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resorting to luxury

INTRODUCING TERRANEA

by Melinda O'Brien

Southern California possesses a delightful habit of enthroning all things luxurious. And the South Bay is dedicated to helping tip the scales in favor of this reputation. Rancho Palos Verdes is doing its part by serving as the set-

ting for the new Terranea Resort, soon to be ordained the only true luxury destination resort along the coastline of the Pacific Ocean in Los Angeles County. The quintessential feather in the cap of an already decidedly prestigious locale, Terranea Resort will grace the cliffs of the Palos Verdes peninsula, just 20 miles south of the international airport. The epitome

of "a fashionable and exclusive residential colony" – as envisioned under the heading of the "Palos Verdes Project" some 80 years ago by Frank Vanderlip, the founding father of the Peninsula – Terranea Resort is slated to open in June 2009.

Accurately touted as a magnificent Mediterranean-style oceanfront hotel and real estate



HOT PROPERTY



Prized amenities at Terranea will consist of a 25,000-square-foot destination spa, a nine-hole golf academy, three restaurants, three swimming pools and two-miles of on-property hiking trails – all set amidst a breathtaking coastal backdrop. Seamlessly complementing these luxurious offerings, the resort will also provide more than 63,000 square feet of indoor event space, complete with an 18,000-square-foot ballroom and 31 meeting rooms for social and business gatherings. All the while, an array of outdoor venues will showcase expansive terrace and lawn space with awe-inspiring views for meetings, weddings and social affairs.

Now to say Terranea Resort sounds inviting would be an understatement of grand proportions. In speaking with some of the principal resort team members, one quickly gains the understanding that the allure of this elite luxury property will be all encompassing. Terri A. Haack, Executive Vice President and Managing Director, Kathy van Vechten, Vice President of Marketing, Christian Schmidt, Executive Chef, Douglas Hoagland, Catering Director and Melinda K. Milner, Spa Director, reveal the Terranea story, thus far, in all of its splendor.

community, the 102-acre Terranea Resort will boast 360 rooms with 34 suites, including an 1,800-square-foot presidential suite, along with 50 three-bedroom casitas and 32 two- and three-bedroom villas. Terranea's casitas and villas are being offered for sale, and people from around the globe are expected to take advantage of these glorious living accommodations.

Melinda O'Brien: After being introduced to the spectacular plans for Terranea, when did you realize you had to become a key player in its development?

Terri A. Haack: During the ground breaking, I became overwhelmed envisioning all of the possibilities for the magnificent site. 102 acres of walking trails, open space, an oceanfront wedding lawn, and nine holes of golf were to be created with the highest regard for this fragile coastal environment. I could picture a hotel reminiscent of a Mediterranean estate with casual, yet elegant service. And I could almost hear the laughter and joy pouring out from the residential villas and casitas where generations of families would gather. As the shovel hit the ground that day, I knew the journey had begun.

Kathy van Vechten: I first saw the location for Terranea four years ago when it was still the abandoned site of Marineland. As sad as the large empty parking lots and heaps of debris appeared, they couldn't mask the sheer beauty of this oceanfront setting. It's a special place that draws you in.

Christian Schmidt: The day after I prepared a tasting for the team, Terri gave me a personal



L to R: Chef Christian Schmidt, Douglas Hoagland, Kathy van Vechten and Melinda K. Milner

tour of Terranea. It was then that I truly wanted to become part of the resort. I sensed at that time that I could complement the strategic vision and the future of Terranea.

Douglas Hoagland: Immediately! It was love at first sight. I hadn't traveled to Palos Verdes and was skeptical that a location in Los Angeles County could really be so beautiful and natural. Then I got closer to the property. From Hawthorne Boulevard, I saw the spectacular panoramic vistas of the rugged coastline. And by the time I arrived at the resort itself, I knew I was hooked.

MO: As veterans of the luxury industry, which specific features do you believe will clearly set Terranea apart from other resorts in its class?

TH: While we'll have an unparalleled physical hotel, it will be the underlying spirit of Terranea

that will compel people to fall in love with the resort. Our staff is encouraged to be highly professional, yet sincerity and genuine warmth are the traits that will rise to the surface every single day. It's very hard not to be taken in by the "aura" around this extraordinary place and there will be a special bond between the staff and all who visit Terranea.

KVV: The site for Terranea is a natural and environmentally distinctive setting. You could sit on the terrace of the oceanfront spa or at the adult pool and just enjoy watching nature go by. Shearwaters fly by the location in the thousands; grey whales glide by on their journey south each year; and hundreds of dolphins play off the shoreline. The way the property is positioned – surrounded by the ocean – on the site is incredible. Nature is our most special feature.

DH: The sheer impact of the location is enough

to make any bride go weak in the knees. It's just a magnetic and magical locale. Terranea's outside venues with the majestic oceanfront lawns are truly awe-inspiring.

Melinda K. Milner: I believe that the impeccable quality Terranea has to offer in its restaurants, spa and other amenities makes it a clear choice for business-related travel and meetings, as well as individual and family getaways. Add the stunning location to all there is to do, and Terranea has everything one could ask for in a resort.

MO: Are there expectations placed on a luxury resort in Southern California that would not necessarily come into play with a luxury resort in a different part of the country?

TH: Diversity is a key component for success in Southern California. In order to serve so-

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phisticated guests from all around the world on both the business and leisure fronts, Terranea will provide facilities and staff that are diverse and, therefore, able to meet wide-ranging needs and desires. In all of our offerings – food, beverages, activities and communications – we will be prepared to connect in a meaningful way to a frequent visitor from the community or to the traveler visiting the United States for the first time.

CS: Our location on the Palos Verdes Peninsula is unique and protected. We have worked very hard to adhere to the very strict environmental standards the state of California has put in place to protect an irreplaceable coastline like ours. That's a challenge and an opportunity that doesn't exist elsewhere.

DH: Southern California offers wonderful resorts that have provided guests with incredible service. The quality bar has been set quite high. Our success will come from delivering unmatched service in a relaxed, yet sophisticated fashion.

MM: Guests will expect to be able to sample all that Southern California has to offer. As such, access to the notable variety of activities and amenities offered in this area is critical. Fortunately, the South Bay itself offers a wealth of things to do while also providing proximity to a multitude of hot spots in Los Angeles.

MO: How do you think Terranea will help to further define the personality of Rancho Palos Verdes?

TH: Aside from the obvious positive economic impact Terranea will have on the area, it's our desire to promote an increased awareness of what an oasis Rancho Palos Verdes is in Los Angeles County. A visit to RPV and Terranea is a journey to the Southern California lifestyle of a bygone era, one that emphasizes an appreciation and reverence for casual outdoor living and respect for nature.

KVV: From the many Rancho Palos Verdes residents with whom I have spoken, I've learned that they are excited about having "their favorite place" – the home of Marineland – become this special resort. They plan to come here for dinner, enjoy girls' days off at the

spa, watch football in the lobby bar, and plan their kids' weddings at the Catalina Room. Terranea will be a great place on the hill to get away from it all, without really having to get away at all.

CS: Terranea's beauty will blend wonderfully into its surroundings. And as the resort delivers world-class amenities, I'm sure it will increase the real estate value in the local communities.

DH: In many respects, I believe Rancho Palos Verdes is shaping the personality of Terranea to help it fit into the life and style of the surrounding area. Terranea will be an integral part of the community's life. Given this, it needs to be a comfortable place for people on the peninsula to call "home."

MM: Also, Rancho Palos Verdes has a timeless feel with a cultured and diverse community, and Terranea will reinforce that persona. The Palos Verdes peninsula will now have an added element of a luxury resort, but one that fits naturally into the community.

MO: Will you create a signature dish in honor of Terranea?

CS: I'm sure that the community will shape a signature dish during our first year. I'm looking forward to all of the feedback and ideas from people who have fond memories of this area. Through their input, I have no doubt that we will perfect several signature dishes that will come to represent the "taste" of Terranea.

MO: Do you plan to satisfy a global palate with your menus or will you focus more on California/Mediterranean cuisine?

CS: Our culinary creations will satisfy the most discriminating traveler and some of our outlets will focus on California/Mediterranean cuisine. But the advantage of a resort our size is that we will have many dining options and they will offer something for everyone.

DH: We are very flexible with menu concepts for all events. We have created menus for a global palate with authenticity. An added benefit is that our location offers a diverse collection of interesting ingredients available right in our own backyard.

MO: If you had only three hours to spend at Terranea, how would you do so and why?

TH: Without a doubt, I would find a quiet, comfortable chair in the sunlit lobby of Terranea where the breathtaking panorama unfolds through the floor-to-ceiling windows. Observing the wonderment on the faces of guests as they walk toward the view, soaking it all in, is not only priceless, but also inspirational. After this people-watching session, I would stroll along the walking path in preparation for watching the sun slip into the Pacific.

CS: I would do a dine around – eating my way from casual to elegant – while watching the whales and dolphins play. The food and view would confirm just how special a place Terranea is.

DH: This must be a trick question because three hours at Terranea barely allows one to scratch the surface. Still, if I were granted just a short visit, I would spend my time wandering around admiring the golf course, the pools, the trails and the layout of the resort. Terranea would demonstrate what a true destination resort should be.

MM: Three hours at the spa is just enough time to make me feel like I've had a mini getaway. But if I had any moments to spare, I would be sure to take in a walk along the coastal trail around sunset and end at the bar with an appetizer and nice chilled glass of wine. While watching the sun go down, I'd learn just how relaxing Terranea could be.

KVV: I would take my dog for a walk along the oceanfront path, leisurely traveling from one end of Terranea to the other. Stops at the interpretive displays where one can learn more about the property would be a must. Since my dog is lazy, I would take a break at Nelson's to get some iced tea, allowing him the chance to benefit from a drink of cool water at the doggie hitching post. Next, I would continue walking to Cielos at the adult pool to grab a snack. Provided we still had energy, we'd explore the entire Palos Verdes trail system that is connected to Terranea. Three hours would convince me and anyone else, I suspect, that Southern California and Terranea are both inspirational places. ●