

Summer's Best Strawberries | Sustainable Travel | The Cars You Can Buy Now

PASADENA

JULY / AUGUST 2022



\$5.95 JULY/AUGUST 2022



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Here and bottom right: Mission Pacific

HEAD SOUTH AND ESCAPE TO NORTH COUNTY

A world away from Los Angeles, beyond the master plans of Orange County, before the bustle of downtown San Diego, there is North County. It's San Diego, but it's not the zoo, Sea World, La Jolla, or Coronado. There's no baseball stadium. But there is a thoroughbred club for horse racing and a manageably sized theme park—Legoland—and the biggest attraction of all, the waves—for swimming, surfing, gazing. The businesses supporting such a lifestyle remain refreshingly one-off and thoughtful. As you move down the coastline, each beach town breeds a vibe of its own, as do the resorts in this handful of recommendations. **BY JENNIFER ASHTON RYAN**



OCEANSIDE

TO STAY:

Mission Pacific and Seabird

Sister resorts for the foodies or families.

➤ During the pandemic, sister six-story hotels built atop two parking lots forever changed the waterfront. Walking into the 161-room Mission Pacific hotel is like arriving in the eclectic living room of a private home filled with live plants, wood-framed furniture, and natural-color linens. High/Low functions as its all-day kitchen, and fine-dining Valle showcases cuisine from Baja California's Guadalupe Valley. Grab a snack at High Pie in the Top Gun House (yes, the actual cottage shown the 1986 and 2022 movies) on the walk next door

TOP: JASON DEWEY



Kids Surf Family Beach (Oceanside)



Alila Marea Beach Resort

to the 226-room The Seabird, styled like a California beach house with bright white tongue-and-groove walls and a beachy mix of old and new paintings and photographs. The heart of the hotel, which is especially welcoming to families with children, is the expansive pool and adjacent Shelter Club restaurant and lounge, open to guests of both hotels. missionpacifichotel.com; theseabirdresort.com

TO DO:

- 1. Hop between Oceanside's two rooftop bars.** Begin at the loungy Rooftop Bar at Mission Pacific for a sunset Champagne toast with ceviche and quesatacos. Then walk a few blocks to the new 10-room Brick Hotel, where the Cococabana Bar's specialty is Caribbean cocktails.
- 2. Survey the lauded dining scene** at Dija Mara, which earned a Michelin New Discovery mention in 2020 for Balinese-inspired dishes by local chef Jason Ambacher. The next night, try Wrench and Rodent for sushi and local beers.
- 3.** The shopping center concept that has been reimagined and rebranded

as **collectives** makes for oases of gentrification. The Tremont Collective warehouse conversion houses nine local businesses. Look for Freeman Collective in "South O" opening later this year.

CARLSBAD

TO STAY:

Park Hyatt Aviara Resort, Golf Club & Spa Country-club feel with convenient access to top attractions.

➤ Fresh from a \$50 million overhaul, the 327-room Park Hyatt Aviara makes for a sleek, amenity-filled escape with no need to leave the resort, apart from traveling companions insisting on a visit to Legoland. The 200-acre golf resort on the expansive Batiquitos Lagoon opened in 2010. For some travelers, the family pool and green waterslide complex can occupy a large part of a weekend. For everyone else, there are separate adult pool facilities, two new Topgolf Swing Suites to play indoors, tennis courts, and a par-72 Arnold Palmer signature course at the Aviara Golf Club. Chef Richard Blais just opened Ember & Rye for steak and seafood, and a new

partnership with outfitter Adventure IO can get you off property with pro athletes. hyatt.com

- 1. Legoland** is just 10 minutes by car, and resort guests have early parking access, Lego-themed amenities, and preferred pricing on theme-park tickets.
- 2. Venture off property for fine dining** at one-star Michelin restaurant Jeune et Jolie. The modern French menu by chef Eric Bost is served in four courses for \$105.
- 3.** At the Aviara Golf Club, book one, two, or three days of instruction with Kip Puterbaugh at the **Aviara Golf Academy**, known as one of the country's top schools for its caliber of instructors and advanced coaching technology.

ENCINITAS

TO STAY:

Alila Marea Beach Resort

Sleek, modern clifftop retreat.

➤ At its heart, Encinitas remains a surf town. Walk the beaches to watch locals ride reef and point breaks, including Swami's, accessed via a steep stone staircase below the gold-domed Self-Realization Fellowship. Downtown, a bustling commercial district along Pacific Coast Highway is home to an eclectic mix of retail and dining options, both independent and franchised. On the quieter, north end of Encinitas, find Alila Marea Beach Resort perched atop an oceanfront cliff. Opened in March 2021 with 130 rooms and three dining options, the Zen-like resort pulls off a sleek aesthetic using wood, concrete, and stone. All through the three-story compound, which curves along the natural shape of the coastline, decorative elements complement rather than distract from ocean views. Take in the views outdoors from a poolside



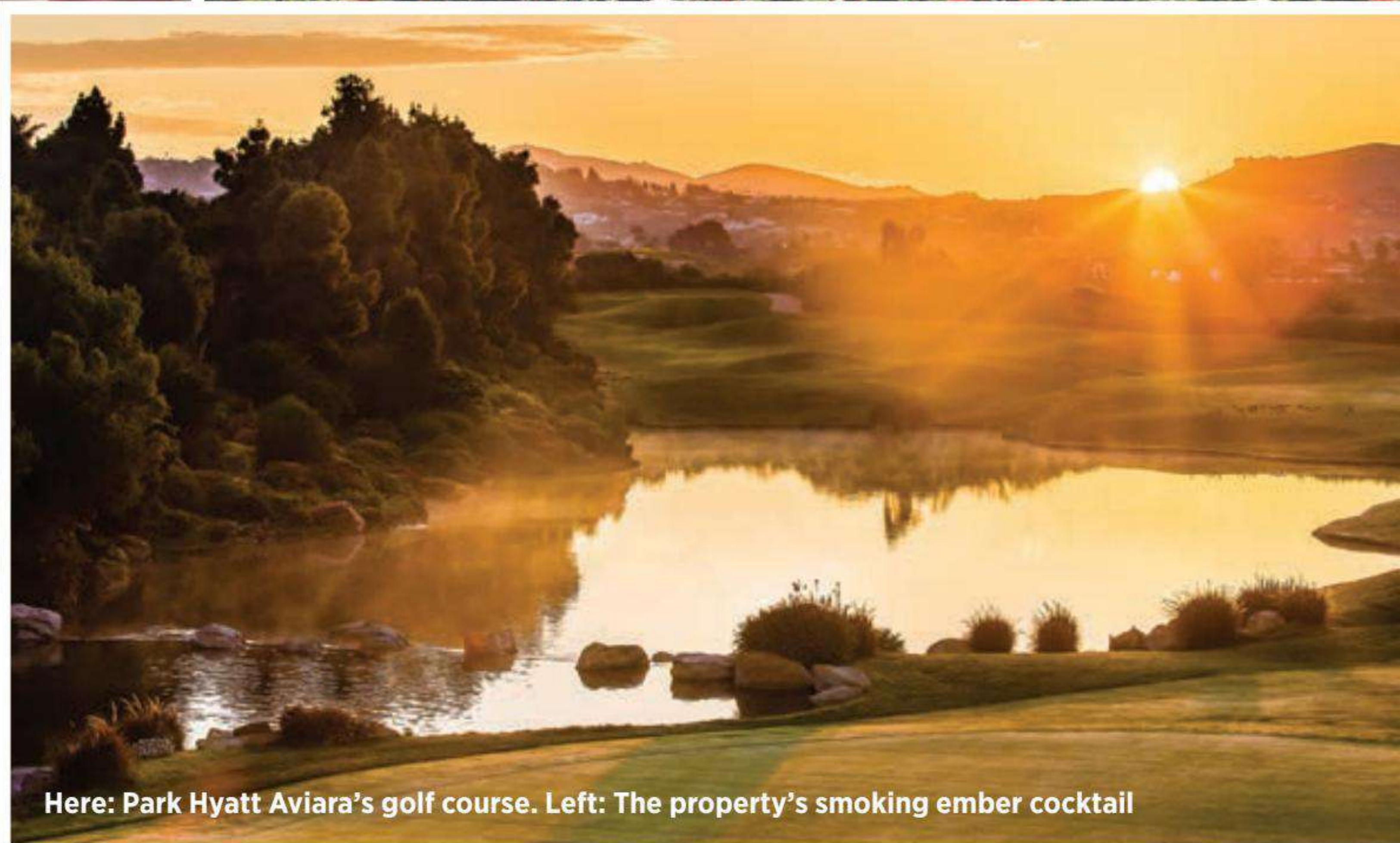
Tremont Collective



Casa Valencia



Rancho Valencia Lobster Tacos



Here: Park Hyatt Aviara's golf course. Left: The property's smoking ember cocktail

cabana or relax further by closing your eyes in Spa Alila. alilahotels.com

TO DO:

1. Buy a surfboard. Order a custom shape and design from Greg Sauritch Surfboards, a local shaper since 1975. Board shops here date to the Golden Age of surfing: Bing was founded in 1959, Hansen Surfboards has remained family owned since its start in 1961, and Encinitas Surfboards opened on the 101 in 1975.

2. Enjoy a beach day at Moonlight State Beach, a local favorite for the playground on the sand, volleyball nets, firepits, and picturesque ocean bluffs. Don't miss the come-as-you-please, community-driven Dave's Rock Garden at the corner of B and 2nd streets.

3. Shop Cedros Avenue Design District in neighboring Solana Beach, which stretches 2.5 blocks. Many of the 85 stores and restaurants are housed in curved Quonset huts built in the 1950s for storing scientific instruments.

RANCHO SANTA FE

TO STAY:

Rancho Valencia

Luxurious accommodations for indoor and outdoor pursuits.

➤ Fresh off of an expansive renovation last year, Rancho Valencia features 45 stunning landscaped acres with just 49 private casitas—each with secluded outdoor

spaces, many of which contain hot tubs and fireplaces—as well as three large homes available for rent (The Hacienda, as well as the recently added Spa House and Casa Valencia). The newly enhanced spa is an oasis of relaxation, while a new salon makes getting ready for special events seamless. Chef Alex Bloom's menu takes in the region's bounty of fresh produce and sustainably sourced seafood and meat, while an on-site garden and chicken coop also contribute to the farm-to-table menus. ranchovalencia.com

TO DO:

1. Take advantage of the property's coveted **tennis** program. Adults and children of all ages can participate in clinics, classes, and even one-on-one private training.

2. The nearby **Torrey Pines Golf Course** overlooks the Pacific, providing stunning views and terrain.

3. Surrounding the property are miles of **horseback-riding** trails. Have the property arrange for an afternoon of riding. Or, should horseback not be your preferred method of transport, utilize the resort's **Bentley** Test Drive program, where you can take a Bentley on a four-hour cruise and even have the hotel pack you a picnic lunch.

DEL MAR

TO STAY:

Fairmont Grand Del Mar

Italianate golf course retreat with

exceptionally fine dining.

➤ Olive trees line the long drive through golf course greens, transporting visitors from North County to Northern Italy. The red-tile roof of the Mediterranean resort gradually comes into view. This main building houses 249 finely appointed guest rooms outfitted with ornate marble bathrooms and traditional two-poster beds. The inland property spreads across 400 acres with tennis courts, four swimming pools (including a pool-front sand area for building sandcastles), junior golf academy, and (just added) archery facilities.

Throughout the summer, the resort sets up a twilight cinema, but at least one evening should be dedicated to dining at San Diego's only two-star Michelin restaurant. Chef William Bradley at Addison maps out a nine-course tasting menu (\$298) showcasing regional ingredients and California wines. fairmont.com

TO DO:

1. You can leave on foot from the resort to **hike** the adjacent Los Peñasquitos Canyon Preserve.

2. Drive 10 minutes to the **beach** to enjoy a walk through the stunning Torrey Pines State Reserve or plan a picnic with sundowners at Powerhouse Park.

3. A summer tradition since 1937, the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club runs a robust **horse-racing** season at the fairgrounds from late July through September. **P**