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The State's
Top Breweries!

33 SUMMER GETAWAYS

Best places to stay, from scenic spas and ritzy resorts to romantic B&Bs and cool cabins!

June 2011



Beach Bungalows

Whether you're looking for an intimate cottage or a family-style villa, these plush California resorts offer amazing amenities with all the comforts of home.

IN 2009, NEARLY 90 PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE WHO BOOKED a hotel for fun in California were from California (why leave a good thing?), but the next highest number of tourists (2.6 percent) came from Arizona, as is usually the case. We know a good thing when we see one, too, and those cool Pacific waters sing to us each summer like mythical sirens. Weakened by the desert's relentless heat, we're simply powerless to their melodies.

Knowing and accepting this, you can now plan your best California beach vacation ever. For some that might mean staying at a top-tier resort with top-rate service; for others it might mean renting a tattered beach house with tons of personality but none of the perks of a ritzy hotel.

The most savvy summer travelers, however, will get the best of both worlds by booking a private bungalow, villa or casita at one of the state's best resorts, which are catching on to the fact that guests don't necessarily want to leave the comforts of home behind—they just want to leave *their* homes. Cozy couples will enjoy extra privacy and, in some cases, direct access to sandy beaches (perfect for those quixotic long walks), while families can take advantage of full kitchens, spacious living rooms and multiple bathrooms.

Check out three of our favorite southern California resorts that know how to merge luxury with familiarity.

Hotel del Coronado

1500 Orange Ave., Coronado
800-468-3533, hoteldel.com

When Midwestern investors Elisha Babcock and Hampton Story bought San Diego's

flat, barren Coronado Island for \$110,000 in 1886 and built the lavish, Victorian-style Hotel del Coronado a year later for \$1 million, they only dreamed of constructing a resort that would become the scuttlbutt of summering folk everywhere.

Dream come true.

With the help of sugar magnate John D. Spreckels, who kept the hotel afloat during a depression in the 1890s as sole proprietor and inventor of the carnival-like Tent City across the way, the Del was cemented in history as one of the most storied, significant and scenic resorts in America. Today, it's a favorite summer destination for Phoenicians, who flock to the stately manston, with its signature maroon turrets, for some much-needed beach time and ample family-friendly activities.

Your brood won't balk at any one of the Del's 500- to 900-square-foot lavish suites, but the resort took family vacationing to a new level of sophistication last year when it rolled out Beach Village at the Del, a private enclave of luxurious oceanfront cottages and villas. Ranging from cozy guestrooms to two-level, three-bedroom suites, each cottage and

A beach cottage at Hotel del Coronado



Great Escapes



From top: Terranea Resort in Rancho Palos Verdes; a private villa at Terranea Resort



villa offers the comforts of a full-size home, including great rooms with fireplaces, cushy couches and 42-inch flat-screen TVs, spacious dining areas, gourmet kitchens, bathrooms with elegant soaking tubs and separate showers, and wraparound porches.

Sequestered from the hustle of the main hotel, the villas still include the perks of staying at the Del, just with a touch more privacy (they're so cozy, in fact, you might feel a bit naughty staying here, as if you've snuck into someone's personal beach house). They're

perfect for larger families who like to sprawl out with their summer gear – or a romantic retreat for two summering shutterbugs.

The villas also include exclusive access to smaller pools and hot tubs, and closer proximity to the 28 acres of Coronado's pristine white beaches.

Don't let the private digs deter you from enjoying all the Del has to offer, however, such as dining at one of four restaurants, including the chic wine bar ENO; splurging at one of 17 shops clustered along a quaint board-

walk that meanders throughout the property (everything from kitschy candy to designer duds is available); indulging in a soothing spa treatment (try the Shell Coronado massage, which uses warm tiger clam shells and aromatherapy oils to knead out those knots); or renting bikes to pedal around the island. Kids get an extra bonus with the resort's VIK (Very Important Kid) package launched last summer, which gives guests ages 4 to 12 extra perks throughout their stay.

If you get a touch of island fever, take the short drive across the bridge that connects Coronado with downtown San Diego, where SeaWorld, the USS Midway Museum and the historic Gaslamp Quarter offer endless entertainment for families. Too touristy? A leisurely stroll around the island pays off with an afternoon's worth of perusing quaint shops filled with beachy knickknacks and grabbing a bite at any number of bustling cafés (check out Burger Lounge for the island's most mouthwatering patties).

Rates for Beach Village at The Del range from \$650 to \$4,450 per night. For special packages, visit delbeachvillage.com.

Terranea Resort

100 Terranea Way, Rancho Palos Verdes
866-802-8000, terranea.com

Perched on the Palos Verdes Peninsula just south of Los Angeles, this sprawling resort overlooking the Pacific Ocean combines the casual attitude of southern California with all the elegance of a lavish Mediterra-



The spa at The Villas at Rancho Valencia in Rancho Santa Fe

mean estate. It doesn't hurt that the property is postcard-pretty, either, with its distinctive bluffs and haunting beach cove making appearances in several TV shows and movies.

Throw in an award-winning, nine-hole, par-3 golf course, three pools with ocean views, a full-service spa, and eight eclectic restaurants, bars and cafés, and you have yourself one serious summer destination. Without the history of, say, Hotel Del Coronado behind it, Terranea tempts further with its promise of being less populated. (It often books to capacity, actually, but the 102-acre property ensures a more secluded feel.)

For the highest level of privacy - and the most expansive views (yes, that's Catalina Island in the near distance) - book one of 50 oceanfront casitas, 32 ocean view villas or 20 spa bungalows, each of which offers the posh amenities of the 360-room resort without feeling cramped by too many neighboring guests.

Located in an exclusive enclave of the property, the villas feature two-, three- and four-bedroom floor plans complete with a full kitchen, living room, large outdoor terrace and a garage. Stay here especially if you're working on your swing, as the villas open up to views of the golf course.

Even cozier, the residential-like casitas, situated on the east and west bluffs of the peninsula, offer two- and three-bedrooms, along with spacious living rooms, multiple bathrooms, fully outfitted kitchens, washers and dryers, and fireplaces both indoors and out.

Spa fanatics should opt for one of the beach-breezy bungalows, which offer breathtaking ocean views, discounts on select spa services, all-day dining at the Spa Café, and a personal concierge who can arrange anything from dinner reservations to kayak rentals.

Rates start at \$835 for bungalows, \$680 for casitas and \$1,175 for villas. Summer specials include the "Kids Rule Vacation Celebration Package," which features a \$100 resort credit per night, good for golf, spa, dining, or recreation. Available through December 31, 2011. Restrictions apply.

Rancho Valencia - an Auberge Resort

6134 Calle Valencia, Rancho Santa Fe
866-996-6442, villasranchovalencia.com

While the sunny beaches of La Jolla beckon families to southern California, it's the off-shore activities that drive guests to this lush 40-acre resort in the tony neighborhood of Rancho Santa Fe. Families in need of a break from the beach scene can try their hands at tennis, bocce ball, croquet and golf at the world-renowned Torrey Pines nearby. Or simply escape to the Spa at Rancho Valencia, where revitalizing treatments play with citrus, mint, green tea and avocado to perk up parched sunbathers.

The 49 swanky, ranch-style suites on this petite property don't disappoint, but if you can, shell out \$2,500 per night to live like royalty in one of the resort's 96 luxury villas. Available for ownership, each of the villas features 3,500 square feet of indoor and

outdoor living space, three bedrooms, three and a half bathrooms, a private entry court, a jetted hot tub, indoor/outdoor fireplaces, and a patio grill. Custom furnishings, hand-painted tiles throughout and private garden patios lend to the villas' quintessential California hacienda look.

Not good enough? Rent the Hacienda, a grandiose 5,000-square-foot adobe home, featuring three suites, a private swimming pool, three wood-burning fireplaces, a spa and private garden patio. It's no bargain at \$4,725 per night, but the privacy you'll assume is unparalleled, and villa guests still have access to the resort's 18 tennis courts, fitness center, spa, swimming pools and dining facilities (Executive Chef Eric Bauer's new menu at the resort's signature restaurant features brasserie-style comfort cuisine such as 18-hour braised short ribs and hand-selected local oysters).

The opulence continues with a complimentary Mercedes-Benz for guests itching to drive into town (available on a first-come, first-served basis) and croquet and tennis lessons coupled with cocktails and charcuterie every Thursday evening throughout summer (\$22 per person).

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