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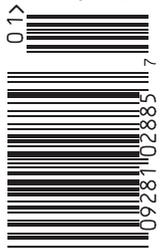
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BIRD'S EYE VIEW

On California's Newport Coast, the Palladian-style Pelican Hill resort is a golfer's dream, but its world-class amenities, eye-popping architecture, and breathtaking setting will win the hearts and minds of just about anyone.

BY SCOTT KAUFFMAN



STROKE OF GENIUS: The Palladian-style Pelican Hill resort overlooks the Pacific Ocean by way of a stretch of emerald green fairways and manicured grounds.



In the hit 1970s television series “Gilligan’s Island,” the comical cave scenes featuring Gilligan’s shipwrecked passengers of the *S.S. Minnow* were shot in Newport Beach, California. Even the theme song’s famous phrase, “... a three-hour tour...,” was sung as the *Minnow* headed out to sea with Newport Bay’s rock jetties in the backdrop.

Now knowing where Gilligan and the gang were actually “stranded,” devotees of the show might not feel quite as bad for the millionaire and his wife after all.

Rest assured, though, that if there’s one place in which an off-course crew should ever wish to be shipwrecked, it’s Newport Beach. These days, however, rather than be stuck in Gilligan’s caves, well-heeled travelers and their “crews” would likely prefer to set up camp at Newport’s palatial Resort at Pelican Hill. And that applies whether they’re traveling with the entire family, their golf buddies, or their own “Loveys” on a romantic getaway.

Pelican Hill, a 504-acre Palladian-styled resort situated high above a stretch of this swanky Southern California coastline, has it all. The first-class golf club, highlighted by two completely new oceanview courses redesigned by acclaimed golf course architect Tom Fazio and a brand new 44,000-square-foot clubhouse and golf academy, is just the start. There’s also a top-rated 23,000-square-foot spa facility, highly acclaimed dining led by the signature Andrea Ristorante, and 328 luxurious resort accommodations that range in size from 847 square feet for oceanview “bungalows” to 3,628 square feet for exquisite three-bedroom oceanview villa residences that feature around-the-clock butlers, and a private 10,000-square-foot Villa Clubhouse built in the truest Tuscan-themed style and architecture.

Upon your arrival at Pelican Hill’s large herringbone-patterned auto plaza, you’re likely to find Bentleys and Benzes parked. Make your way through the grand lobby and look out past the Roman-inspired Coliseum Pool—the largest circular pool in the world—and see the stunning vistas of the blue Pacific Ocean,

you’ll realize you’re truly somewhere special. Indeed, the neighboring Pelican Hill communities are recognized for having some of the priciest real estate in America, where hillside homes can start at \$10 million.

One of the main reasons Pelican Hill is so desirable and exclusive is its near-perfect location and overall setting. Situated along a stretch that locals call Newport Coast, Pelican Hill is a remarkable resort. It overlooks the Pacific Ocean and is just a 15-minute drive from the heart of Southern California’s chic Newport Beach and neighboring Newport Harbor—the largest small-yacht harbor in the world with an estimated 16,000-plus boats. Head another 20 minutes in the opposite direction and you’re in the lovely little village of Laguna Beach, a charming surf- and arts-oriented town with numerous boutiques and restaurants.

Meanwhile, just a short distance away from Pelican Hill is the historic 2,791-acre Crystal Cove State Park, a 3.5-mile stretch of craggy coastline framed by sandy covers, popular tide pools, and a marine park. This is a great place to take the family and have a leisurely day at the beach, enjoying dramatic rock formations and 80-foot bluffs lapped by the famous Southern California surf. One favorite stop is the Beachcomber Café, where one can enjoy a casual coastal breakfast or tasty fish tacos and organic burgers for lunch. Featuring “Old California” ambiance, the Beachcomber is part of a historic district of 46 beach cottages that date to the 1920s and 1950s.

The 46 beach cottages, which have been featured in many films and are included on the National Register of Historic Places, are being or have already been restored

OUT AND ABOUT: Opposite, clockwise from top left, dining with a view from the Pelican Grill Terrace; the 17th hole of the Ocean North golf course; a coastline view of Main Beach from Heisler Park in Laguna Beach; the master bedroom of a Pelican Hill villa.







TAKE IT EASY: Left, Pelican Hill's Coliseum swimming pool is surrounded by chaise lounges and affords vast views of the Pacific Ocean. This page, from top: the resort's entrance; the 18th hole of the impeccably groomed South Course; and a cabana at the resort, complete with food and beverage service and a designated dining area for cabana guests.







by California State Parks. The cottages are owned by The Irvine Company, which also owns the Resort at Pelican Hill.

Like the rest of the Resort at Pelican Hill, the oceanview golf courses coexist in perfect harmony with the coastal California landscape. The Ocean North and Ocean South courses offer 36 outstanding championship holes recreated by Fazio, who designed the original courses 20 years ago. The two completely rebuilt courses (both opened in November 2007, a year before the 304-unit resort debuted to the public) offer two distinctly different playing experiences with one common characteristic: stunning views of the Pacific Ocean from nearly every vantage point, as well as Newport's Balboa Island and Long Beach Harbour in the distance.

With resort green fees starting at \$235, which includes forecaddies, or private gold memberships that start at \$10,000 for unlimited golf, Pelican Hill arguably is one of the best values for high-end golf anywhere in the state of California. Of the resort's two layouts, the Ocean South Course is the

top choice, what with three rare oceanfront holes—Nos. 11-13—situated alongside the precious Newport Coast. The back-to-back par 3s—Nos. 12 and 13—that feature Crystal Cove State Beach on the left and \$30 million estates on the right are two of the main highlights. Although notable, these two holes are by no means Pelican Hill's signature holes. On the front nine, there's another great stretch of holes, starting with No. 4, a 142-yard downhill par 3 that features spectacular ocean and Crystal Cove State Beach vistas behind an elevated teebox.

Then, after loosening up the nerves with that first par 3, Pelican Hill sends duffers up a long steep path to the most exciting drive of the day: a 359-yard par 4 shot over a massive canyon, eventually ending up on a dogleg fairway down to a nicely framed green with—yet again—that same beautiful ocean in the background.

If only Gilligan, Skipper, and the gang had Pelican Hill Resort as an option, perhaps the shipwrecked *Minnow* might not have been such an unfortunate experience after all.

ROMAN HOLIDAY: Opposite, clockwise from top, the Cafe at Pelican Hill, the perfect place to load up on homemade goods; dining alfresco on the Andrea Terrace, and one of its premier tables; a decadent yet delicate ravioli entrée; and the women's acqua colonnade at the spa.