

A vibrant photograph of a tropical garden. In the foreground, a pond is filled with large, round, green lily pads. A small child is swinging on a swing set made of a tree branch over the pond. The background is a dense wall of various tropical plants and trees.

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# CASA HABITA

Reviewed by Angelique Platas



**Arrival/Check-In:** After driving through downtown Guadalajara, through busy streets, markets and a main road seemingly dedicated to selling only bathroom porcelain and fixtures, the silence, greenery and openness surrounding Casa Habita was almost jarring. The hotel sits neatly tucked away behind lush foliage and a short staircase designed more like the entrance to an inviting home than a hotel.

I walked into the floor-to-ceiling glass-clad entrance and through a waiting room that seemed more like a cigar bar and swanky lounge than anything else (a theme here) toward guest services to check in. The concierge graciously cut short my choppy Spanish as she took my information and handed me my key within minutes. My room was ready (huge plus), so I didn't have time to pour myself a welcome shot of tequila from the three varieties — *añejo*, *reposado* and *blanco* — available at the desk. Shoot.

**Guest Quarters:** I grabbed my old-school key (think *Secret Garden*) and headed to my Junior Suite. It took a minute or two to find it, as the dark-toned hallways were dimly lit, but I finally entered my corner room boasting city views from three of the four walls, two of which featured floor-to-ceiling windows.

The open layout of the space offered a king-sized bed facing one glass wall, sectioning the room with a retro-green vinyl headboard acting as a room divider, a real *Mad Men*-meets-Mexico aesthetic. I put my bag on the floor and made use of the side table and velvety rolling chairs for my clothes — I'm not

one to use hotel drawers and dressers, but I do always use the closet, which this room lacked.

The room felt larger than its documented 538 square feet, with the open concept extending to the bathroom, which had no doors, only privacy windows with a slight frosted tint. Finding a rain showerhead is always a fun surprise, but just remember to close the floor-to-ceiling curtains before you get too excited and hop in. The room's 1930s–1950s vibe was not wasted on me — I loved the simplistic style, pop of color and swanky furniture.

**Services/Amenities:** Between the guestroom's city views and rain shower, you could forget to go out and explore the hotel's small pool, spa, secluded outdoor space and equally charming 1930s style throughout.

This hotel has its own vibe. One side boasts a light and airy tropical look, with light-filled windows, palm patterns and upscale wicker furniture, while the other offers a dark, cigar-rolling, rich, fabric-covered side — the two together offer an Old Havana feel in the heart of a bohemian, artsy Mexican neighborhood. The hotel could be a set in a Wes Anderson film, a style which perfectly encapsulates the hip neighborhood surrounding its walls.

The service was efficient and helpful, from check-in to check-out. I called down and housekeeping came within minutes; the staff remembered my name and made friendly conversation throughout my stay but wasn't at all overbearing — a win/win for me.

## TOP TAKEAWAYS:

- ◆ The hotel's complimentary WiFi was great; I had service throughout my stay on multiple devices.
- ◆ I made use of the Bluetooth speaker in my room almost the entire time I was there — it was a nice touch.
- ◆ The hotel hosts exclusive, secret events for locals and guests, like a speakeasy-style party in a penthouse room, only made known to a select group of guests.
- ◆ Take advantage of the complimentary continental breakfast!

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