

# JOURNEYS



## Get Away

Fill up your tank, get in the car and drive. Before you know it, you'll have arrived at a destination that's close to home but that feels much farther away. *Coast* readers know their own backyards, so we went a little further and found four nearby places (such as Orange County's own Pelican Hill Resort, pictured) that will relax, rejuvenate and inspire you – all within a tank-of-gas drive away. Dust off your weekend bag – it's going to be a great couple of days. Weekend getaways start on page 126.





Pelican Hill's Ocean North 17th hole

FOR THE GOLFER

# NEWPORT BEACH

MILES FROM NEWPORT BEACH ➤ 0 MILES

It's a stunning resort with spacious bungalows and two to four bedroom villas, has the world's largest circular pool lined with 1.1 million mosaic glass tiles, boasts its own temperature controlled pasta room in its sumptuous Italian restaurant, and is designed like an Italian village on the sea. But the most alluring feature of Pelican Hill has always been, for me, the golf. Ranked as the number one golf resort in California and number one resort in the world by *Condé Nast Traveler* readers, Pelican Hill Resort feels secluded from the rest of the world despite being conveniently located less than a mile from Pacific Coast Highway.

My goal for this weekend getaway was to improve my golf game. I had high hopes knowing I'd be attending a clinic with Glenn Deck, Pelican Hill Golf Club's Director of Instruction, and one of *Golf Magazine's* "Top 100 Teachers in America." I have to admit I wondered how much I would learn in a group clinic and if I'd be able to retain what I was taught. As someone who has taken golf lessons before, I have found they tend to be so complicated that my game usually suffers and eventually I forget everything I've learned.

Deck's philosophy was different. The instruction was simple and straightforward. For each part of the game, he shared tips that were easy to remember and also easy to apply. Instead of hitting the delete button

on everything I'd learned in the past, the tips enhanced my strengths and enabled me to improve in areas that needed improvement. Deck's group clinic worked because it's relaxed and allowed each participant to move at their own pace. After small group sessions, each golfer was able to spend time practicing alone, focusing on the areas where they really needed assistance.

Pelican Hill Golf Club features two championship 18-hole courses set among 400 acres of the most spectacular land in Southern California. Perched cliffside with stunning views of the Pacific Ocean, the courses meander through ravines and the natural coastal environment of Newport Coast. Having spent time at the resort, it's not surprising that the quality of instruction

and service at the Golf Club is top-notch. I'd expect nothing less than top notch golf from designer Tom Fazio, but resort courses are generally made for the occasional vacation golfer. Not the case here.

After the clinic, I put my new skills to work on the South Course. After driving my cart over the resort's stunning entrance (a classically designed bridge reminiscent of one I once crossed in Florence, Italy), my game was quickly tested. I was grateful to be taking advantage of the resort's forecaddie program. In addition to having a great sense of humor (necessary to getting through any round with me), my caddie, Pink, knew the details of every hole, which was particularly helpful and really enhanced the experience. It also allowed me the time to gaze at the breathtaking views from almost every hole while he was reading the lightning fast greens.

Months after leaving Pelican Hill, I'm still using the tips I learned from Deck and my scores have improved round after round. In a location where we can play golf year-round, we're lucky to have this ace in the hole in our own backyard. – ERIN ZILIS

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Women's Golf Instruction at Pelican Hill Golf Academy