

The History of Casa de Campo

In 1960, Mr. Alvaro Carta fled Communist Cuba to live in Miami. In the late 1960's he was off to the Dominican Republic to operate the financially troubled South Puerto Rico Sugar Company. With the financial backing of the huge Gulf + Western empire, headed by Charles Bludhorn, Carta formed a new division known as Gulf + Western Americas.

The Sugar Mill in the town of La Romana quickly became the single largest producing mill in the world and Carta began to consider investment options for the millions of dollars flowing into Gulf + Western each year. He wanted to take the money cultivated in this country and create a new industry, developing impoverished areas and improving the economic conditions of its people. He targeted the tourism industry and began looking for land to build a lavish resort with a golf course.

Carta brought in famed golf course designer Pete Dye to assist him in locating the perfect spot. After drawing up plans for an area just outside of Santo Domingo, Dye asked if there were any alternate locations. Carta reluctantly suggested there was an area near the La Romana Sugar Mill that was too dry to grow sugarcane and too sparsely vegetated for cattle. Carta and Dye ventured out to take a look.

Dye started out building an Executive Course in the area to be played by the employees of the Sugar Mill. But in scouting the coastline, Dye discovered that something truly extraordinary could be created here.

Over the next year, more than 300 Dominicans molded a sea-side course. The course was created by the use of manpower, instead of horsepower because the cost to import special machinery was prohibitive. The land, covered with thick underbrush, stubby tropical trees, big boulders, and cactus was cleared by laborers who gripped their machetes and cleared the land. The crew used sledgehammers, pickaxes and chisels to crack the coral rock. The soil was carted from a mile inland, by sugarcane carts pulled by oxen and transported to the course site. The topsoil was created with cachaza, a by-product of sugarcane. The course was originally named Cajuales, referring to the beautiful cashew trees that grew in the mountains. The name was changed to the "Teeth of the Dog" when Dye heard natives refer to the sharp coral rock as, "diente del perro, (teeth of the dog in Spanish) after the canine-teeth appearance of the sharp rock edges.

In the Fall of 1971, the 18-hole course **Teeth of the Dog**, with seven holes on the Caribbean Sea was ready for play. An international airport was built at Casa de Campo to accommodate the many corporate CEO's arriving via private jet to vacation here.

In 1974, Casa de Camp resort opened as an executive retreat for Gulf + Western and its "Teeth of the Dog" hosted the World Amateur Team Championships. About the same time, the late Indian Prince Maharajah Jabar Singh, one of the best polo players in the world, having won Spain's Kings Cup six times and Frances' Deuville gold Cup three times, was invited to introduce **polo at this new resort**. Singh organized polo and started breeding and training polo ponies for Gulf + Western.

Tennis was added as an added perk to vacationing guests. In 1976 the "Links" golf course opened for play and construction began on a village high atop a hill dedicated to be a cultural mecca to showcase the art of the Dominican Republic. In 1979, the heart of Altos de Chavon was completed. Genesis Discotheque opened Dec. 31, 1980 and two years later on August 20, 1982, Frank Sinatra inaugurated the villages' 5,000-seat Grecian style amphitheatre with an HBO televised special. The Altos de Chavon School of Design opened in 1983 in affiliation with New York's famed Parson's School of Design.

The Tide Turns Public.....

As the global economy began to fall in the mid-1980's, Casa de Campo, the Sugar Mill and its surrounding property was sold to a group of private investors of the Central Romana Corporation. The "tourism" dream of Alvaro Carta was about to take-on a different dimension... this time with a global impact becoming the force driving tourism development in the Dominican Republic.

Native Dominican designer Oscar de la Renta, who built a home here, was asked to provide his fashion talents to design the overall original "ambiance" of Casa de Campo.

American Eagle, a division of American Airlines began daily commuter service to Casa de Campo's private airstrip from San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Casita hotel rooms were built to supplement the private villa homes and to give guests a choice in accommodations. In 1986, the new owners brought in famed British marksman Michael Rose to create a **world-class Sporting Clays** facility to complement the **golf, tennis, beach watersports, river and ocean fishing, horseback riding & polo** already in play at this Caribbean resort.

With world-class level sports and instruction, Casa de Campo had a firm hold on the high-end and upper middle markets - endorsed by our guests interested in golf, tennis, polo, shooting, etc. In 1986, the coveted Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Edition was shot at Casa de Campo resort. When it hit the stands in Winter 1987, the resort with these amazing shots was on the map!

In 1990, the private **La Romana Country Club & Golf Course** was added. Casa de Campo became an international port of call in July 1992 with the inaugural arrival of Costa Cruise Lines' Classica.

Then on June 15, 1995, **American Airlines** flew its Inaugural jet service from Miami to Casa de Campo.

In the summer of June 1998, computer giant Microsoft introduced its long awaited **Microsoft Golf '98** game featuring Casa de Campo's famed "Teeth of the Dog" and "Links" courses. Just a month later, (August '98), The World Amateur Golf Championships returned to Casa de Campo with nightly updates provided to golf enthusiasts around the world on The Golf Channel's popular "Golf Central" telecast.

Just before high season, on December 19, 2000, American Airlines from the USA landed a jet in an inaugural flight into the new **Casa de Campo / La Romana International Airport**, just minutes from check-in at the resort! And one year later, December 2001, the Casa de Campo Preparatory Institute by Johnson & Wales University opened in the morning and, the new Casa de Campo Marina & Yacht Club opened later that same day.

It was April 2003, when Pete Dye himself cut the ribbon to his newest creation at Casa de Campo; rumored to rival the famed Teeth of the Dog, the new DYE FORE course located near the Altos de Chavon village was born.

After decades of family vacationing at Casa de Campo, famed restaurant owner Siro Maccioni joined forces with the owners and management of Casa de Campo in Winter 2007. Maccioni sent a chef direct from Le Cirque in New York (not a bad gig for a NY chef in the Winter), and the new **Beach Club by Le Cirque** opened with Le Cirque signature cuisine and service at the resort's private Minitas Beach.

Following years of searching the globe for the "right spa fit" for Casa de Campo, in the Spring 2008, the new **Cygalle Healing Spa at Casa de Campo** opened. Cygalle Dias, creator of the mobile, eco-friendly Cygalle Healing Spa that serviced not only designers and models at Fashion Weeks in both NY and London, but also celebs and socialites who summured in the Hamptons for years, found a permanent home at Casa de Campo.

Throughout its colorful, exciting history, Casa de Campo has received countless industry accolades for its quality facilities, staff and service. The resort continues to amaze villa owners and guests alike, with its constant evolution while maintaining a strong dedication to high quality facilities and services.