

Also in 1898, Ignacio Arzapalo, who came to bathe in the hot springs, opened the 36-room Hotel Arzapalo in Chapala; the hotel began its own daily stage-coach service to Atequiza, the nearest railway station. This proved to be a great success and, in 1905, on the site where the Town Hall (formerly the Hotel Nido) now stands, Arzapalo began to build the two-storey, 96-room Hotel Palmera.

The architect for the Hotel Palmera, which opened in 1907, was Mexico City-born Guillermo de Alba who had graduated as a surveyor-engineer in Guadalajara in 1895, before undertaking a visit to Chicago. On his return, de Alba began building homes in Chapala, including his family residence, Mi Pullman (1906). Besides the Hotel Palmera, de Alba designed Villa Niza (1919), remodeled Villa Ave María (1919) and was the favored architect of several wealthy families in Guadalajara. However, de Alba's architectural masterpiece is not a villa but the beautifully proportioned Chapala railway station, completed in 1920. Several of the buildings de Alba designed have been lovingly restored in recent years, the pride of the bunch being his former family home Mi Pullman, half-way along Aquiles Serdán, the short street immediately west of the pier.

Porfirio Díaz had already been President of Mexico for more than fifteen years when he visited Chapala briefly in December 1896. Eight years later, in January 1904, Díaz and his wife revisited Chapala, where her sister and her husband, Lorenzo Elizaga, had built a fine estate known as El Manglar. Díaz and his family returned to Chapala for Holy Week in 1905, 1908 and 1909. Cocktails called *chatos* (Elizaga's infant son's nickname was El Chato) were served, and the State Band would be sent from Guadalajara to provide entertainment.

The popularity of Chapala grew. The Presidential seal of approval encouraged many noted Guadalajara families, such as Uribe, Pérez Verdía, Hermosillo, Capetillo, Castellanos, Somellera, Brizuela and Newton, to build or purchase houses on the lake. In 1906, a very distinctive, European-style house built by historian Luis Pérez Verdía was sold to one Alberto Braniff, from Mexico City, who spent up to a month each year in Chapala. Braniff, one of the sons of an American businessman with multifarious business and banking interests in Mexico, was an aviation pioneer and introduced many sporting activities into Chapala, including bullfighting and motorboats. His brother, Tomás, had the area's best sailboats. The Braniff family (no direct connection to the founders of the eponymous U.S. airline) sold their Chapala house in 1942. It is a restaurant, the Cazadores, today.

In about 1908 a Norwegian entrepreneur, Paul Christian Schjetnan, visited Chapala. He was much taken with the area and, along with several federal politicians, helped organize the first Chapala Yacht Club. The members began operations in 1910, importing into Mexico (from the U.S.) a prefabricated wooden yacht club building. This was assembled on metal posts about 150 yards from the pier. It was a one-storey building with offices, a library, dance room, restaurant, terraces, a lookout and a lighthouse, which never worked. Absolutely everything was imported—the furniture, the cutlery and even the tablecloths. The club also imported three sail boats, none of which survived long. The *Condor*, about sixty feet long,