

A Century of Conviction — Grupo Poma

Grupo Poma has carried a century of Salvadoran enterprise across the United States, the Caribbean and Latin America. A fourth generation carries it further, on one conviction: discipline builds what haste cannot.

| By Matías Godoy |

Four Generations of Growth

The story began in 1919: Bartolomé Poma, a Spanish mechanic from Barcelona, founded an automotive business in El Salvador. It grew into one of Central America's most established family groups.

His son Luis Poma added Chevrolet and, in 1953, Toyota, making the family the automaker's first partner in the Americas, second worldwide after Taiwan. Then came workshops and spare parts; then industry, real estate and hospitality—the foundations of the group's businesses.

Luis's son Ricardo Poma led Grupo Poma for more than four decades, taking it across the Americas—deepening each business, adding global brands and forging long-term relationships, including one with Bain Capital dating back to its earliest days.

Today the group operates five companies—Excel, Grupo Roble, Real Hotels & Resorts, Autofácil and Solaire—in 10 countries, with more than 12,000 employees. In a recent interview in El Salvador, Fernando Poma, a member of the fourth generation and Ricardo Poma's eldest son, said: "We have been around for 107 years in El Salvador, and now operate in 10 countries. We have a very long-term vision."

Discipline Creates Scale

Grupo Poma's defining strategy is knowing where it can win—and declining everything else, however tempting. Diversification has meant geography: extending the same five businesses into new countries, where experience compounds—never into

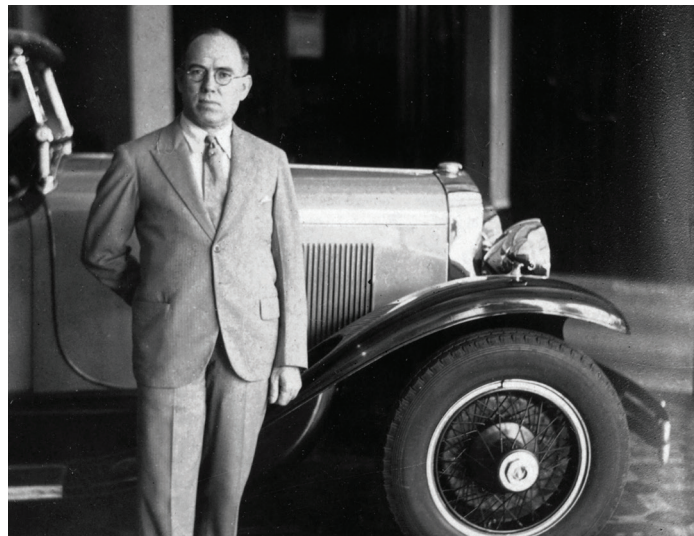
industries the family does not understand. The filter is exacting: enter only businesses that are predictable not one year out but 10 or 20 years out; protect capital before chasing returns, because losing half means doubling just to recover. Profits go back into widening competitive advantages, not out the door. Execution belongs to what Poma calls "gente 10": 10-out-of-10 talent, given direction and room to work.

"We have a very clear strategic discipline to know what we know and know what we do not know," Poma said. "We are very aggressive if we find opportunities within our core competence."

That aggression shows at Real Hotels & Resorts, where Poma has spent a quarter-century building partnerships with Choice Hotels International, IHG Hotels & Resorts, Marriott International and Hyatt: a Grand Hyatt underway in Panama City and the JW Marriott San Salvador rising at home will lift the portfolio—24 hotels in 10 countries—to 26, and the group is constantly looking to expand. Excel, led by Andrés Poma, Fernando's brother, is Central America's largest automotive company, with 19 brands and 42 franchises across five countries, from Toyota and Chevrolet to BMW, Nissan, Kia and Mitsubishi Motors. Grupo Roble's real estate platform, led by Alberto Poma, spans eight countries, with 20 shopping centers and 60,000-plus homes delivered, alongside corporate and mixed-use developments.

Investing in People

The long horizon extends beyond business—education, health, opportunity.



BARTOLOMÉ POMA, WHO FOUNDED THE FAMILY'S AUTOMOTIVE BUSINESS IN EL SALVADOR IN 1919.

«We have a very clear strategic discipline to know what we know and know what we do not know. We are very aggressive if we find opportunities within our core competence.»

FERNANDO POMA

vulnerable young adults through dignified employment."

Family as a Foundation

Behind the businesses lies another continuity—family unity. Across four generations, preserving harmony has mattered more than any single deal. That principle underpins orderly succession: six members of the fourth generation currently work across the group's companies, in different roles.

Rooted at Home

Growth abroad has never diluted the family's Salvadoran identity. El Salvador remains the center of its commitment and giving.

"We love El Salvador. We've been here for 107 years," Poma said. "We believe in the people of El Salvador."

Pride of Ownership

That conviction guides the next cycle of investment. "Our objective is not scale alone but differentiation — products and services with advantages durable enough to defend," Poma explained. The family calls the standard "pride of ownership": invest more than the market asks to build something unique. Success, Poma likes to say, demands a rare pairing: a dreamer and a doer at once.

After 107 years, the proposition remains what it was in that first workshop, now written across the Americas: build to last, and stay true to the country, people and values that built the enterprise.



