Best Christmas Holiday Destination

> *“One must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star”*

And she definitely is one – Francesca Bonato, the star behind Coqui Coqui.

Alongside her partner in crime and soulmate **Nicolas Maleville**, this dynamic duo keeps the wanderlust souls and adventurous globetrotters dreaming since their first opening way back in **Tulum**, 2003.

“It all started accidentally!” **Francesca** says after the small house she and **Maleville** built turned into a hotel as more friends and family started visiting and needed a place to stay. Initially, the duo moved to Mexico in need of a healthy and organic lifestyle, one that proved not only simple, but genuine as well. After the success of their coconut oil and their first residence, they both somehow felt responsible for Tulum currently being such a trendsetting destination.

Nevertheless, the real heart of Coqui Coqui is the fragrances – the initial project created by Maleville who is a landscape architect and perfumier. The thirteen exotic fragrances represent the spirit of the **Yucatan Peninsula** and are inspired by the aromas of its lush surroundings, made by combining original scents extracted from Mexico plant-life. Between the different scent notes, I personally fell in love with the Eucaced fragrance because it perfectly matches with my personality: smoky and spicy with a cedar base note!

In addition to learning about the fragrances, Francesca explained to me how the duo became involved with the local Mayan community after creating an environmentally sustainable system called Hacienda Montaecristo. This features a collection of hand-crafted products using natural fibers and local techniques revisited with a contemporary touch. One of their trademarks would certainly be the hand-crocheted Hammock in different natural hues.

When you think about Coqui Coqui, it is more than just a perfumeria, residence or spa. It is much more than just a chic hideaway in a secluded destination. It is a full sensory experience from which one can truly let go and become immersed within the perfumes, flavors, colors and food. The latter being a unique component that is a tailored mix of Mexican, Italian and Argentinian influenced cuisine.

Even though each of the residences offers a one of a kind story and design concept, they all are related by their ability to connect with nature. It is the sophisticated simplicity and authentic lifestyle of understated luxury that are the common concepts shared between all the Coqui Coquis.

As I arrived in Coba I was suddenly shrouded from the primitive yet suggestive atmosphere of this place. Coqui Coqui Coba sits within Mayan ruins in a jungle setting, by a charming lagoon. This two-towers palapa-roofed hideaway resembles the ancient design of a Mayan temple, consciously conceived in local limestone with soft and neutral tones, two plunge pools and a rope bridge that connects the two towers. The interiors are minimal with a bohemian and colonial touch, fresh linen and hand-crafted local objects. The best memory was waking up early before sunrise, listening to the birds and the jungle slowly coming alive.

In the historical centre of Merida, the capital of Yucatan – the Epicerie, a one-suite residence established in a old french townhouse will make you savor la belle époque with a marble bath, two standalone bathtubs and velvet finishes. A romantic mix of local and colonial traditions above the Coqui Coqui boutique and perfumery and a small café dining area where you can delight some handmade chocolate. You will be surprised to find a spa hidden on a tiny backyard immersed in the green!

I feel blessed to have been the first one to have experienced Coqui Coqui's latest residence in the small colonial town of Izamal. Just few blocks away from the convent of San Antonio de Padua, Casa de los Santos is a old house lays in part on the basement of an ancient Mayan pyramid, sharing the same walls with it. In addition to the perfumeria and the boutique it boasts Bonato and Maleville's personal collection of old wooden statues of saints and virgins that they collected from all over the world during their travels.

Now Francesca & Nico live in a cabana by the sea in Bora Bora, Polinesia where they've just launched in the summer their new collection of perfumes & cabinet of curiosities. This time around the duo is inspired by the island's local flora and fauna. Who knows what and where it will be next, but one thing's for sure: this creative and passionate couple will keep inspiring us with their elegant simplicity and soulful authenticity for time to come.

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