



pasadena

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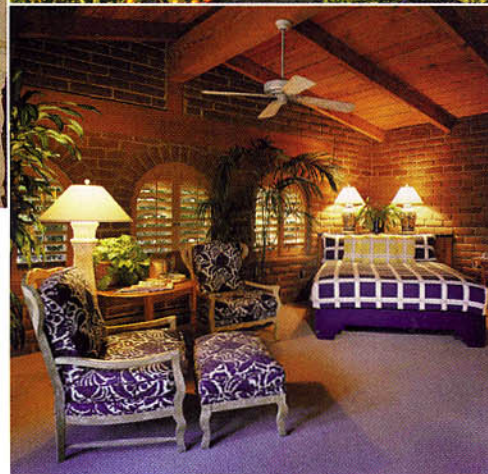
**CHECK OUT
OUR LOCAL
DENTISTS
PROFILES**

AUGUST 2009 \$6.95 US





SEASIDE SUMMER. Left, The Marine Room restaurant in La Jolla; top right, the Rancho Valencia Resort; bottom right, a hacienda bedroom at Rancho Valencia.



Swept Away by San Diego

Choose from a variety of charming seaside cities for a perfect weekend escape.

// STORY BY **SHAENA ENGLE**

ONCE UPON A TIME, SAN DIEGO WAS PRIMARILY KNOWN FOR ITS PANDAS. THE SAN DIEGO ZOO WAS LENT TWO GIANT PANDAS IN 1987, AND THE BLACK AND WHITE BEARS DREW 2 MILLION VISITORS. BACK THEN THE CITY WAS A PLAYGROUND FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN, OFFERING ESCAPES TO THE ZOO AND ITS WILD ANIMAL PARK, SEAWORLD AND MORE RECENTLY LEGOLAND. SAN DIEGO, WITH ITS 70 MILES OF WHITE SILKY-SAND BEACHES, ENTHRALLING VISTAS, SECLUDED PARKS AND GARDENS, MANY MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES, INTIMATE CAFES AND ENTICING

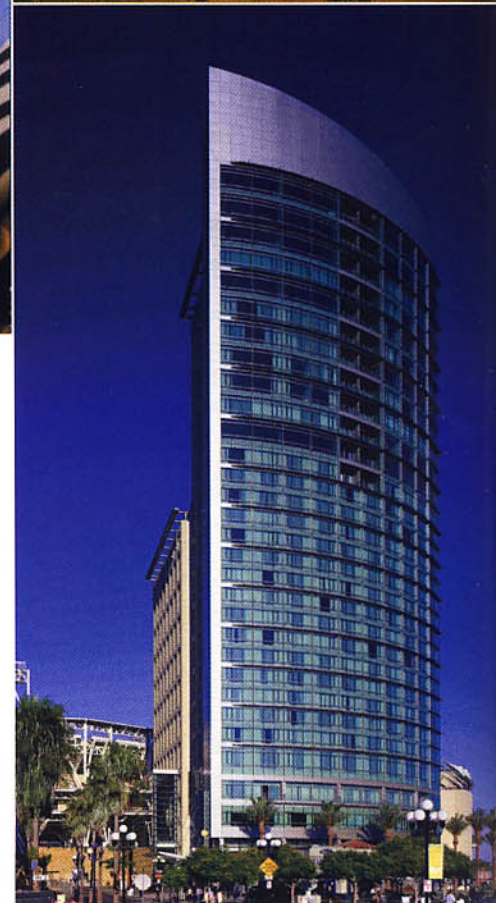
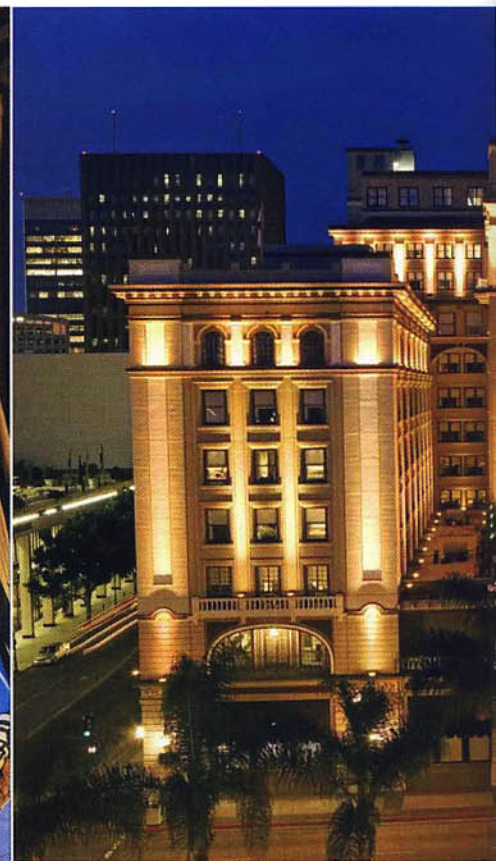
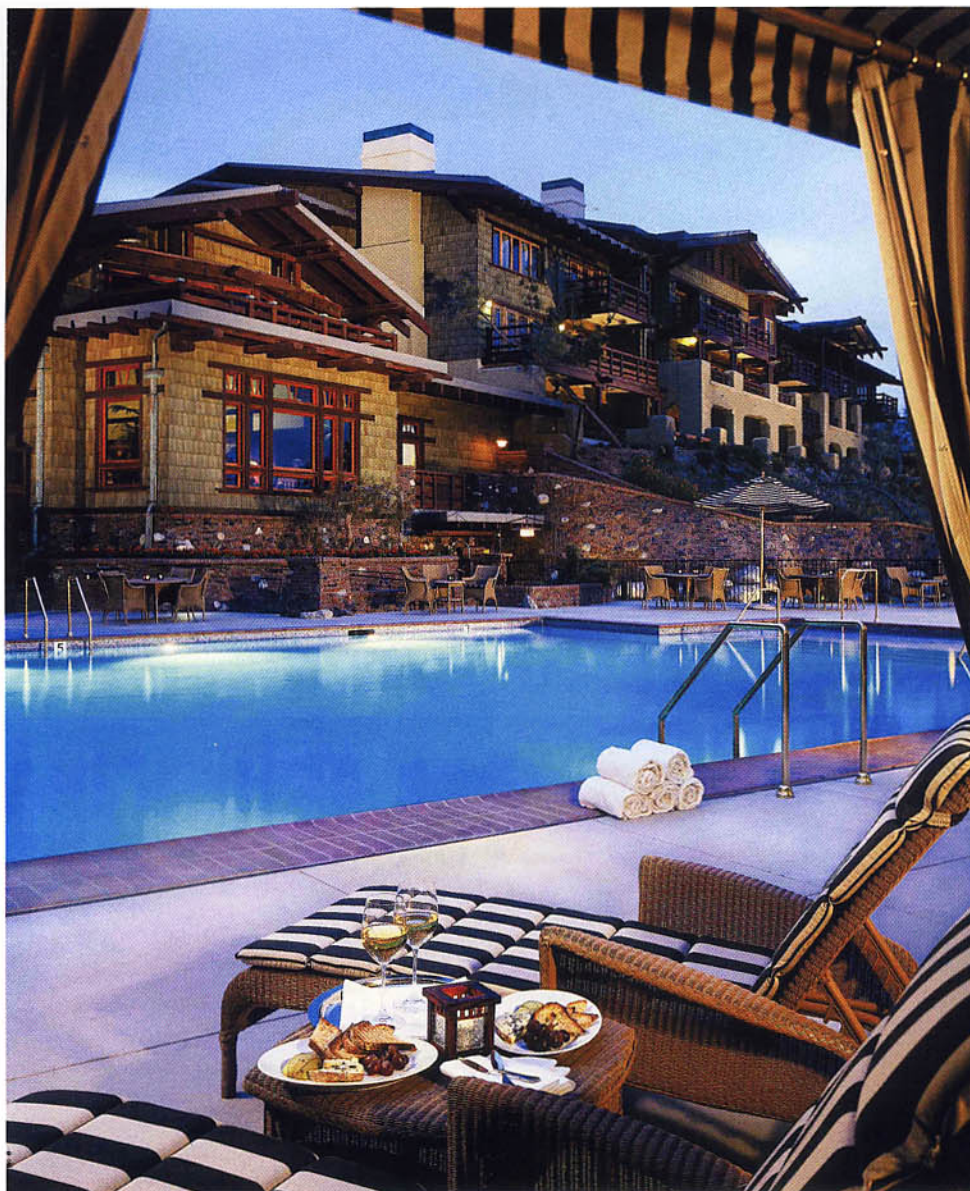
restaurants is now a top choice for a romantic weekend away. From the laid-back attitudes of Carlsbad or the gentrified sophistication of La Jolla to the urban vibrance of the historic Gaslamp Quarter downtown, each neighborhood has a charm of its own. Here are a few places worth exploring:

San Diego's North Coast

For those who enjoy the ultimate peaceful pampering experience, head to San Diego's north coast. Enjoy a stroll through 30 acres of scenic walkways and trails housing California plants, exotic tropicals, palms and fauna and flora collections at the Quail

Botanical Gardens (230 Quail Gardens Dr., Encinitas, 760.436.3036). Head to the Self-Realization Fellowship's (215 K St., Encinitas, 760.753.2888) meditation garden and climb the shaded paths filled with koi ponds, gnarled cypress, azaleas and lush flowers leading to breathtaking ocean views.

Spend the afternoon relaxing with a private couple's Suite Heart Massage at Spanish colonial-style La Costa Resort and Spa (2100 Costa del Mar Rd., Carlsbad, 800.729.4772). The resort offers one of the largest spas in Northern San Diego (43,000 square feet), with dozens of treatment rooms, Roman pools, Swiss showers and saunas. Check in to the Rancho Valencia Resort (5921 Valencia Cr., Rancho Sante Fe, 858.756.1123) for a few nights of secluded bliss. The Spanish-Mediterranean rustic resort houses 49 suites decorated with whitewashed wood beams, ceiling fans, large



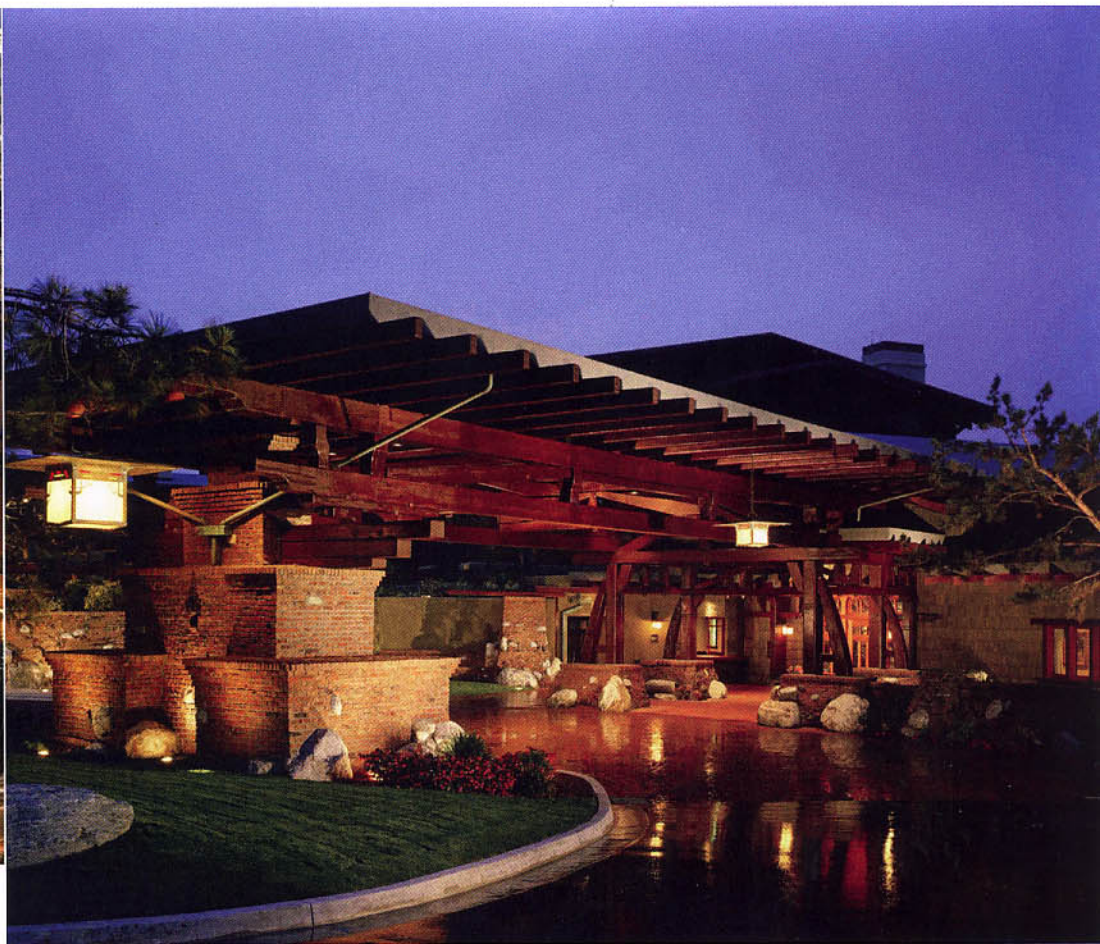
wood-burning fireplaces and private terraces. At night, visit the resort's restaurant for outdoor traditional French dining by the wood-burning fireplace.

La Jolla

Atop a rocky peninsula 10 miles north of downtown San Diego lies the idyllic community of La Jolla, filled with drop-dead views of surf, coves, hills and lagoons. A good first stop is a visit to the luxurious Lodge at Torrey Pines (11480 N. Torrey Pines Rd., La Jolla, 858.453.4420). The Craftsman architectural style popularized in early 20th century California inspired this 171-room retreat, which sits perched just above the 18th green of Torrey Pines Golf Course and the rugged coastline of Torrey Pines State Reserve.

Before dinner, head to the reserve to hike the mile-long Guy Fleming Trail, housing wildflowers, sweeping views of the Pacific and the park's signature tree, the Torrey pine. Enjoy a cozy dinner afterward at the Lodge's signature restaurant, A.R. Valentien, amid high wooden-beamed ceilings, handmade stained glass lanterns and plush private booths. The menu offers in-season fresh dishes, including pan-roasted swordfish with turnips and mustard greens, wild striped bass with lemon risotto, and roasted duck confit with leeks and Kabocha squash.

Start your day with brunch at the Cottage Restaurant (7702 Fay Ave., La Jolla, 858.454.8409), a charming historic bungalow in the heart of La Jolla village. This white-fenced sunny yellow eatery offers favorites



SD STYLE. Opposite page, pool at The Lodge at Torrey Pines; mid-page, the US Grant Hotel in Downtown San Diego; this page, left, The Omni hotel; right, the entrance to The Lodge at Torrey Pines.

like mascarpone-stuffed French toast and crabcakes benedict. Head to the Stephen Birch Aquarium (2300 Expedition Way, La Jolla, 858.543.3474) for a fish's eye view of local and tropical marine life. Attractions include the hall of fishes, an outdoor tide pool, displays and a spectacular view of La Jolla shores and cliffs from the outdoor plaza.

Venture back to La Jolla village to upscale Prospect Avenue for an afternoon of art gallery hopping and boutique shopping before checking in to the cliff-top La Valencia Hotel (1132 Prospect St., La Jolla, 858.454.0771). Since the early 1920s, film stars including Charlie Chaplin and Greta Garbo flocked to this tranquil Mediterranean-style pink palace with red tile floors, candelabra chandeliers and dazzling views of La Jolla cove. Opt for one of the 15 opulent ocean villas, which feature fireplaces, whirlpool tubs and personalized butler service. For an intimate dinner, ride the original brass cage elevator to the 10th-story Sky Room restaurant. The mirrored 12-table dining room offers lavish dishes with foie gras, Kobe beef and lobster with truffles amid sweeping views of the Pacific.

For a closer view of the ocean with an equally spectacular view, opt for the Marine Room (2000 Spindrift Dr., La Jolla,

858.459.7222) just before sunset. Sitting just beyond the sandline within feet of the waves that snuggle up to La Jolla shores, the restaurant offers outstanding French-Colonial cuisine, as well as stunning vistas and high-tide waves that splash against the floor-to-ceiling picture windows. Menu standouts include the lobster bisque cappuccino, rack of lamb and macadamia coated salmon.

Gaslamp Quarter and Downtown

Scores of preserved commercial buildings from the Civil War through World War I line the 16-block historic downtown Gaslamp Quarter. Now housing stylish restaurants, nightclubs and trendy shops, it is perfect proximity to the harbor, airport and nearby attractions. Take a short trip to Balboa Park (entrance on Sixth Avenue and Laurel Street, 619.239.0512), housing 1,200 acres of walkways, gardens, the city's best museums and the world-famous San Diego Zoo. Check in to the stately U.S. Grant Hotel (326 Broadway, San Diego, 619.232.3121),

opened in 1910. The opulent interiors, from the lobby to the Grant Grill, blend Art Deco furnishings with luxurious crystal and marble. Its 227 rooms feature custom carpets, marble baths and original artwork.

Trendy dining can be found a few blocks away at Suite and Tender in the swanky Se San Diego Hotel (1047 Fifth Ave., San Diego, 619.515.3003). This 126-seat two-story restaurant and lounge offers a twist on the traditional "surf and turf" pairing, with twin entrees such as braised pork belly with diver scallops and butter-poached lobster with braised short ribs.

Sports lovers can catch a Padres game at Petco Park and walk across the private skybridge to stay at the Omni Hotel (675 L St., San Diego, 619.231.6664). This nautical-themed 511-room hotel offers baseball memorabilia galore and suites featuring views of the bay, city or ballpark.

No matter where you decide to visit in San Diego, this sunny city makes an ideal weekend getaway.