

SILICON VALLEY'S GUIDE TO STYLE

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getaways

green on blue

L.A. resorts lure visitors with sun, sand – and recycling

By **Katharine Fong**





Katharine Fong

terranea

They arrive twice a day by golf cart like mini Hannibal Lecters, leather hoods covering their heads. But the captive-bred falcons are hardly menacing – the hoods keep them calm enroute to their launching spot at one of Terranea Resort's dramatic bluffs overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Once in the air, the birds soar up high, banishing pesky seagulls and the odd pigeon with their mere presence.

It's environmentally sensitive pest control, Terranea style. Rising from the water's edge on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, 20 miles from both the Los Angeles and Long Beach airports, Terranea bills itself as a luxury eco-resort. The 102-acre property, opened in June 2009, has 75 acres of green space, and is committed to protecting its coastal resources and restoring and preserving the natural habitat. (Happily, 1,000 acres of green space directly adjacent are part of the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve, and 1,200 acres of the larger peninsula is protected by the Palos Verdes Land Conservancy.)

In addition to now-standard luxe hotel efforts to reduce, reuse, recycle, Terranea offers teachable eco-moments throughout the grounds: telescopes for whale- and dolphin-watching and zooming in on Catalina Island in the distance, informative handouts on the tide pools along the beach below and an on-site naturalist to point out native flora and fauna. Also, Terranea-implemented wet ponds, bioswales ("created wetlands") and storm filters enhance local water quality and provide avian habitat.

Greening aside, Terranea's history makes for good stories: It sits where the old Marineland of the Pacific theme park once operated. The 1960s TV series "Sea Hunt" was shot here, and Nelson's pub is named for the character Mike Nelson, played by Lloyd Bridges. Recent movies such as "Pirates of the Caribbean" and "Pearl Harbor" have shot scenes on the property.

But visitors will mostly exult in the sheer physical beauty of the place. Not so much for the sprawling hotel complex and bungalows, casitas and villas (some for sale) – but for Terranea's majestic perch above and below the endless blue. There are three saltwater pools, plus a 140-foot waterslide that delights the kids; all command spectacular ocean views. Morning spin classes at the spa's fitness center are outdoors on a cliff above the beach. Sunsets at Nelson's pub often affords close-ups of dancing dolphins.

Terranea Resort

100 Terranea Way, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA, 866.802.8000, terranea.com

Onsite:

360 rooms, with 20 bungalows and 32 suites, plus 50 casitas and 32 villas. Nine-par golf course. three pools, spa and fitness facility, three restaurants. Hiking, biking, kayaking, beach access. Dog-friendly. Rates from \$300.



Courtesy Terranea Resort



Courtesy Terranea Resort

The L.A. wedding thing

Above the beach

Tie the knot at Terranea's breathtaking Catalina Point, where the blufftop above the Pacific has a paved square and trellis above. If the cliff's edge is not for you, use the manicured lawns below the lobby and near the ballroom and meeting rooms. Wedding parties – or bridal shower parties – find the bungalows and casitas a great way to keep that friends-and-family feeling intact and be near the action at the same time.

Cost: Varies; average price per person is \$200, which goes toward meeting the food and beverage minimums (\$20,000 to \$30,000-plus in the Catalina Ballroom); does not include ceremony site fee.

Fun fact: Last February (2010), TV's "The Bachelor" star Jason Mesnick married Molly Malaney at Catalina Point, in front of some 300 friends. (Mesnick had become notorious for dumping his first choice in favor of Malaney.) The festivities were taped and aired a few days later, natch.

