



Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa, Rancho Santa Fe

CREME DE LA CREME

San Diego's most-celebrated spots will take your meeting to the next level

By Nikki Gloudeman

How does something go from good to great? It's a tough question to answer, but also essential for planners to ask. Because increasingly, getting attendees to stay engaged with the content of a meeting requires an experience that is more than serviceable—it must be extraordinary.

Luckily, San Diego, home of magnificent beaches, an elegant waterfront and that irresistible coastal California vibe, offers several hotels, service providers and group restaurants that deliver the sublime. Guests are wowed upon arrival, pampered during their stay and leave wishing their stays were just a little bit longer. Their secret to success lies in intuitive service, decor elements that dazzle and a keen eye for the little things that make a big difference. By mastering every aspect of the attendee experience, greatness becomes possible.

Here, we guide you through the city's best of the best, justly lauded by the likes of Forbes, TripAdvisor, *Travel + Leisure* and *Smart Meetings*. These standouts are not merely good—they are truly extraordinary.

» GREATER SAN DIEGO

RANCHO VALENCIA RESORT & SPA

Kudos: No. 9 Best Hotel in the United States, *U.S. News & World Report* (2014); No. 9 Best Spa in the World, *Conde Nast Traveler* (2014); Best Boutique Hotel in America and Most Sensuous Spa, Boutique Hotel Awards (2013); World's Best Hotels, *Travel + Leisure* (2013); and Forbes Five Star (2014)

Reasons for the acclaim: Fresh off a \$30 million extensive revamp just in time for its 25th anniversary, Rancho Valencia has emerged as one of the most luxurious properties in the San Diego area. The only Relais & Chateaux hotel in Southern California, the hotel fosters a sense of seclusion and exclusivity with its 49 Mediterranean-style casitas spread

across 45 acres lined with olive groves and foliage. Plus, meeting spaces offer that coveted "wow" experience, with little additional attention needed from planners. Our favorite? An exposed-brick wine room, lined with barrels and bottles, that opens onto a terrace fronting a eucalyptus grove.

SAN DIEGO	ROOMS/MEETING SPACE	WHAT'S DISTINCTIVE
Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa	49 rms/12,000 sq. ft.	Uber-luxurious property located 30 minutes north of San Diego; two distinctive restaurants, Veladora and The Pony Room; spa includes a yoga pavilion, Pilates studio.