



**A** Azure Palm Hot Springs offers a unique desert spa experience with mineral spring water pools.

# DESTINATION RELAXATION

Unwind apres awards season at these restorative locales **BY KATHY A. McDONALD**

**There's an outcome** everyone involved with awards season awaits: it's over and now it's time to relax. From south to north, here are five pampering California spots where rest and relaxation is integral to a visit.

## EXCLUSIVE RETREAT:

### RANCHO VALENCIA

#### RESORT & SPA

There's much to recommend at Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa in North San Diego County's Rancho Santa Fe: the quiet, tree-lined canyon location, the 49 elegant, hacienda-style casitas with indoor and outdoor fireplaces, the top-notch spa and outdoor hydrotherapy circuit, expertly maintained hard and clay tennis courts and the clubby Pony Room, serving California cuisine highlighting local ingredients. The 45-acre resort's citrus trees provide some of that bounty: fresh-squeezed juice arrives every morning to guest rooms. Casa Valencia, a private home transformed into a contemporary refuge, was added to the resort's offerings in early 2022. It has a chef's kitchen, pool and hot tub surrounded by luxurious landscaping.

*Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa, 5921 Valencia Circle, Rancho Santa Fe, ranchovalencia.com*

## RENOVATED GEM: CASA CODY

Step through Casa Cody's wrought iron gates under bright bougainvillea and discover estate-like grounds in the heart of Palm Springs' downtown-adjacent Historic Tennis Club district. Scenic views are towards the towering San Jacinto Mountains. A marriage of several attractively restored historic properties, each of the 30 rooms is unique, although comfortable beds and cool tile floors are found throughout. Two pools, a hot tub, navy blue canvas lounge chairs and breakfast await guests who may opt to never leave the palm and citrus tree-dotted hideaway.

*Casa Cody, 175 S. Cahuilla Road, Palm Springs, casacody.com*

## SOAK AWAY: AZURE PALM HOT SPRINGS

Hot mineral water is the star at the 2021-opened, low key Azure Palm Hot Springs hotel and spa on Miracle Hill in Desert Hot Springs (across the Coachella Valley from Palm Springs). Founded by Maria Lease, a former TV pro, the 40-room hotel and full service day spa features outdoor and covered mineral water in-ground jetted spa pools, a Himalayan salt

room for total decompression and a full-sized, mineral water-fed pool. The newly completed one-acre oasis adds five soaking tubs, lounging areas and a reflexology river where guests can walk in a flowing river with soft pebbles underfoot for a natural food massage. WiFi is available but there are no TVs in-room.

*Azure Palm Hot Springs, 67589 Hacienda Ave., Desert Hot Springs, azurepalmhotsprings.com*

## FAMILY FUN: VESPERA

### RESORT ON PISMO BEACH

It's mere steps to the sand at this family and pet friendly, cheerfully decorated oceanfront resort located on one of the Central Coast's longest flat beaches at 17 miles. The historic pier is also close to the two-year old, 124-room Vespera Resort at Pismo Beach. Walk, paddleboard, surf, play in the shallow waves and even dig for famous Pismo clams (fishing permit required). Park once and take the resort's free shuttle or stroll to most of Pismo's diversions and signature restaurants — Splash Café for clam chowder or Beachin' Biscuits for hearty Southern-style breakfasts. At night, Vespera provides guests star maps and mini telescopes for easy stargazing from one of the deck's many fire pits.

*Pismo Beach, 147 Stimson Ave., Pismo Beach, vesperapismo.com*

## SERENITY NOW:

### ALILA VENTANA BIG SUR

On a clear day, the views seem to go on forever from Alila Ventana Big Sur; other times, misty clouds surround the 59-room resort's 160-acre ridgetop location overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Since 2017, there have been major updates to the timeless, 47-year-old redwood-clad retreat, now a Hyatt managed property. Stays are now all-inclusive and the dramatic Sur House restaurant is open to resort guests only. Treatment rooms at the Alila spa open to ocean breezes and there are two pools, an infinity-edged hot tub overlooking a redwood forest and outdoor Japanese baths.

*Alila Ventana Big Sur, 48123 Highway 1, Big Sur, ventanabigsur.com*