

## WHAT'S NEW IN San Diego?

ACTRESS/PRODUCER/AUTHOR  
BRINKE STEVENS RECENTLY  
VISITED ONE OF HER FAVORITE  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA  
CITIES, AND SHARES HER  
EXPERIENCES.

By Brinke Stevens

I'm always excited to revisit **San Diego** and discover what's new. Every month is a good time to go, because there's really no such thing as an off-season. San Diego has a world-famous Zoo, Balboa Park and the Old Globe Theatre, the Gaslamp Quarter and Old Town, pristine beaches like Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve and La Jolla Shores, the historic Hotel Del Coronado, and Legoland. There's truly something for everyone in "America's Finest City."

I'm partial to anything with an ocean view, so I like to stay in the heart of La Jolla at the Grande Colonial hotel. Originally built in 1913, it retains a classic elegance yet is thoroughly modern — and also features delicious California cuisine at NINE-TEN restaurant. Best of all, it's nicely situated within walking distance of art galleries, boutiques and restaurants, including one of my favorites, the recently renovated George's At The Cove. Their roof-top terrace offers casual outdoor dining with a stunning view. On the fine-dining lower

level, Chef Trey Foshee's sophisticated menu can't be beat for inventive taste combinations and artful presentation.

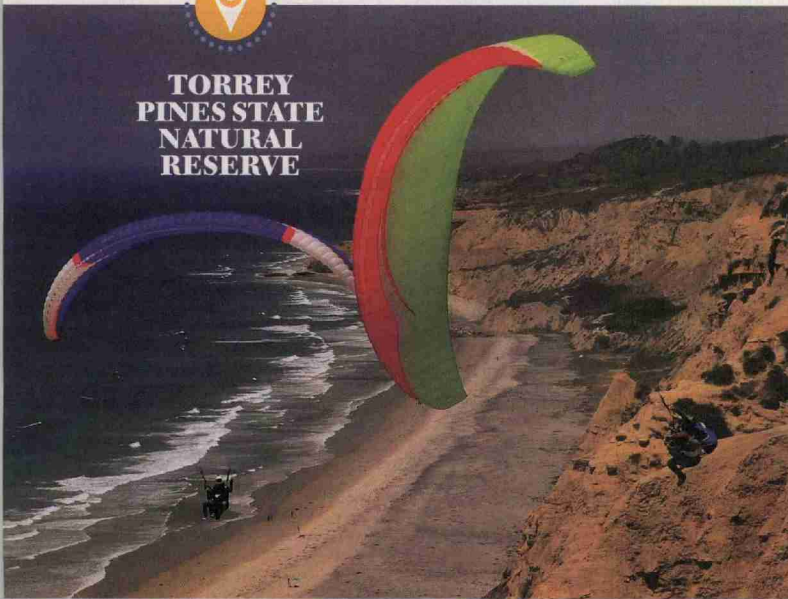
One block away, **LA JOLLA COVE** is a real gem. Although the beach is small, the wildlife is plentiful. Harbor seals and sea lions bask on the rocks, and orange Garibaldi fish join swimmers in the calm water. At **LA JOLLA SHORES**, Avenida De La Playa is full of kayak and paddle board rental shops, many of which offer guided tours. Just north of La Jolla, **TORREY PINES STATE RESERVE** provides eight miles of hiking trails amid beautiful sandstone ravines, eroded badlands, and towering cliffs with breathtaking views of the coastline.

For another spectacular view of San Diego, I like to drive to the southernmost tip of Point Loma. Here you can find a sweeping panorama of the Pacific Ocean, downtown San Diego, Coronado, and on a clear day, the mountains of Tijuana, Mexico. You can explore the **CABRILLO NATIONAL MONUMENT** and take a self-guided tour of the restored **OLD POINT LOMA LIGHTHOUSE**. From the summit, you could continue down Cabrillo Road to study the tide pools or take a scenic walk along the bluffs.

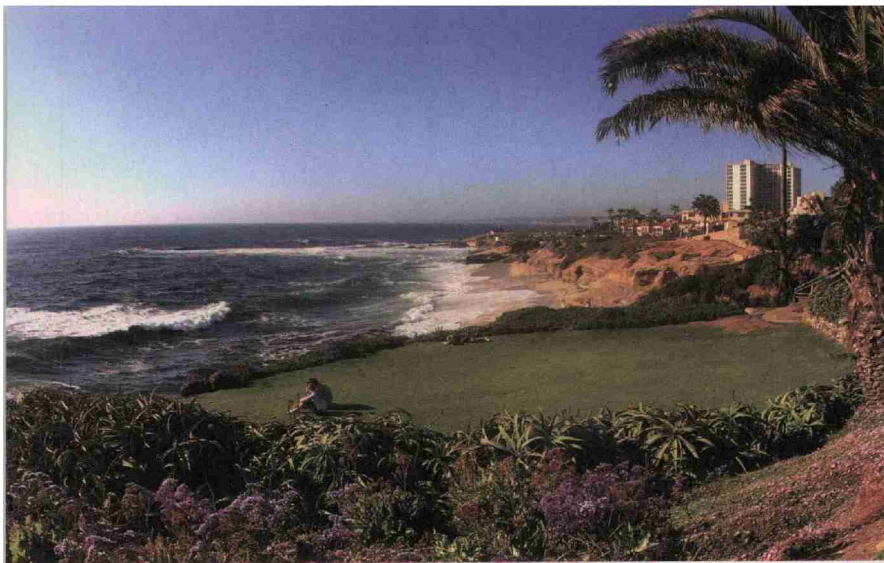
Once I've gotten my fill of gorgeous scenery, I head to Point Loma's **LIBERTY STATION** for lunch. San Diegans quickly fell in love with the new Public Market there. Ranked one of the Top 20 food halls in the U.S., it follows a path paved by iconic markets like Seattle's Pike Place. This lively gastro-emporium offers food and goods from 30 local artisans and chefs, including prepared foods, produce, fish, pastries, beer, wine, arts and crafts. Popular vendors include Parana Empanadas, Mastiff Sausage Company, Olala Crepes, and Venissimo Cheese. On Sunday afternoons, stop by for a free concert on the dog-friendly outside patio, where you can relax with globally inspired food and alcoholic beverages from Bottlecraft or The Mess Hall. Surrounding this foodie-heaven is a vast complex called the **ARTS DISTRICT OF LIBERTY STATION**. Formerly a Naval training center, Liberty Station is now packed with movie theaters, art galleries, and many small museums such as



**TORREY  
PINES STATE  
NATURAL  
RESERVE**



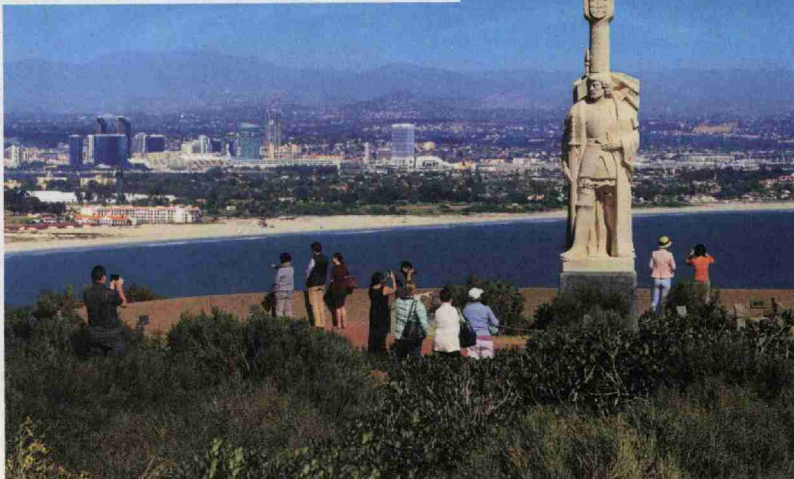
Torrey Pines Gliderport. Courtesy of Torrey Pines Gliderport.



LEFT: La Jolla. Photo by Joanne DiBona. BELOW: Cabrillo National Monument. Courtesy of SanDiego.org. BOTTOM: Old Town Trolley Tour in Little Italy. Courtesy of Historic Tours of America.



## CABRILLO NATIONAL MONUMENT



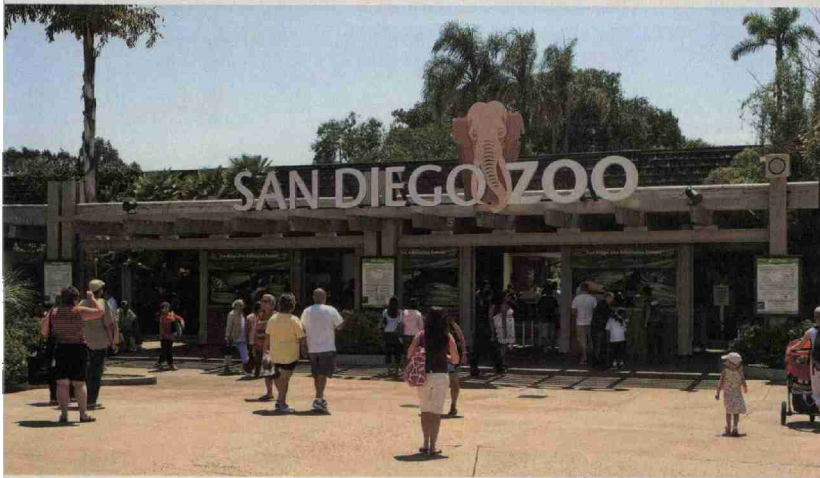
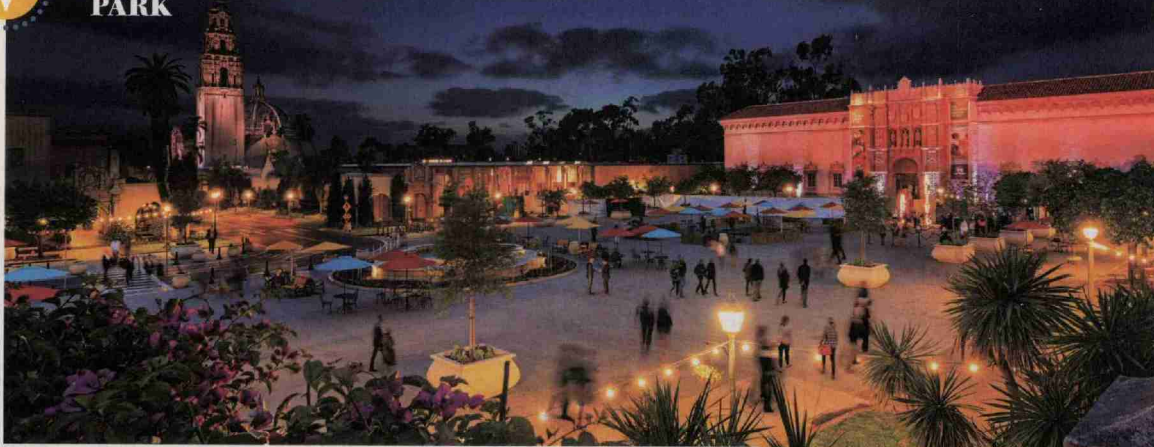
the Comic Art Gallery, the New Americans Museum, the Visions Art Museum, and The Women's Museum of California. The Avocado Museum opens this summer to celebrate **San Diego's** Fallbrook area as the Avocado Capital of the World. As hopping as this place is, it is only the beginning. There are future plans for The Barracks Hotel, an art-themed boutique hotel utilizing historic military buildings. And East Village's beloved Café Chloe is opening their "Chloe at Scout" outpost at Liberty Station, an outdoor French café with a menu of pastries, quiche, cheese, charcuterie, soups and salads. Another highly anticipated new food hall debuts this summer in **LITTLE ITALY**, a downtown neighborhood renowned for authentic Italian fare. The Little Italy Food Hall takes up residence in the European-style Piazza della Famiglia. The interior décor pays homage to the area's maritime past. Visitors can order freshly prepared food from six vendors, including Not Not Tacos by Sam the Cooking Guy, featuring tortillas stuffed with unconventional fillings like meatloaf, salmon, or pastrami. The Bar at Little Italy Food Hall features craft cocktails, local beer and wine. There's also a refined Milan-style pizzeria Ambrogio15, artisanal Roast Meat & Sandwich Shop, and Wicked Maine Lobster with its New England seafood. In addition to the food hall, Piazza della Famiglia includes Frost Me Café & Bakery, wine tastings, and the occasional live cooking show.

Little Italy is one of San Diego's hottest dining districts, featuring Top Chef-helmed restaurants and a thriving nightlife. On ▶





## BALBOA PARK



my last visit, I was delighted to discover the brand-new Born & Raised restaurant. Borrowing a bit of decadence from time-honored steakhouses of decades past, Born & Raised features swanky leather booths in a glorious art deco-style dining room, as well as a rooftop level with panoramic views. The menu features humanely raised beef and an in-house dry-aging program, not to mention tableside cart service by tuxedo-dressed servers. That said, this is not your father's steakhouse. Far from being a stuffy formal experience, it's a fun, happening scene on both floors.

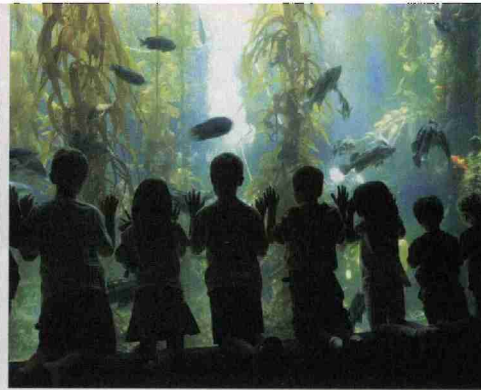
San Diego is a sunny haven for suds lovers, with more than 100 craft breweries like Ballast Point, Green Flash, AleSmith, Stone, Port and Lost Abbey. It's interesting to visit local production facilities, and many tasting rooms are clustered in the Miramar area. To avoid drinking and driving, you

can call on **SAN DIEGO BEER, WINE AND SPIRITS TOURS** for tastings at local breweries, wineries and distilleries. Their guided downtown trolley tour, for example, includes beer tastings at four San Diego breweries plus lunch. If you prefer wine, there's a chauffeured Winery Tour that includes pick-up and drop-off at your hotel, three local wineries (18 different wines), and dinner overlooking a rustic vineyard. They also offer a new five-hour chauffeured tour of local small-batch distilleries.

**THE SAN DIEGO ZOO** is widely acclaimed as the best zoo in America. Encompassing 100 acres and a vast array of animals, many of which are endangered species, the zoo steps into the future with the recent opening of "Africa Rocks." The \$68-million project incorporates the latest ideas about exhibits at a time when zoos find themselves in an ongoing debate about the

TOP: Balboa Park Plaza. Courtesy of San Diego.org. LEFT: San Diego Zoo. Courtesy of San Diego Zoo. ABOVE: Paraná Empanadas Argentinas. Courtesy of Paraná Empanadas Argentinas.

treatment of animals in captivity. Designed to be more naturalistic and focused on conservation, "Africa Rocks" lets visitors walk on a meandering pathway past six distinct habitats housing flora and fauna from the African continent, including penguins, meerkats, Nubian ibex, ring-tailed lemurs, leopards, and dwarf crocodiles. Africa



ABOVE: Liberty Public Market. Photo by Robert Benson. RIGHT: Birch Aquarium at Scripps. Courtesy of Birch Aquarium at Scripps.

Rocks' seven-story waterfall is the largest manmade waterfall in San Diego, and you can even walk behind it! Should your feet grow weary while exploring, the zoo offers a 35-minute guided bus tour of the park. There's also the Skyfari aerial tram that transports visitors from one end of the park to the other, offering a birds-eye view of the exhibits below.

To experience wildlife from the Land Down Under and come face-to-face with kangaroos, head 30 miles north to the **SAN DIEGO ZOO SAFARI PARK** in Escondido. The newly opened Walkabout Australia attraction will transport you to a faraway land. Discover meadows teeming with kangaroos, grasslands where wombats frolic, and forests filled with kookaburras and cassowaries. Elsewhere, you can view some of Africa's most beloved animals — including lions, elephants, cheetahs, meerkats, zebras, and gorillas — roaming relatively free. True to its name, the park offers a variety of different safari tours, including an exciting zipline safari.

Close to downtown, **BALBOA PARK** was constructed for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition. Enjoy lush gardens and trails, tiled fountains, remarkable architecture and 17 museums within this picturesque 1,200-acre city jewel. Wander around the park and admire the intricate Spanish-Renaissance architecture. The Botanical Building is a great starting point, featuring a striking collection of tropical plants and orchids. The park also features a cactus garden, rose garden, a Japanese-style garden as well as a palm tree canyon. Venture to Panama 66 to refuel with a snack and

craft beer or dine alfresco at the luxurious Spanish-style Prado Restaurant. Take in a show at the Old Globe Theatre or visit the Spreckels Organ Pavilion to see one of the world's largest outdoor pipe organs.

Be sure to stop by the Museum of Man, which is dedicated to anthropology. For the first time in 80 years, it now offers visitors a 40-minute guided tour of the landmark California Tower. You'll proceed to a secret staircase hidden to the public, and then climb higher and higher for spectacular panoramic views of Balboa Park, downtown San Diego and beyond.

Museums are plentiful enough to suit all interests. Art lovers will enjoy the San Diego Museum of Art, the Museum of Photographic Arts, and Mingei International Museum. Science enthusiasts can explore the Fleet Science Center or the Air and Space Museum. There's also the Model Railroad Museum, an Automotive Museum, and the Hall of Champions Sport Museum, dedicated entirely to San Diego's sports history.

I try to come back often to revisit my old favorite digs — and to see how much San Diego has transformed. I was happy to hear about **THE HOPPER**, a new double-decker bus tour of six top sites: Old Town, Little Italy, Balboa Park, Gaslamp Quarter, Seaport Village, and the Embarcadero. The buses stop at each location every half hour, so guests can "hop on and off" whenever they like and discover San Diego at leisure without having to drive around all day. It's just one more great way to explore this awesome city. Simply put, San Diego is inspiringly beautiful and has everything you need for a perfect getaway. **TL**

## SOURCE LIST

**GRANDE COLONIAL HOTEL**, 910 Prospect St., La Jolla, CA 92037, 888.828.5498, <https://www.thgrandecolonial.com>.

**GEORGE'S AT THE COVE**, 1250 Prospect St., La Jolla, CA 92037, 858.454.4244, <https://www.georgesatthecove.com>.

**LA JOLLA COVE**, 1100 Coast Blvd., La Jolla, CA 92037, <https://www.lajolla.com/guides/la-jolla-cove-guide/>.

**TORREY PINES STATE RESERVE**, 12600 N. Torrey Pines Road, San Diego, CA 92037, 858.755.2063, <https://torreypine.org>.

**CABRILLO NATIONAL MONUMENT**, 1800 Cabrillo Memorial Drive, San Diego, CA 92106, <https://www.nps.gov/cabr/index.htm>.

**LIBERTY PUBLIC MARKET**, 2820 Decatur Road., San Diego, CA 92106, <http://libertypublicmarket.com>.

**THE LITTLE ITALY FOOD HALL**, 550 W. Date St. at India St., San Diego, CA 92101, <https://www.littleitalyfoodhall.com>.

**BORN & RAISED STEAKHOUSE**, 1909 India St., San Diego, CA 92101, 619.202.4577, <http://bornandraisedsteak.com>.

**SAN DIEGO BEER, WINE, AND SPIRITS TOURS**, 858.551.5115, <https://sandiegobeerwinespiritstours.com>.

**THE SAN DIEGO ZOO** is located in the northwest corner of Balboa Park. 2920 Zoo Drive, San Diego, CA 92101, 619.231.0251, <http://zoo.sandiegozoo.org>.

**SAN DIEGO ZOO SAFARI PARK**, 15500 San Pasqual Valley Road, Escondido, CA 92027, 760.747.8702, [sdzsafaripark.org](http://sdzsafaripark.org).

**BALBOA PARK**, 1549 El Prado, San Diego, CA 92101, 619.239.0512, <https://www.balboapark.org>.

**CALIFORNIA TOWER AT MUSEUM OF MAN**, 1350 El Prado, San Diego, CA 92101, 619.239.2001, <http://Californiatower.org>.

**THE HOPPER BUS**, 833.743.3467, <https://www.ridethehopperbus.com>.