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LUXE GETAWAY ON THE BIG BAY

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After a significant renovation and expansion, the iconic Kona Kai Resort & Spa re-emerges as a modern jewel of San Diego's Shelter Island.





Once a playground for celebrities such as Marilyn Monroe, Wilt Chamberlain, Jerry Lewis and President John F. Kennedy, the historic Kona Kai Resort & Spa, a Noble House Resort, is a legend reborn, thanks to a recently revealed \$13 million expansion. The resort, which also underwent a \$14 million renovation to existing spaces in July 2015, now boasts 170 luxury guest rooms (including 41 brand-new suites) and amenities that are unique to its waterfront location and rich history. At the tip of Shelter Island, only 10 minutes away from the San Diego Airport and the happening Downtown Gaslamp District, Kona Kai Resort & Spa is a prime getaway in San Diego Bay.

The resort's new luxury suites consist of eight Coastal Revival Suites and 33 Endless Summer Suites—each conceptualized by renowned Seattle-based interior design firm Degen & Degen. Standout design features include hand-hewn wooden ceiling beams; spa-inspired bathrooms with dual vanities, deep soaking tubs and rainfall showers; and oversized balconies. The Coastal Revival Suites highlight the resort's ocean setting with modern wood furnishings, including a double-sided fireplace and private balcony. Meanwhile, the Endless Summer Suites are outfitted with double-sided fireplaces, and brilliant pops of orange and red. Each room features 420 square feet of living space and a private balcony with views of the marina or pool, while the two largest suites offer 645 square feet.

Amenities at the intimate resort include a private beach (the only private beach in San Diego where alcohol can be served); two heated outdoor swimming pools (the new Paloma Pool and Bar is adults-only with beautiful private cabanas); and Vessel Restaurant + Bar (helmed by chef Roy Hendrickson, featuring a menu of California comfort fare, a circular bar, an outdoor patio and private dining room offering 180-degree views of the marina). Kona Kai Resort & Spa also features the 7,020-square-foot award-winning Spa Terre (try a massage in the heated quartz sand bed—one of only 16 in the United States and the only one in San Diego); a state-of-the-art fitness center with daily fitness classes; 55,000 square feet of versatile indoor and outdoor event space; and 518 marina boat slips ranging in length from 30 feet to 250 feet. The resort also offers sailboats, speedboats, paddleboards and Jet Skis for rent; complimentary beach cruiser bicycles on which to explore the 10-mile Shelter Island; a Kid's Club; and nightly s'mores at the private beach.

Then there's the renowned private Kona Kai Club, wherein members have access to the property for a one-time initiation fee of \$2,500 and monthly dues. Once highly regarded as the crème de la crème of San Diego's private clubs, Kona Kai Club offers a private lounge; invitations to all exclusive members-only parties and events; reserved poolside and private beach cabanas; reserved members-only poolside sun loungers; unlimited access to the fitness center and group exercise classes; two complimentary guest passes per month; and more.

The pet-friendly resort also offers the new IslandPaws program (\$150 additional per night), which includes a pet bed for use each night during the stay; pet water and food bowls; a special welcome amenity with treats; a dog-walking map; dog in-room dining options through the resident Bark Butler; and mobile grooming services. 1551 Shelter Island Drive, San Diego, 619.221.8000, resortkonalai.com





OUT AND ABOUT

Three reasons to venture beyond Kona Kai Resort & Spa.

Balboa Park is the nation's largest urban cultural park in North America (at 12,000 acres), thanks to its 17 museums, lush gardens and world-famous San Diego Zoo all located within its borders. The park, which began in 1868 and is named after the Spanish explorer Vasco Núñez de Balboa, is home to highly ornamental Spanish Colonial-revival style architecture, numerous art installations and cultural events that are held throughout the year. Don't miss the Museum of Man, The San Diego Museum of Art and the Botanical Building. balboapark.org

Born & Raised, helmed by two-Michelin starred chef and partner Jason McLeod, is one of the hottest new restaurants in San Diego. The \$6.5 million, two-story steakhouse, is best known for its dry-aged beef, duck and pork, and the incredible tableside service. Every inch of the restaurant was custom designed and built. Basile Design worked with Arsalun Tafazoli, founder of CH Projects, to design a space that combines both midcentury and art deco elements. Sleek walnut plumes cover the first floor with brass inlays, while camel-colored leather booths fill the comfortable space. The rooftop has a club-like feel and reservations are a hot commodity on both levels. bornandraisedsteak.com

Liberty Station is a 361-acre waterfront urban village that served as a former Naval Training Center. Today, it is home to a variety of art galleries, local shops, restaurants, cultural activities and public parks. Be sure to stop by the new Liberty Public Market, a 22,000-square-foot artisan market with more than 30 local specialty purveyors, such as Rakiraki Ramen, Wicked Maine Lobster and Bottlecraft. libtystation.com

