



Welcome to The Resort at Pelican Hill Where it All Feels Like a World Away...

By Gwen Wunderlich-Smith

There was a cold front on the West Coast a few weeks ago when my two colleagues and I retreated to the award-winning Resort at Pelican Hill in Newport Coast, California, to enjoy a quintessential girls' getaway. Sixty degrees or not, with the sun, the air, and the beach shining around us, there was no stopping these Long Islanders from taking in every experience.

Friday evening we made our way to Newport following a whirlwind trip in Los Angeles, ready for some rest and rejuvenation. Finally, there it was, Pelican Hill, a Palladian-style resort perched on 504 acres of sun-drenched hillsides. It was indeed a magnificent meeting of land and sea with views from every vantage point. The massive entryway set the stage

for a magical maiden voyage and from the moment we arrived, we knew we would have an experience like no other. We were poised to enjoy all Pelican Hill had to offer.

After a swift check-in and warm welcome, we settled into our well-appointed bungalow where we changed for the evening ahead, all while enjoying decorative chocolates set out for us on the hotel's signature Majolica painted plates. The accommodations offer residential comforts with the first-class service of a fine resort. Guests can expect ocean views, crackling fires and private terraces in their homes away from home. The bungalows are perfect for couples, friends or a family of four, while the villas are particularly spacious and would make for delightful accommodations

for wedding parties or family reunions as they comfortably sleep up to 10 guests.

Soon after our initial exploration, we were whisked away to one of the hotel's four restaurants, The Pelican Hill Grill, for a dinner so memorable we're still talking about it. We dined on Filet Mignon, Pan Seared Maine Diver Scallops and Mustard Glazed Skuna Bay Salmon accompanied by Garlic Truffle Mashed Potatoes, with everything cooked to savory perfection. We all agreed that it was hands down one of the best meals we had ever had. Even though we barely had room for one more sip of Pellegrino, we all gave in to the temptation to try the house specialty, the Strawberry Soufflé. The crème anglaise on the dessert is so intricate that you need to order it

when you first arrive to allow for 20 minutes additional prep time. However, it was well worth the wait for this succulent sweet.

We rose to early cappuccinos, threw on bulky sweaters and met our group for the guided four-mile Crystal Cove Beach Hike. Nurturing our adventurer within, we discovered pristine ocean views, migratory birds, dolphins, tide pools, immaculate bluffs and more!

Feeling invigorated by the walk, it was off to The Spa at Pelican Hill, where the goal is to have guests embark on a highly personalized voyage of fulfillment and realization in the most pampered and indulgent of spa ambiances. The menu features traditional rejuvenating treatments and heralded therapies from around the globe. I was lucky enough to enjoy a delightful and fully invigorating Amber Gold Signature massage while the girls decompressed in the Aqua Colonnade and enjoyed herbal steam rooms, saunas, whirlpools and soaking tubs.

After our long hike and pampering sessions, it was off to The Coliseum Pool & Grill. Our poolside lunch - Traditional Chicken Tikka Masala, Blackened Ahi Tuna Salad and Thai Fettuccine Pasta - was refreshing and made with the most flavorful produce. The meal was complemented by Mai Tais all around. I'll admit it was the Mai Tais that easily helped us de-robe in the sixty degree weather as we quickly jumped from the pool, which overlooks the Pacific, into the Jacuzzi, where for hours we basked in the sunshine, cocktails and our very own aqua heaven.

After our day of delight, we were ready to head out to Andrea Ristorante, a Pelican Hill darling, which specializes in Tuscan cuisine. Lobster Tortellini - Tarragon Butter, Fusilli "San Daniele," Prosciutto, Asiago Cheese and Pan-Seared "Bigeye" Tuna, Tuscan Tomato Bread Pudding and "Pappa Pomodoro" Saba Sauce tickled our fancies and to say our happiness became infectious is to say the least.

The Resort at Pelican Hill has numerous onsite activities and is a great location for those who want to enjoy the amenities on the grounds. Keeping the Resort a beloved place, the architects remained faithful to Andrea Palladio's Renaissance philosophy of grand scales and intimate details. Intricacy is such as acres of mature olive trees grace the property and provide the olives for The Resort's signature olive oil. For golfers, the award winning Gold course designed by Tom Fazio features championship golf with panoramic views of both the North and South Ocean. For those looking to adventure and explore, it is also close to the town of Newport Beach. This picturesque place offered us the best of shopping and gorgeous scenery before we departed back to the hustle and bustle of L.A.

I highly recommend The Resort at Pelican Hill for any occasion. You won't be disappointed whether you're looking for a wedding destination, a girls' getaway like us, or a romantic weekend for two. The coastal promenade, the renowned restaurants and the unequalled customer service positions The Resort at Pelican Hill as a premier travel destination.

For more information, visit www.pelicanhill.com.

