

unwinding in San Diego

writer Michael Nassar

With year-round perfect climate and unparalleled natural beauty, Southern California provides the ideal backdrop for rekindling the spirit and pampering the body. The recent worldwide spa explosion is exemplified in San Diego, which boasts a bevy of spas with top-of-the-line treatments, first-class services and indulgent amenities. These luxurious escapes can be found throughout the region nestled against the dramatic Pacific coastline, perched high above the glittering downtown skyline, tucked into the Cuyamaca Mountains and set amidst the serenity of lush inland canyons. Get ready to soothe your senses, inspire your soul, invigorate your step and energise your spirit. They don't call this the Sunshine State for nothing.

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URBAN SPAS

HOTEL PALOMAR

Kimpton's Hotel Palomar in downtown San Diego officially re-launched its stylish 5,500 square-foot Sè Spa this spring with an array of refreshing new services, calming treatments and luxurious products. The unique Silk Road menu is based on cultural and aesthetic influences from Southeast Asia, India, Northern Africa and Japan. Try the Eastern Table Thai massage, Green Tea & Crushed Rice Body Scrub, Indian Head Massage with Shirodhara or indulge in the spa's signature experience, the Moroccan Rasul, a specialised clay and steam treatment known for its intensive detoxifying effect. For an additional pick-me-up, the spa's private relaxation lounge serves the Soma Shot, a blend of cucumber vodka, agave nectar and blueberry pomegranate juice.

www.hotelpalomar-sandiego.com/san-diego-hotel/spa.html

HARD ROCK HOTEL SAN DIEGO

Rock Spa at the Hard Rock Hotel San Diego, located in the heart of the historic Gaslamp Quarter, is an ideal place to recharge for the night ahead or decompress from the one before. With its dimly lit, dark ebony wood floor and hallway walls textured in rich purple suede, the spa promotes rejuvenation in a unique manner inspired by its hip setting. In true Hard Rock fashion resident vibe manager John Resnik has created a distinctive music playlist meant to enhance the spa experience.

Instead of the typical piped-in pan flutes, prepare to be serenaded by the more modern groove of Moby, Marvin Gaye, and Morcheeba. Signature treatments include the Dream Weaver Massage that fuses rosewood, palmarosa and vanilla oils with Swedish, Hawaiian and Thai massage techniques, and the Amped-

Up Sugar Scrub that exfoliates the skin using natural ingredients like sugar, cinnamon, eucalyptus, cumin and lemon.
www.hardrockhotelsd.com

INLAND ESCAPES

RANCHO BERNARDO INN

Reminiscent of a Mediterranean estate, Rancho Bernardo Inn's early California design features a network of facilities connected by landscaped walkways, lush patios and perfectly placed benches and alcoves. Inside, wood-beam ceilings, oriental rugs, fireplaces, and a variety of hand-collected antiques from the Americas and Europe create a warm and inviting environment. Unique among San Diego resort spas, The Spa at Rancho Bernardo Inn Spa Garden features five temperature-controlled treatment casitas, a cascading fountain, a hydrotherapy spa, and cozy areas that allow for complete escape.

In the privacy of the lush spa garden, guests can choose from a menu that includes an antioxidant-rich Coffeeberry Facial and Made Fresh Daily, a seasonal package incorporating fresh, therapeutic ingredients – ranging from rosemary in spring to pomegranate in fall and chocolate in winter – in a massage and scrub. As a bonus a recipe for an at-home treatment, along with a recipe for one of the chef's creations using the featured ingredient, extends the experience beyond the spa. Adjacent to the garden, guests can cool off in a

THIS PAGE: Swimming pool at Surf & Sand Resort; Hard Rock Hotel San Diego. OPPOSITE PAGE: Woman in hot tub at Spa at The Del at Hotel del Coronado. OPENING PAGE: City skyline from Embarcadero Marina Park

SEASIDE SANCTUARIES

HOTEL DEL CORONADO

Famous as the setting of Billy Wilder's *Some Like It Hot*, the historic Victorian Hotel del Coronado unveiled the spectacular Spa at The Del in 2007. Bathed in natural light, it takes advantage of the resort's unparalleled beachfront location and encapsulates the time-honoured powers of the ocean to heal and restore, relax and invigorate. Featuring 21 treatment rooms, Jacuzzi, steam rooms, and a spectacular beachfront relaxation terrace with vanishing edge pool, the star attractions, however, are the unique ocean-inspired treatments: Shell Coronado Massage, Island Sands Body Polish and Goddess of the Sea Body Wrap. Another highlight is the new Get Lifted facial, which uses the NuFace microcurrent device to provide instant toning and stimulation. Also available are yoga and meditation classes on the beach and the Yamaguchi Salon, where celebrity hair stylist Billy Yamaguchi integrates the ancient philosophies of Feng Shui into modern hairdressing techniques.
www.hoteldel.com

SURF & SAND RESORT

Beachfront Aquaterra Spa at Surf & Sand Resort in Laguna Beach is a tranquil oasis dedicated to relaxation and luxury. With an emphasis on oceanic properties, the spa features an indoor lounge and treatment rooms, private outdoor relaxation areas and

soothing water features. The California coast inspires Aquaterra's selection of body treatments and skin care lines, including Kimberly Parry Organics, which are available for purchase and also utilised in Aquaterra's spa menu. Made locally in San Clemente, CA, the body scrubs and lotions are customisable and made-to-order using all-natural ingredients. Aquaterra also offers spa and lunch combos, called Splunches, that can be enjoyed poolside, in addition to a number of beach fitness programmes like yoga and bootcamp, that can be combined pre or post spa treatment.

www.surfandsandresort.com.

ESTANCIA LA JOLLA HOTEL & SPA

Nestled on the coastal cliffs of La Jolla, Estancia La Jolla Hotel & Spa boasts a sanctuary garden of eucalyptus, lavender and citrus trees, which create a peaceful environment to stimulate the senses. The spa's signature treatments include facials, Vichy and Swiss showers, botanical body treatments and garden rain treatments, which are performed under a rain bar that exfoliates and hydrates skin as 12 showerheads massage the body. Additional spa amenities include an outdoor fireplace, salt-water Jacuzzi and moisturising eucalyptus steam room.

www.estancialajolla.com





saline pool, surrounded by trees and technology-equipped cabanas, perfect for lounging or dining.

www.ranchobernardoinn.com

RANCHO VALENCIA RESORT & SPA

Currently putting the finishing touches on a massive USD25 million renovation, Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa – the award-winning resort and spa in North County San Diego’s upscale neighbourhood of Ranch Santa Fe – has doubled down on its wellness initiatives, debuting a new treatment menu centred on Amala, the radiant skin care line available exclusively at Rancho Valencia. In a 90 minute Harmonizing Facial the purifying effect of wild-crafted blue lotus and organic cocoa bean along with Amala’s aroma point stimulation provides stunning results.

Jade Infused Soaking Rituals awaken the senses with deeply penetrating, herbal soaks infused with therapeutic jade powder. Plus, a unique collection of herbal teas made from East Asian herbs are brewed to complement individual treatments, working from the inside out to purify the body while removing negative energy so that chi and blood can flow. Additional changes to Southern California’s only Relais & Châteaux property include a remodel of the all-suit accommodation and major enhancements in the restaurant spaces. Fans can be assured that the property’s 45 acres of lush landscaping and Mediterranean-styled architecture will remain untouched.

www.ranchovalencia.com

THIS PAGE: Spa pool at dusk at Rancho Bernado Inn; Swimming pool at Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa. OPPOSITE PAGE: Massage at La Costa Resort & Spa; Private Suite at Park Hyatt Aviara; Labyrinth at The Golden Door.

LA COSTA RESORT & SPA

Nestled in the coastal foothills of neighbouring Carlsbad, La Costa Resort & Spa recently unveiled a renovation reflecting a new focus on the elements of nature. The picturesque Spa at La Costa boasts 28,000 square feet of indoor space, which underwent an interior re-design, unveiling a bright colour palette that mirrors the coastal California vibe. Within the 15,000-square-foot Spa Courtyard that features an exclusive outdoor pool, guests will find an all-new stone path adjacent to the herb garden – a Reflexology Path – one of only a few that exists in the US. In addition, the Spa Café space has been expanded and a new menu showcases the herb garden’s chives, Thai basil, mint, lemon thyme and parsley in several new dishes.

Treatments include invigorating citrus and herbs grown on the property, and others inspired by locally-grown ingredients such as lavender and rosemary. The resort also plays host to the Chopra Center for Well Being founded by the internationally renowned Dr. Deepak Chopra. The Chopra Center explores new frontiers in the expansion of human consciousness through programmes, products and services that integrate the mind, body and spirit.

www.lacosta.com



PARK HYATT AVIARA

Park Hyatt Aviara sits on the north shore of Batiquitos Lagoon – a vast protected wildlife sanctuary. From atop the highest ridge, overlooking the ocean and the lagoon, the San Diego resort provides a respite from the ordinary. Nowhere is that more evident than in Aviara Spa, which practises a very personal approach to wellbeing: Bespoke Spa, a tailored programme of rituals customised to bring about optimal wellness. Like fine tailors, the specially trained therapists at Aviara Spa adapt each experience to the unique needs of the client.

Beginning with an initial consultation, the spa journey is designed to develop a deeper connection between body and mind. The spa session is augmented nutritionally, too, with the delivery of a post-treatment culinary offering. Each freshly prepared small bite incorporates essential oils, herbs, and spices known for their intrinsic health benefits to complement individual wellness needs – whether that be to revive the spirit, relax the body or destress the mind. “This connection,” according to Aviara Spa Director Kyra Johnson, “allows for a more transformative spa experience.”

www.parkhyattaviara.com

DESTINATION SPAS

CAL-A-VIE

Nestled on 200 private acres in the rustic community of Vista, located approximately 40 miles northeast of downtown San Diego, Cal-a-Vie health spa and resort offers an unparalleled level of personalised attention with a four-to-one staff-to-guest ratio. The resort combines luxurious European spa philosophies with the Californian concepts of fitness, health and nutrition. Three, four and seven-night packages include gourmet spa cuisine, fitness classes, golfing, hiking, beauty and spa treatments. Guests stay in private, luxuriously appointed Mediterranean-style villas featuring breathtaking views from private balconies. Cal-a-Vie is highly regarded for its cuisine, fitness and mind and body programmes, and it stands proud as the only destination spa in the US to have its own 18-hole golf course.

www.cal-a-vie.com

THE GOLDEN DOOR

The Golden Door, located on a winding country road five miles north of Escondido in San Diego’s North County, is one of the most famous luxury retreats in the world. A jewel-encrusted entrance gate flanked by camellias, fuchsia and other blossoms leads guests through courtyards of ornamental gardens, meditative sand gardens and fountains. The facilities include three guest lounges, a dining room, kitchen, indoor/outdoor exercise studios, the Dragon Tree Gym, two swimming pools, two tennis courts and a private hillside for hiking. The bathhouse contains a steam room, sauna, showers, fan-shaped therapy pool and sequestered rooms for body scrubs and herbal wraps. With a clientele that includes the very famous and ultra-rich, the Golden Door has earned a reputation for exclusivity, luxury and unparalleled relaxation and rejuvenation.

www.goldendoor.com/escondido