



THE (NEW)



# FAMILY VACATION

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**B**ooking five hotel rooms and making sure everyone knows what time to meet at the breakfast buffet—these are the things that suck the fun out of family vacations. Unlocking your three-bedroom cottage with ocean views? Lounging in the private pool off your mini-manse? Firing up a movie on your flat-screen? Telling the chefs what time you want dinner? Now we're talking. Maximize bonding time by taking advantage of all the first-rate multi-room vacation accommodations that resorts are offering these days. It's just like your easy, relaxing summers at the Jersey Shore, but with way more amenities (and much bluer water). Here, some places worth exploring ... together.

edited by Ashley Primis



The circular pool at sunset; a golf course (top right); the bedroom of a villa (bottom right) at Pelican Hill



take the family to:

# A VILLA IN CALIFORNIA

Pacific Ocean views and 300-plus days of sunshine make this a true West Coast experience.

Anyone can vacation in Southern California. But living there for a week? Pulling your car into the driveway of your stucco villa lined with olive trees? Pretending that hiking down to the ocean through the rocky terrain of Crystal Cove State Park is your usual morning routine? That it's not a big deal to see Kobe Bryant on a coffee run? (Okay, the Kobe thing didn't happen, but he does live nearby.)

Immaculately landscaped **Pelican Hill** sits high up in the canyon of Newport Coast, and was designed to make you feel just like that. It's an un-resort resort. Don't get me wrong; it has all the amenities—glinting saltwater pools, a to-die-for spa, 36 holes, first-rate eateries—but without the imposing hotel tower. It was smartly planned out like a country-club community, so in place of stodgy lobbies and dark halls are winding neighborhood-like streets whose abodes (be



they multi-bedroom villas or bungalows) have ocean, golf-course or garden views, plus privacy.

Louis, our butler for the week, waved us into our garage after we checked in at the Villa Clubhouse. He

had already stocked our fridge with the essentials (milk and beer); now he gave us a quick tour and left us with his direct line and instructions to call anytime—*seriously*, he emphasized. He's around to help with anything from food-shopping runs to dinner reservations, and though "Let's call Louis!" became a thing we liked to exclaim all week, we only wound up calling him once, when I needed a few more pots, pans, wineglasses and plates for an impromptu dinner party. Like Louis, everyone we encountered at Pelican Hill had that

CONTINUED ON PAGE 133



**AGES:** Thanks to easy accommodations, this trip is great for everyone. **KID STUFF:** Amazing pools, kayak tours that get you close to sea lions, boating, hiking and golf. **GROWN-UP STUFF:** *Condé Nast Traveler* rated the spa as the best in California. **TOGETHER TIME:** Hikes, water and beach activities, games, and exploring all the Orange County towns made famous by MTV and Bravo. **EATS:** Meals at all of the resort eateries are great. The villa's kitchens are well supplied for at-home dining. Fish tacos at Bear Flag Fish Co. are a must. **QUIET TIME:** Camp Pelican has its own pool and clubhouse. **SO YOU KNOW:** A supermarket that sells wine and beer is just minutes away. **GETTING THERE:** Virgin America has well-priced direct flights to LAX, which is about a 45-minute drive away. Or connect to get to Orange County's John Wayne Airport, just 15 minutes away. **STAY DETAILS:** The starting rate for a two-bedroom villa is \$795 per night; prices vary by villa and season.