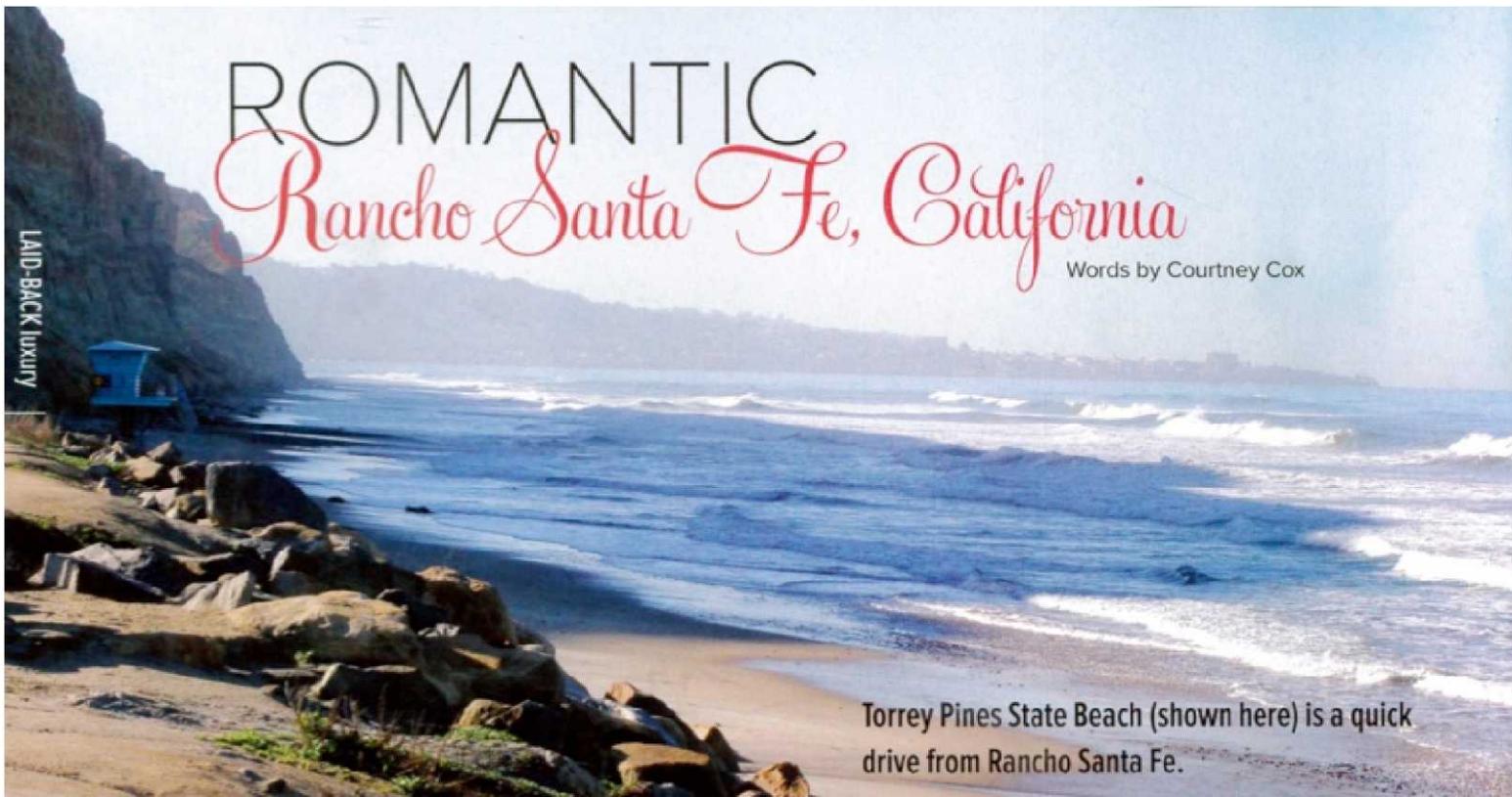


ROMANTIC *Rancho Santa Fe, California*

Words by Courtney Cox

LAI-D-BACK luxury



Torrey Pines State Beach (shown here) is a quick drive from Rancho Santa Fe.



We recently discovered a California hot-spot in the form of Rancho Santa Fe. Known for being a private, luxurious locale 30 minutes north of San Diego, it's the perfect alternative for a destination wedding couple who doesn't require a beach within walking distance.

Having been to San Diego countless times, I found the quiet, rolling hills of Rancho Santa Fe a welcome change of scenery. For a true experience of laid-back luxury, the Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa is a beautiful option.

Each of the 49 rooms has its own private patio with hot tub, an in-room fireplace, expansive steam shower and walk-in closet. The Spanish, ranch-style architecture is cozy with high beamed ceilings, large rooms and hand-painted tiles.

If you have a small destination wedding party, we strongly suggest looking into Rancho Valencia's La Hacienda suite. The three-bedroom home is located on property, but offers another level of privacy and comfort. It is the equivalent of renting a private home for your wedding, but with all the services and amenities of a hotel. A ceremony in La Hacienda's backyard is the epitome of exclusivity and can accommodate up to 60 people.

Rancho Valencia encourages guests to take advantage of the many world-class activities offered. Take a tennis lesson with former U.S. Open Doubles Champion, Robin White, and improve both your backhand and abs with lots of laughs thanks to this sassy instructor. In addition to impressive tennis courts, the resort also has a breathtaking indoor/outdoor yoga pavilion and both spin and pilates studios. After all the activity, stop by the spa for a Sixth Sense Ritual massage which includes a soak in an outdoor cast-iron tub, scalp massage and paraffin treatment.

Delight in coastal-ranch cuisine by Executive Chef Eric Bauer at the beautiful Veladora restaurant, or more casual fare at the laid-back Pony Room. When it comes to food, virtually everything is made in-house at Rancho Valencia. From smoked meats and fresh pastas, to breads and stocks, it's all fresh and delicious. To cap-off your wedding experience, request a tasting lesson with Sommelier Jayson Knack. With over 600 wines to choose from, it will be both an educational and beautiful experience in the resort's Wine Room. For luxurious accommodations with a laid-back vibe, Rancho Valencia is the perfect option.

