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ESCAPE

Coastal California Gold List

BY SI SI PENALOZA

Coastal California has been synonymous with jetset style since Marilyn Monroe famously frolicked in the bubbly surf back in the 1950s. It was an iconic cultural moment for both Santa Monica Beach and the much-buzzed bikini. These days, the coast is a sultry playground of A-listers, pro athletes and the business elite — a veritable catwalk by the sea. From La Jolla in the south to Sausalito in the north, the coastline unspools to reveal a wonderland of hedonistic delights.

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Holding court on Sausalito's waterfront, **The Mansion at Casa Madrona Hotel & Spa** is the blushing debutant, having only opened this month in the most hotly-anticipated arrival in decades. The Bay Area rarely receives new inventory, let alone of this prime real estate and caliber of luxury. Legendary views are no doubt the star attraction, while haute private dining and a swoon-worthy spa play pivotal supporting roles.

There's such an intimate feeling here, you could easily mistake it for a sprawling private estate, one belonging to a fabulously wealthy family with a fondness for walk-in wine cellars. Staffers are beautifully blasé about how jaw-droppingly gorgeous the Mansion is; they know the real luxury lies in lazy, cashmere-swaddled afternoons by the fire. The best time to



The Mansion at Casa Madrona Hotel & Spa - Kitchen



The Mansion at Casa Madrona Hotel & Spa - Master view

book is June and July, when the Mansion is bathed in pearly, early morning skies and sultry late night luster. This is also peak preening season, when key San Francisco socialites drop in for cocktails.

So what's it like inside a private enclave designed to satiate the wealthy in the world's wealthiest nation? Utterly sublime, we must admit. Masterful renovation of its 11-room historic Mansion, featuring the 5,000 sq foot Alexandrite suite (a trophy pad to attract the high-rolling likes of everyone from Larry Ellison to Pharrell) hits all the right high notes. On a scale this intimate, a buyout for weddings or corporate retreats is optimized, giving you the run of posh hillside cottages and meeting spaces. The hotel caters to platinum card Crusoes searching for the real meaning of getting away from it all. It's perfect for escapists yearning to bask in the warm, lazy rhythm of the California coast.



The Mansion at Casa Madrona Hotel & Spa - Mansion exterior