an email from our daughter in Spain. She was feeling a bit “overwhelmed” because everyone there spoke Spanish! Too funny. We got a chuckle out of that.

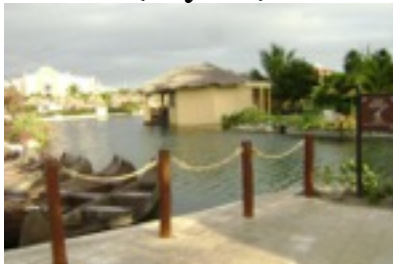
We thoroughly enjoyed dinner. Service was excellent. After dinner we made our way to Hemingway’s for Rios’ martini. I noticed that the El Gran Azul was all ready for a wedding. Very pretty.



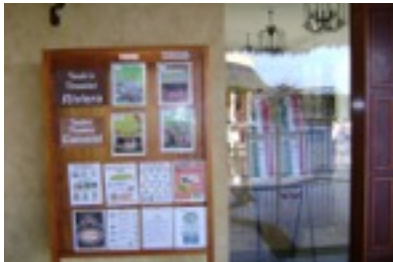
We listened for a while to the Golden Sound Band (very good) and made our way back to our home away from home. Another perfect day in Paradise. Friday ~ Another gorgeous day in Paradise. It was a red flag day and the surf was crashing. After my cappuccinos, I decided to go for another long walk. I wanted to get pictures of areas I had not previously photographed. Resort waking up on White Sand side



Canoes (kayaks)



Schedules of events outside Kabah. Italian night menus.



Kids play area near Punta Emilia



I bumped into Felipe at the beach bar. He had ridden his motor scooter there for an early morning espresso. Out of curiosity I asked him if the resort tries to preserve hot water during the day. I know they are very environmentally conscientious. It seemed that sometimes we didn't consistently have hot water. It didn't matter to me as we always had plenty of hot water with great pressure after our day at the beach. Felipe made a note on his hand (joked about his "Blackberry") and within an hour there were three maintenance men in our room. Steam was everywhere. Wow, did we have hot water after that!

Rios and I enjoyed another wonderful breakfast. Rios always ended his breakfast with a selection of toast from the freshly made breads at the resort. One suggestion I will make is for the resort to move some butter to the area where the fresh breads and toaster are located. I knew where the butter was (down yonder with the condiments) but it seemed a lot of people were wandering around looking for it.

We enjoyed a quiet morning in our spot. When we went up to Gran Azul at lunch I noticed a long line just kind of waiting. There was so much food to choose from I was curious to see what the line was waiting for. Aha!

Apparently it was "spare rib" day. They do make great ribs. The chef wheeled out piles of spare ribs. They disappeared as quickly as he could carve them. They just kept bringing out more. Rios and I decided to try some more of their freshly grilled foods. I asked to have some salmon and chicken breasts grilled. Yummy!

Wandering back to our spot on the beach, we noticed that they were already setting up for the beach BBQ.



Happy and satisfied, we went back to our peaceful spot on the beach. The tranquility had vanished as a large rowdy group had arrived. They were all talking (yelling) at once, complaining about some trivial thing or another. Running around wildly were about a dozen kids of various ages. Now I like kids but these kids were out of control. Every now and then a parent or two or three would scream something at the kids. Deaf ears. The parents were refilling their beers while the kids bounced balls off the palm trees trying to knock out coconuts. I was very concerned that a coconut would go flying out of a tree and hit Rios or someone else nearby. I didn't see the football coming that one of them slammed into my head. My forehead was bleeding and had a large egg on it. I was dizzy from the impact but didn't want to upset Rios. The parents did nothing, just got louder as they consumed more beer. (I have nothing against beer drinkers as long as they know what their kids are up to.) They were absolutely clueless. I pointed to a nearby open

area where there was a volleyball net and instructed the kids to go over there. They scattered away quickly and took their balls with them.



My dignified, patient Rios said, "It's time to move on". This was totally out of character as he is always so much more patient than I am. I had hoped of course that the group who had rudely invaded our peaceful territory would move on but that was not to be. I scouted out the beach and found a very peaceful spot near Scuba Caribe where we spent the rest of our days. One would think it might be noisy but it was very quiet, near the beach bar, easy to access via wheelchair and as a plus we got to watch the occasional passerby who waved to the webcam! I was sad to have to give up the spot where we had spent our days on so many visits but the behavior of that unpleasant group of people was not something that we could or should have had to witness.

Friday - Part 2

When Rios went to the room for his rest I decided that I really must get some shopping done. I wanted so much to give something to Felipe (the bartender we had met at Hemingway's one night). He was so proud of his family and especially of his 6 year old daughter. His eyes just shone with love for her. He lives in the dorms on the resort and can only see his family on Sundays so I wanted to find something he could give her on Sunday. We also had not found anything at all for our Abby who was in Spain.

Felipe when we met him in Hemingway's



After checking out the gift shop on the Kantenah side, I walked to the Colonial lobby and hopped on the golf carts that were covering for the trains. Very easy ride to White Sand lobby. The gift shop on White Sand has similar inventory to that of Kantenah but I think there is more of a selection. What to get for a six year old that wasn't "touristy"? After much debate I bought her a little colorful bracelet that could also be used as a pony tail holder. I found my Abby some great earrings. OK. Shopping is done. We would buy our vanilla at the airport for our friends at home. (Note: Vanilla is much more reasonable at the airport but you must buy it at

the Duty Free shop. They will seal it in a bag and deliver it to your flight.) Rios has also been talking about looking for some special gin that he read about in one of his spy novels!

We had a reservation for El Dorado that night. Felipe (bartender) told me that he often filled in at the Colonial bar at night so my plan was to go by there before dinner and give him the gift.

Schedules in Colonial theater



We were fortunate on several levels as we approached the Colonial bar; bartender Felipe was there. I gave him the gift for his daughter with a handwritten note. Just at that moment Jayne RI and Sean came over so I was a bit distracted but Rios watched Felipe's face and said he was close to tears of gratitude. My Rios owned a tavern and restaurant once and is very sensitive to the staff. I am so pleased that a tiny gift like a bracelet brought someone so much happiness. Jayne & Sean were leaving the next day and talking about their next trip. They were debating about it as their oldest son would be in college but I think they had decided they would take the plunge and go as a threesome.

More happiness. The Colonial bar has either Beefeater or Gordon's gin (can't remember which). Felipe made Rios a perfect martini. We had a nice chat with Jayne & Sean; their kids came by. Their oldest son got his diving certification and was very proud. Their sons know my Abby and we talked about her being in Spain. Then I saw Felipe Martinez (GM) come and sit at the bar for an espresso. He was deep in conversation with a business associate. He never stops working! Amazing. Once Rios finished his perfect martini we made our way to El Dorado.



Jorge was our waiter. Service was impeccable. It began with the staff locating the most comfortable table for Rios in his wheelchair. They did not hesitate for a second to move us to a large table which was more comfortable for us. We were given the menu and said that there was a filet as a special. Someone on the forum had asked me to check out when they have the filet special and I was told, "almost every night". We both ordered

the filet. Excellent! As always, they kept the wine flowing. I said, “be careful, I’m driving”. Immediately the head waiter appeared and concerned, asked, “madam are you driving? “ I smiled and pointed to the wheelchair and we all had a good laugh.



Desert?



After dinner we listened to Quarzo for a short while. Checking my notes I didn’t write down where it was but you can check the bulletin boards in the theaters, outside of La Hacienda or Kabah as the bands float around. We passed the BBQ on the way back. We heard many sounds of laughter and good music;delicious smells permeated the air.



Another magical day in Paradise. Tomorrow is our last full day.....

.Saturday – Our last full day in Paradise

It had warmed up a lot since the beginning of the week. Witnessing a gorgeous sunrise on a beautiful beach with a cappuccino is truly like being in Paradise.



On this morning I felt inspired to write in the sand.



The boat was out early on a morning tour.



I wandered back to our room where Rios and I shared a coffee. Villa 30 was perfect for us. While we loved the Mayan suites on the Kantenah side when we stayed there, it was much easier to get around from Villa 30. Thanks to the resort for being so sensitive to our needs.



All over the resort we were struck at just how lush everything had become. Everything was filling in beautifully. (Villa 30 from path near El Gran Azul).



On this morning at breakfast they had the thinnest fried potatoes. They tasted like homemade potato chips. Yummy! We always got great pleasure out of breakfast and after another wonderful meal, I accompanied Rios to our new spot near Scuba Caribe. We always enjoyed the path along there that leads back and forth to our room. The iguanas are plentiful and not especially shy. On this day we saw not just iguanas of every shape and size but another agouti. What a treat!



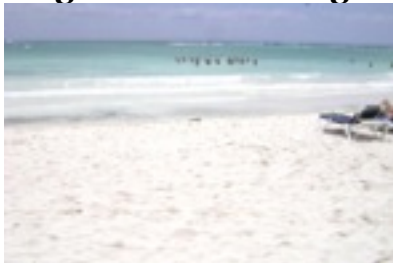
As this would be our last evening at the Palladium we had discussed perhaps taking Felipe up on his invitation to try El Jardin on the Royal Riviera side. My kind and easy going Rios said, “Whatever you decide. I just want you to be happy”. So I left Rios on the beach to go up to cancel our Rodizio reservation and ask the Guest Services about El Jardin. They told me to go to El Jardin any time we liked. No reservation needed. That was nice as we could just go at a leisurely pace.. I wanted to linger over our last evening.

I noticed that even the foliage indoors has become more lush. Colonial setting with romantic table.



I also checked our flights and the time had changed. I emailed Javier at AGI to please come an hour later the next morning and they did, right on the dot!

I wandered back to the beach and sat with Rios, reading, just enjoying our magical surroundings. We watched water robics.



Wow, this always made me feel hungry. We wandered up to El Gran Azul for another wonderful lunch. There is always a main course such as roast beef, roast pork, roast chicken, roast lamb, spare ribs, usually surrounded by delicious roast vegetables. There are always a number of side dishes such as fish, chicken dishes, rice dishes. Then there are a number of freshly grilled items you can order to have grilled while you wait, i.e. chicken, three kinds of fish, pork chops, steak. For those who want simpler fare, there are hotdogs, hamburgers and crispy french fries which they continually make and put out fresh.. There are always about six or eight different cold salads

that change daily. I cannot imagine anyone not being able to find something to his/her liking here!

After lunch we went back to our new spot. This was a good people watching spot which we both enjoy. I decided to take another quick walk down the Kantenah beach. I wasn't looking for those speedo Greek gods, just some good beach pictures!

Kantenah beach

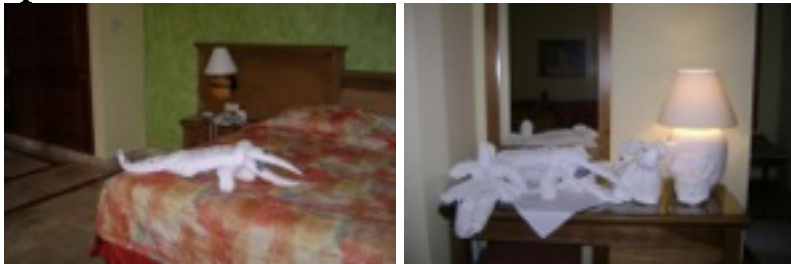


.Kantenah showing Royal area to the left.



We spent the rest of the afternoon just reading, inhaling our environment, people watching. Rios sipped on a champagne and then he wanted to rest so we could linger over our last evening. We had spent some fun time with Patti & John and hoped to share a cocktail with the Kerns this evening. We had left the arrangements open to make it more leisurely for all.

Back at the room we noticed that Edwin had left us some more fun towel art. He had been a wonderful housekeeper all week and we found lots of special touches.



Sunset over El Gran Azul pool



It was nice to linger and not be on a schedule. When we were ready for dinner, we called a golf cart to bring us to EL Jardin. One was immediately dispatched and our driver could not have been nicer. (I should have written his name down.) He left us at the entrance to EL Jardin where we were greeted warmly.



We were given the choice of an outdoor or indoor table. We chose indoors. Walter was our waiter and was superb. First he took our drink order. Rios asked if they had Beefeater or Gordon gin. Walter proudly proclaimed that they had Beefeater: “very good”. Then the bartender held up the bottle. Rios

ordered a Beefeater martini and when it arrived it was warm. Now my Rios rarely if ever complains. He nicely said, "it is warm, may I get it shaken over ice?" So the next martini that came was cooler but it was sweet. The bartender then began holding up vermouth bottles. At this point we didn't want to fluster anyone so Rios said, "how about some Beefeater on ice?" Everyone was happy after that.

Walter explained that there was a "help yourself" salad bar and then we could choose from any of the entrees displayed near the grilling stations.



I chose a rib eye and Rios a sirloin. The steaks were outstanding, Rios proclaimed the best he had had at the resort. Walter then presented deserts.



I decided to use the lady's room before leaving. I love the lady's rooms at the Palladium. While I was in there taking a picture little did I know that Sun and Sand was also there taking pictures!



We really enjoyed El Jardin. It was smaller than the restaurants on the other areas of the resort and casual despite having an upscale feel to it. The mix up with the martinis was a source of smiles for us. We still had to make one last trip to Hemingway's. Before leaving we decided to check out the Royal lobby bar. It was a nice area but the bar was smallish and all seats taken. Rios really enjoys his martinis while on a bar stool so I used the computers to say hi to Abby (computers are quite nice) and we caught a Royal golf cart and went off to Hemingway's. There we had a nice visit with Patti & John. The Kerns eventually arrived, tired from their trip but we all had some good fun. The Kerns were also in the Kantenah Mayan suites and

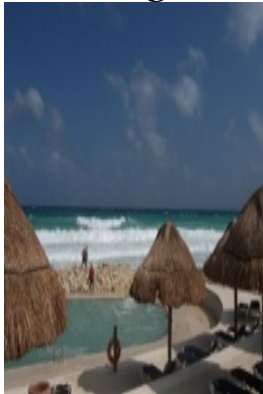
appeared to be happy with their suite. Rios, trying to make the evening linger as long as possible, had a 2nd martini! We all laughed about that after relaying the martini stories at El Jardin. I know my Rios was really tired and trying for both our sakes to stay up but soon I accompanied him to our room. Not yet ready to leave Paradise, I sat by the pool and listed to the sounds of music, laughter, the sea and the jungle.....

Conclusion...Savor every moment

Rios had been reading some detective novels in which the James Bond type character drank martinis made from Bombay Sapphire Gin. He was thrilled to find it at the Duty Free shop at the airport.

We headed home Sunday night and as soon as we arrived at home he said, "I can't wait for a martini made from my new bottle of Bombay Gin." Since Rios had become ill he took pleasure in many small things. He taught me how to make his daily martini precisely right. We talked happily about our trip which was a gift as I had been unsure that Rios would be able to make it this time. He was determined and I will be forever grateful.

Rios also enjoyed candles at cocktail time so we always had a peaceful time together as a prelude to our dinner with Abby. This night Abby was in Spain so we lingered.



On Monday morning copies of his book arrived, *The Immortal Tavern* by Jim Adams. This memoir constitutes a labor of love, both in the physical restoration and re-opening of Paul Revere's favorite tavern, The Warren Tavern in Boston, and in several years' work it took capturing the many rich stories that comprise the tapestry of the tavern book. Rios spent much of Monday reading and re-reading the *Immortal Tavern*.

On Tuesday he wanted to see his garden, always a pleasure to him and something he had missed working on throughout his illness. During martini time he took great pride and pleasure in reading the emails from our Abby in Spain. She would be leaving her host family the next day to travel to Madrid. Rios called to check on his brother who had been ill. Then Rios called some old dear friends to share some of the stories from the "Tavern" days. There was much excitement about the Tavern book. Shortly thereafter my beloved Rios passed away, in his favorite chair with his martini, his book, pictures of us with Abby and her emails by his side. He

passed quietly and with great dignity like the officer and gentleman he exemplified.

He had surprised me with an eternity ring on my recent birthday, courageously accompanied me on our miraculous trip to the Palladium, took great pride and pleasure in our daughter, his pride and joy, and in having been published. Some of you got to know my Rios on this trip. He was more introspective. I believe Patti M identified and described our feelings for each other which grew deeply during Rios' final journey. His sparkling blue eyes expressed a depth of feeling that now tells me he knew. He gave me this trip as a remarkable gift, as hard as it had been for him to travel and give up his independence to a wheelchair.

Rios would want me to continue with the forum. He often teased me when I was on the computer about "going to Mexico" but he always encouraged me as he knew it brought pleasure to many and so I shall continue. Abby and I have already talked about returning to the warm embrace of the Palladium, our home away from home, where we have so many treasured memories.







