

A Resort Unlike Any

The Resort at Pelican Hill Dazzles and Dominates on California's Coast

By Jay Royle

While I may not live in Buckingham Palace, I am the patriarch of a Royle Family. Much like the Royals across the pond, the women in my family (my wife and two daughters) are in charge of our household. But I do take over when it comes to one very important task – finding amazing destinations for my family to enjoy over spring break.

This year's journey was unlike any other as our quad squad ventured to Newport Beach, California and **The Resort at Pelican Hill**, a luxurious coastal hideaway less than one-hour south of Los Angeles' LAX airport. The Resort at Pelican Hill is one of only 78 Five-Star Luxury Resorts according to Forbes Travel Guide in the nation, a rating that inspires their staff to give every group a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

What I loved most about our five-day adventure is that you can stay a full week and never run out of things to do. Interview ten resort goers and you might get ten different answers on what made their trip. At the top of my family's list was their collection of out-of-this-world pools, including the **Coliseum Pool**, which is made up of one million glass mosaic tiles that form a perfect 136-foot diameter circle. Private cabanas surround the pool

and are available to those guests that stay in a resort Bungalow or Villa by simply calling ahead and making a reservation.

Poolside you will find one of the coolest amenities anywhere – Scotty the trained falcon that keeps pesky pelicans away from the pool so guests can relax in peace. Scotty also presides over the most amazing children's pool we've ever seen, complete with panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean and an ultra-cool bubble-jet fountain. The children's pool is only a small part of their ingenious **Camp Pelican**, a program designed just for their younger guests.

The Resort at Pelican Hill has adult needs covered as well thanks to a bevy of amenities including spa, wellness classes, on-site fitness center, nightly entertainment, and **The Shops at Pelican Hill**. The resort's informative and modern website, www.pelicanhill.com, describes **The Spa at Pelican Hill** perfectly saying, "it is a haven within a retreat – a place for wellness, for healing, and for inspiration in a setting of Pacific splendor. In an atmosphere of serene, classic refinement that pleases the eye and centers you from the moment you enter." My wife concurs with that

Other



The 17th hole of Pelican Hill's Ocean North Course showcases breath-taking Pacific Ocean views.

statement on many levels, so much so she inquired about getting her mail forwarded to the spa permanently. I guess I'll be playing the role of Mr. Mom for a while!

The Spa at Pelican Hill is so much more than manicures, pedicures, and massages as they offer an array of classes including yoga, barre, and aqua fitness. Our family's recommendation, if you are staying for a week, make sure a visit to the spa is on your itinerary at least twice – one after each round of golf.

Now that I've discussed a few key amenities at The Resort at Pelican Hill, let's delve into the triumvirate of what makes this place off-the-charts special – their stellar lodging options, unrivaled restaurant choices, and two of the most well-manicured, visually stunning golf courses I have ever played!

Let's start with The Resort at Pelican Hill's lodging options. Each one-story **Bungalow Guest Room** or **Bungalow Suite** features a limestone fireplace, private terrace (most with ocean views) hand-hewn wood beam ceiling, marble bath and adjacent parking. They are extremely spacious, ranging from 847 to 1,634 square feet. If only my dorm room in college would have been this spacious and well-appointed.

If a more intimate resort experience is your style, then I recommend their Villas which are set in an exclusive, gated enclave that gives you access to a private clubhouse and pool, butler service, and dedicated staff. Ranging from 2,193 to 3,581 square feet, **The Villas** offer two, three or four bedrooms and expansive ocean-view terraces. Plus, the living room windows are huge, meaning you don't even have to go outside to see an epic view. Warning, if you stay in a Villa for more than three consecutive nights, you will not want to go back home!

Another reason you'll want to extend your stay is the quality of their 36-hole golf facility. I find it ironic that the two Tom Fazio designs are called the North and South, as they remind me of Torrey Pine's North and South layouts. Open canyons and elevated plateaus dot the landscape as several holes weave their way right down to the cliff's edge. Make sure you bring a camera, smart phone, or both, as 18 signature holes await on each property. One quick note, even if you aren't a serious golfer but still want to hit a few balls on their spectacular range, Pelican Hill offers free range balls and rental clubs – an amazing perk for all resort guests.

My first round of the trip was on the **Ocean North Course** where you can see the Pacific from every tee shot you'll hit in 18 holes. The three par-5s (No. 1, No. 8, and No. 17) are incredible and all lead golfers to million-dollar views of the ocean behind the putting surfaces. The North is the type of course that you can't wait to see what is around the corner, as every hole builds off one another until it ends with

a challenging 430-yard par-4 that leads back to their impressive clubhouse.

Much like the North, you'll experience an ocean view on every hole of the **South Ocean Course**. Amazingly, the course features a 350-foot elevation drop from the first tee to the 13th green. My favorite stretch is two stunning back-to-back par-3s (No. 12 and No. 13) that require precision instead of power. The 12th measures 159 yards from the tips surrounded by a beautiful landscape of sandy dunes around the green. The wind always seems to affect your shot here, so pay attention to its intensity and direction.

Lucky number 13 is highlighted by two greens that make the hole play anywhere from 80 to 130 yards. This is one of the most picturesque holes I've ever played – if the group behind isn't pushing you, I recommend hitting a shot from each tee box! Overall, I would say the South is slightly more visually stunning from tee to green and everything is right in front of you, which is ideal for first-time players. The North requires a little more time to get to know, a.k.a. what to hit and how far to leave yourself the next best shot. One thing that was a constant on both properties, the conditions were immaculate. In fact, I commented to my forecaddie, (a must to take just for the experience) that I didn't think a single blade of grass was out of place on either course!

If you are looking to go off property for a few adventures, there are almost too many to discuss. That's why The Resort at Pelican Hill has created a tab on their website that lists them all: <https://www.pelicanhill.com>.



Along the coast of Newport Beach, Pelican Hill's 504 coastal acres encompass a complete resort destination.

[com/activities/area-activities/](#). My recommendation, take a half day and explore the nearby **Crystal Cove State Park**, which is comprised of 3.5 miles of uninterrupted coastline. The amazing burger I had at the Beachcomber Café left me in a peaceful food coma, thank goodness an afternoon beach nap was my only must-do for the rest of the day!

But the burger didn't compare to what our family enjoyed at The Resort at Pelican Hills' collection of incredible restaurants. **The Pelican Grill** is home to a prime selection of steaks, wood-fired pizzas, and killer appetizers. If you're looking for a more intimate dining experience, then **Andrea** is your place. This elegant setting features an old-school Italian theme complete with the opportunity to take a pasta making class.

For a once-in-a-lifetime experience order the barrel-aged aquarelle risotto wild mushrooms. This comes with a table side presentation that needs to be video-taped! Finally, their abundant wine selection makes Andrea an ultimate dining memory.

When it was all said and done, The Resort at Pelican Hill exceeded my expectations as a family-friendly, top-tier golf getaway. No matter what time of the year you head west you'll be treated to exceptional weather, two dynamically beautiful golf courses, and a staff that always aims to please. The Resort at Pelican Hill is befitting of their rare 5-Star ranking and deserves every accolade bestowed upon them. For more information, please visit www.pelicanhill.com or www.golfpelicanhill.com.

THE RESORT AT PELICAN HILL'S BEST 2019 STAY AND PLAY PACKAGES

Fazio Unlimited Package

Select Bungalow or Villa accommodations with a two-night minimum stay. Enjoy unlimited golf rounds for one guest on three of Tom Fazio's designed and re-perfected courses, the Ocean North, Ocean South, and Oak Creek. Includes complimentary forecaddie (at Pelican Hill Ocean courses), golf cart, golf club rentals and complimentary valet parking.

Buddies Trip Redefined

"How'd you play?" is irrelevant, unless you are playing with buddies. Experience Pelican Hill Golf Club with groups of 4, 8 or 12 of your best friends. Add 54 Holes of Fazio golf to your "bucket list of golf" and bragging rights forever.

For reservations, please call 855-467-6800.



The stunning green complex of the 8th hole at the Ocean South Course.