



A Taste of Mérida at Villa Verde

Some of the city's top restaurateurs will join hosts Michael Berton and Robert Klie to expertly pair food and wine — while raising funds for the important work of **Fundación BAI A.C.**

A Taste of Mérida at Villa Verde is just around the corner, but if you want to attend you'll have to get on a waiting list. Yes, this year's event has sold out, a tribute to the talents and energy of its organizers.

"This is one of Fundación BAI's two signature events of the year," said Mark Callum, who is one of the organizers, "the other being our famous Mérida Showcase of Homes which last November attracted 950 visitors."

Where last year, A Taste of Mérida was at a grand mansion in García Ginerés, this year sees the glamorous event return to the Centro Histórico, in the quickly evolving Santa Lucia neighborhood.

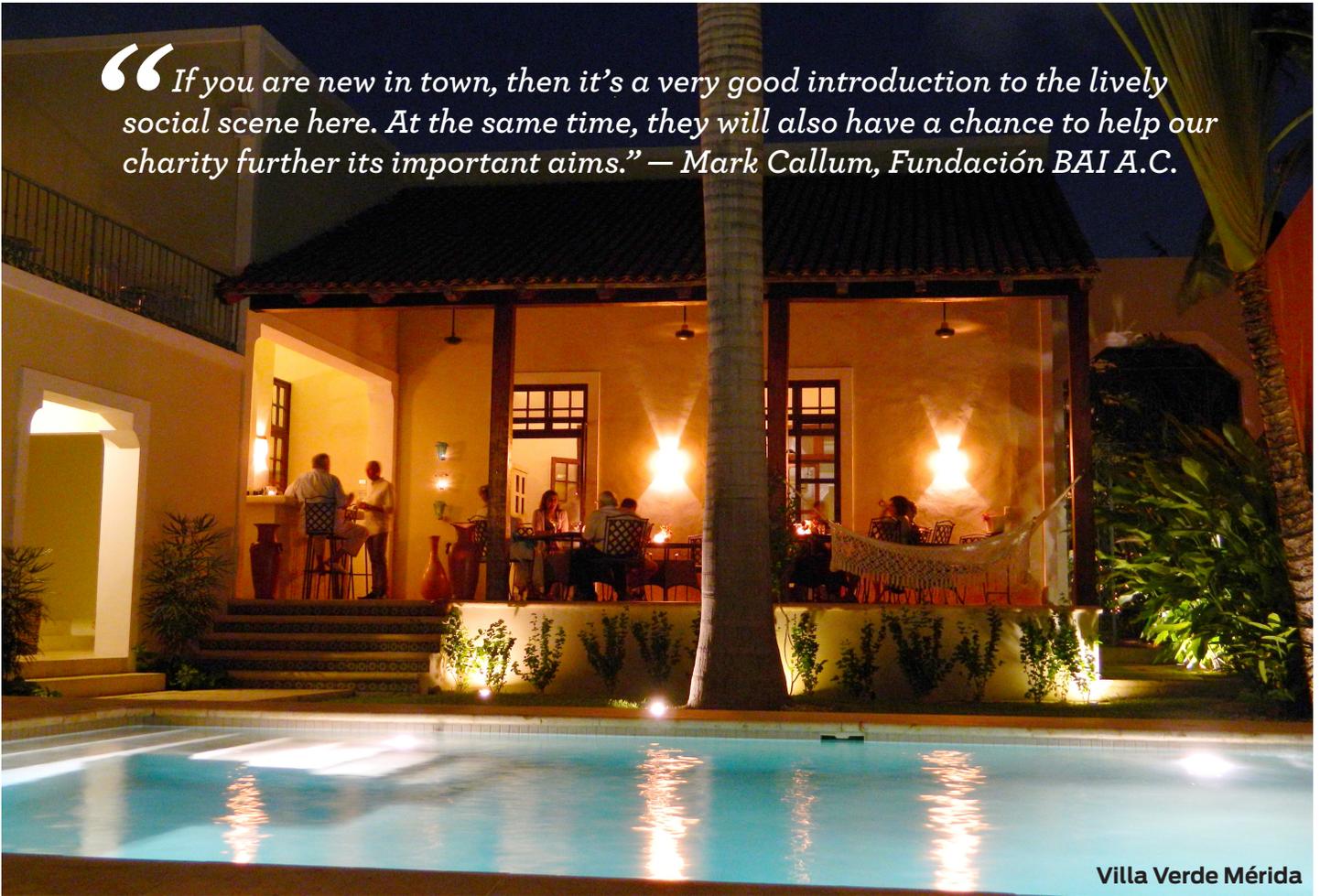
Fundación BAI relies on fundraising events to pay for its programs in the Yucatán to stem the rise of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, as well as teen pregnancies. Since its inception in 2007, they have conducted or participated in over 400 outreach activities including workshops, health fairs and rapid-detection testing campaigns.

Under the leadership of Dr. Carlos Cabrera, Fundación BAI has provided free HIV testing for over 4,000 people. Over 100,000 free condoms have been distributed throughout the peninsula thanks to events like these.

A Taste of Mérida is a temporary escape from the hard realities that Fundación BAI faces down. The grand casona courtyard of Villa Verde is an elegant oasis, suitable for appreciating the chef's offerings from **K'u'uk, Oliva Enoteca, Restaurante Unico** and **Ki'Xocolatl** chocolates. *(See next page)*



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Villa Verde Mérida

“One of our main focuses in planning this event is ensuring that people get to meet others in a relaxed and stimulating setting and above all that they enjoy themselves,” said Callum.

“If you are new in town, then it’s a very good introduction to the lively social scene here,” he said. “At the same time, they will also have a chance to help our charity further its important aims, not only through the purchase of their ticket, but also by snapping up some unique artwork and specially prepared health and vacation packages, aimed at pampering yourself, in our auction.”

The “taste” theme aligns perfect with the locale. Michael Berton and Robert Klie not only own Villa Verde, but they are proprietors of Botella Verde at Parque Santa Lucia, a place that is predicated around food-and-wine pairings. And Villa Verde’s guests enjoy a happy hour regularly on the terraza.

Mérida isn’t always a “dressy” city, but this is one time when you’ll be glad you put on your most chic outfits and mingled with like-minded expats and locals who share an appreciation of good food, good wine, and good people ... for a good cause.

The event has garnered a growing list of sponsors

Fast facts

» Fundación BAI A.C. is a registered non-profit organization, established in Mexico since 2007.

» The goal of the group is to decrease the spread of HIV, sexually transmitted infections, and teen pregnancies.

» Fundación BAI relies totally on donors. Visit fundacionbai.com to contribute or learn about future events.

(Yucatán Expat Life is proud to be among them), evidence of a formula and a mix that has resonated in the community.

“This event would not be possible without our generous sponsors, of course,” said Dr. Cabrera. “Particularly, we would like to thank our Major Gold Sponsors: Mitchell Keenan at **México International**; Adele Aguirre at **SoHo Galleries**; Steve Broin at **Casa Sirena**; Andrea Mereghetti at **Architettura Sonora**; Michael Berton and Robert Klie at **Villa Verde**; Eduardo Sobrino at **Margarita Zoreda**; Robert Abuda at **Robert Abuda Salon** and **Mérida Tradicional**.”

Dr. Cabrera also thanked Silver Sponsors: Grant Beare at **Yucatán Custom Home Builders**; Sean Hennessy and Colm Cooney at **Hennessy’s Irish Pub**; Wade Yarchan at **Yucatán Beach Homes/ City Lights Merida**; Sally Russ and Nita Lindley; John Bradshaw and Alan DiCamillo and Lee Steele at **Yucatán Expat Life**.

In-kind donations were accepted gratefully from **Botella Verde**; **El Estudio**; **Videre Eye Clinic**; **Lakini Massage**; artist **David Aldrich**; **Rosas & Xocolate**; artist **Kreso Calvovic**; **Hotel Casa San Ángel**; **Nahuali Art Gallery** and **Taninos Para Todos**.