

how to be a tourist in your own town

ENJOYING LOCAL
FAMILY-FRIENDLY
RESORT ESCAPES

As most coastal Orange County residents know, our best time of the year is September and October when the weather is warm and the tourists have left town. *Coast Kids* thought, "How can Orange County families easily "escape" to enjoy some relaxed time together this fall?" To feel like you are truly away on vacation, without spending the time and money traveling to a far-away destination, think like a tourist and experience for yourself why families from all over the world visit our coast.



BY NANCY GELSTON FRIES

the Resort at Pelican Hill

The toy-filled wagon at the entry to the Coliseum Grill says it all: casual chic and kid-friendly happily coexist at the Resort at Pelican Hill. Open for nearly three years, the luxe Newport Coast resort reflects the style of Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio, merging Italian and Southern Californian cultures. But sophisticated doesn't mean stuffy.

Highlighting our family's memorable staycation was our private cabana, stocked with soft drinks and fruit, overlooking the largest circular pool anywhere. We discovered that its three-foot depth is ideal for practicing handstands. When we weren't poolside, we were soaking in the sweeping views from the private balcony off our spacious, impeccably appointed bungalow. For dining, the seasonal menu at the Coliseum Grill includes something for every palate. The "young adults" menu includes unlimited pizza, pasta, and the ubiquitous house-made gelato for just \$10. If your children are beyond the smashing peas stage, consider indulging at Andrea, the resort's Tuscan-inspired signature restaurant. No kids' menu there, but as long as they can politely ask for pasta (made in the resort's own pasta room) they'll be perfectly happy and so will you.

Rated best golf resort in California in *Condé Nast Traveler's* 2010 Reader's Choice survey, Pelican Hill offers two championship ocean view courses with lessons for all ages and abilities. The decadent, award-winning spa tailors treatments to your own personal intentions: relaxation, renewal, or invigoration. Guests have unlimited access to the fitness center and classes, sauna, steam room and whirlpool. Meanwhile, kids ages four to 12 can enjoy Camp Pelican, with its own pool, kid-sized lounge chairs, and bubble fountain. The club's indoor room offers karaoke, arts and crafts, and plasma screen televisions.

You need never leave the grounds, but if Indian summer beckons you to the beach, the resort will shuttle you down to Crystal Cove and set you up with lounge chairs, towels and umbrellas. Explore the tide pools, try a date shake at the newly remodeled Shake Shack, or dine smack dab on the beach at The Beachcomber restaurant. For added adventure, hike the unspoiled trails in El Morro Canyon under the guidance of a resort naturalist. Sure, you can do most of this without a room at Pelican Hill, but staying there makes it all "molto bene."