

[FAVE FIND]

Playtime at Pelican Hill

Driving along the Pacific Coast Highway is a quintessential California experience. But when guests pull into **The Resort at Pelican Hill**, a 504-acre property set above the sea in Newport Beach, they will feel as if they have traveled back to the old world. Inspired by the work of Italian Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio, Pelican Hill manages to blend modern luxury with classical elegance. Even better, it does so while still being family-friendly.

On a recent visit to the resort, pool time and gelato were top of mind — two things that my 4-year-old daughter and I consistently agree on. The Coliseum Pool matches its Italian namesake in shape, measuring 136 feet in diameter and overlooking the resort golf course and the Pacific Ocean. The views from here are dazzling, but so is the pool's backstory: More than 1 million hand-cut glass tiles were laid one by one to make it. If clients can manage to pry their family from the warm, slightly salty water, they should consider having poolside snacks and drinks in a cabana or a sit-down meal at Coliseum Pool & Grill, where seasonal California fare can be enjoyed while the sun sets.

If younger travelers want some parent-free time, drop them off at Camp Pelican, designed for kids ages 4 to 12. There's another pool here, plus staff-led arts and crafts, movie screenings, games and more. If families would rather stick together, they should take a complimentary shuttle to nearby Crystal Cove State Park, known for its tide pools and hiking trails — or do nothing at all in their room. Our Bungalow Guest Room felt more like a Tuscan villa than a hotel accommodation, with a giant terrace, a deep marble bathtub and handcrafted, wood-beam ceilings. In order to enjoy the space as much as possible, we opted for an in-room breakfast of pecan-crust French toast and coffee one morning — not Italian at all, but we didn't mind.

While the resort is gorgeous throughout the year, October feels particularly festive. Not only do staffers claim that it is the month with the most magical sunsets, but it's also when Pelican Hill hosts Festa dell'Autunno, an annual food and wine event that aims to replicate harvest celebrations in Italy. Flag throwers, stilt walkers and musical acts join forces, and regional Italian fare is served. The weekend-long soiree also offers a carnival for little ones and Sunday brunch. Just advise clients to save room for artisan gelato. If Palladio had ever sampled the flavors mixed up in Pelican Hill's on-site Laboratorio del Gelato, who knows what beauty he would have imagined? www.pelicanhill.com — *Chelsee Lowe*

The resort offers Camp Pelican for kids ages 4 to 12.



Kids can do arts and crafts, play games, watch movies and more at the Camp Pelican Clubhouse.



Bungalow Guest Rooms feature a large terrace.



Resort staff will set up chairs and provide amenities for guests who want to visit Crystal Cove beach.

