

VOGUE

TRAVEL

The Santa Barbara Hotels That Will Leave You California Dreaming

BY ELISE TAYLOR AND LILAH RAMZI



Mediterranean style of Santa Barbara Damien VERRIER

There's no shortage of Elysian Santa Barbara hotels in both the seaside city and its idyllic surrounding areas of Montecito and the Santa Ynez wine country. The central California region, after all, has been a popular getaway since the early 1950s—its abundance of sunshine, Mediterranean climate, and sprawling Pacific Ocean views made it a magnet for well-to-do honeymooners, road-trippers, and celebrities during the booming post-war era. Soon, the area gained the nickname of the “American Riviera” (a nod to the French coastal region idealized by vacationers of every era, everywhere).

70 years later, and the area's popularity proves perennial: Santa Barbara is a must-stop for those cruising down the Pacific Coast Highway, Los Angeles weekenders, and, well, anyone who desires to live out a California fantasy. So, for those planning—or just daydreaming—about a trip, here are our favorite Santa Barbara hotels in the city proper and its surrounding areas

Hotel Californian



Visitors wanting the full Santa Barbara experience right by the famous Pier should consider Hotel Californian. Opened in 2017 in a prime location in the town's up-and-coming Funk Zone, which is buzzing with culinary and viniculture creativity, the Hotel Californian features a Spanish-style exterior in keeping with the rest of the historic town, but on the inside, acclaimed interior designer Martyn Lawrence Bullard dreamt up a Moorish design scheme that carried over into the hotel's spa, which is laid out like a hammam—the steam rooms are small but mighty and not to be missed. The property features 121 rooms with zellige tiles corridors connecting the amenities—a library bar, rooftop pool, and sunbathing deck (with views of the ocean), as well as several restaurants from the upscale Blackbird to the casual all-day café of Goat Tree. A tasting room, The Society, pours blends from the vineyard portfolio of Hotel Californian's famous wine-loving owner and financier Bill Foley. —L.R.

Amenities: Pool, restaurants, bar, spa, salon, gym, wine tasting room, vineyard tours

Address: 36 State Street, Santa Barbara, CA, 93101

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