



The garden courtyard at The Guild Hotel, San Diego, A Tribute Portfolio Hotel

# Here Are the Must-See San Diego Hotels on Our Radar

Visit the historic city, stay in style

By Shivani Vora

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When it comes to must-visit destinations in the United States, it's hard to beat the appeal of San Diego. The eighth largest city in the country is a vibrant metropolis with fantastic beaches, a booming food scene, world-class surfing, and an endless list of outdoor pursuits from boating and fishing to golf.

The weather—sunny, low humidity days most of the year—is another draw.



“San Diego is a place that has it all and offers attractions for everyone,” says Colleen O’Keefe, a luxury travel adviser with The Global Concierge who lives in the San Diego area. “People often don’t realize what a gem it is, and with respect to cities in California, it’s often overshadowed by San Francisco and Los Angeles.”

The hotels in and around the city are yet another reason to visit, says O’Keefe, and range from properties in the heart of downtown to beachfront resorts along the coastline that are self-encompassing retreats.



The Pool at the Pendry Hotel. Courtesy of The Pendry Hotel

The name getting the biggest buzz is Pendry San Diego, in the Gaslamp District, a bustling neighborhood full of restaurants and bars. “Pendry is *the* place to stay in downtown and has a great vibe and fantastic design,” says O’Keefe. “Locals love being there because it’s so cool.”

Pendry San Diego has 317 rooms and a fresh Southern California design that includes a lobby with Etruscan concrete tile floors and coffered wood ceilings that are a nod to the Spanish influence in San Diego. There’s also an oversized chandelier at the entry with a bronze birdcage mounted to a driftwood boom and bronze counterweight and a welcome desk wrapped in polished aluminum panels that are reminiscent of vintage airplane fuselage.

Amenities include a spa, a rooftop swimming pool and restaurant with a popular

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for anyone who's visiting from out of town," he says.



The rebuffed lobby at Hotel del Coronado. Courtesy of The Hotel Del Coronado.

The Guild Hotel, San Diego, A Tribute Portfolio Hotel is another downtown property that's winning over stylish travelers. It first opened in 1924 as a Navy and Army YMCA and has been transformed into a hip boutique hotel where the former basketball court is now a ballroom. The lobby features a bar, and guests can also look forward to sleek lounges where black-and-white movies play on screens in the background.

The third downtown hotel on our list is Hotel Republic San Diego, Autograph Collection, near the Gaslamp District and Little Italy and with a youthful, fun vibe. Guest rooms are bright and light, and the third-floor open-air restaurant and lounge, Topside Terrace Kitchen & Bar, is one of the most happening spots in town and known for its excellent cocktails.

Leaving the main city and looking to the areas surrounding it, [Hotel del Coronado](#), in Coronado, is getting heads to turn. Open since 1888 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1977, the legendary property is amid a \$400 million renovation that's debuting in phases. In August, the beachfront resort unveiled a new main entrance and lobby with 21 stained glass windows and updated Victorian-inspired decor. One of Hotel del's buildings, The Views, has also been redone with new guest rooms as has the Windsor Lawn, which overlooks the Pacific and has new turf, trees, and lighting.



A view onto the Alila Marea Beach Resort. Courtesy of The Alila Marea Beach Resort

In the North San Diego area, about 40 minutes from the city, [Alila Marea Beach Resort Encinitas](#) is a new beachfront resort that's been especially well received by couples seeking a romantic getaway.

Located in the iconic coastal town of Encinitas, it has a barefoot luxury feel and features soft color tones and natural elements such as wood and stone. An oceanfront pool, restaurant serving dishes with sustainably sourced ingredients, and spa—a signature part of the Alila brand—are among the amenities.

Last up, [L'Auberge Del Mar](#), a beachfront resort in the town of Del Mar, isn't new, but it just did complete a renovation with a design that combines traditional with

contemporary. The transformed lobby has a neutral color palette with tan, taupe, and ivory hues, and the 121 guest rooms have been upgraded with new furniture and carpets.

The highlight of the renovation is Adelaide, a new ocean-forward coastal restaurant that showcases dishes using sustainable seafood from the Pacific Ocean, from Baja to the North Salish Sea.

After putting together our roundup, we can't say which property is likely to be your favorite, but we can tell you this: whether you're traveling to San Diego for the first time or a repeat visitor, the hotels we've covered are all worth discovering, even if it's only for a drink.

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