

LOS ANGELES

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If You're In-the-Know in Newport, You're Probably a Regular at This Hotel

By [Nicolle Monico](#) Aug. 14th, 2017



Photos Credit: Island Hotel Newport Beach

Before the [Island Hotel Newport Beach](#) was what it is today, it was a Four Seasons property. Over the years, the city's finest came out to spend weekends lounging by the pool, dining on five-course meals and discussing their next vacations. It was a place where affluent locals went to hobnob with each other; a proverbial country club, without the membership fees.

Built in 1986 by the Irvine Company, the hotel was managed by the Four Seasons until 2005 when the company re-took management of the property. Following a rebranding and various renovations, the Island Hotel opened and left residents wondering if it would be able to fill the large shoes the Four Seasons had left behind. Twelve years later, and the hotel has maintained its esteemed reputation among *Newpsies*. It's still a place to see and be seen.



Upon arriving to the hotel, one thing you may notice is that the property is not overly-showy, it doesn't feel grandiose or extravagant. Like a true Southern Californian, the hotel leans towards the casual while still remaining chic and well-dressed. There's a hominess to it that makes you feel like you've stepped into the residence of a friend. Neutral color schemes, fresh florals and large pieces of hanging art create an ambiance that is both inviting and classy.

The hotel features 295 guestrooms and suites mixed between eight room categories, the largest of which—the Lido and Newport Flats along with the Catalina & Governor's Suites—range in size between 1,305 to 1,470 square feet. All accommodations come with custom-designed mattresses, goose down duvets and pillows, marble bathrooms, signature bathrobes and Keurig coffee makers.



Whether you choose the first-tier suites or the expansive Governor's Suite, you don't have to worry about lack of space. The residential-style retreats are large enough to host friends and family inside without feeling too cramped. They are also great for those with children since they all come with sleeper sofas and separated bedrooms. The rooms also come with panoramic views of either Newport Back Bay or the coast along

with living and dining areas, mini refrigerators, a service pantry and two step-out balconies.

Guests also have the option of booking Club rooms which gives them access to the private Island Club on the 20th floor of the property. Inside, guests are treated to a light continental-style breakfast, evening snacks, beer and wine during the nightly Wine Down hour, an iMac workstation and a dedicated concierge. Club members also receive curbside check-in and complimentary access to the spa's relaxation lounge and eucalyptus steam room.



Around the hotel, other amenities include a resort-style pool, spa, fitness center, lounge, quick-stop market, 23,000-square feet of event space and the Oak Grill restaurant. The latter, the hotel's main eatery, is helmed by Chef Peter Lai and serves Californian fare. While the inside dining room is beautifully-decorated, the best place to enjoy a meal here is on its outdoor patio. Lit by a bevy of string lights, the expansive deck features two areas for dining, both weaving their way through a garden of lush trees and florals. Adding to the romance of the space is the (almost) nightly live music that takes place on the lower level of the deck.



As a nod to the chef and further affirmation of the hotel's prestige, the restaurant is regularly visited by locals—the true litmus test of any eatery. While there, we witnessed

a couple on their first date, which could seem out of place for a restaurant within a hotel, but the Oak Grill isn't your average in-house dining venue. People go to there specifically to impress their guests, to mingle over cocktails with Newport's most notable residents and to enjoy mouth-wateringly good cuisine.

Among the menu's best dishes are the calamari frito misto, tuna poke and the roasted Chilean sea bass which comes with creamy orzo risotto, asparagus, fennel, arugula and lemon dill dressing. You'll most likely find yourself eating this entrée slowly so that it never ends. It's the kind of dish that makes you fall in love with food all over again.



When it comes time to pamper yourself, book a treatment at the hotel's spa. Featuring all-natural and paraben-free products as well as specialty therapies such as the Lomi Lomi healing massage and the Papaya Purée Body Polish, it's a great place to reset before heading back home. The spa also boasts a massage for frequent sojourners. The Travel Recovery treatment is a 60- or 90-minute session which utilizes warming and cooling oils to promote circulation and soothe body aches.

If you're in need of retail therapy, head to Fashion Island—Orange County's shopping destination for all things luxury—located a short five-minute drive from the property. For an afternoon on the water, head to [Bayside Marina](#) and rent a motor boat for the afternoon or try out other water activities such as kayaking, SUP, canoeing or sailing. The hotel's concierge can easily arrange this for you. Wherever your day leads you, be sure to end your evenings at Aqua Lounge, the hotel's bar. The venue turns into a nightclub after hours with a spinning DJ and a who's who of locals showing up in droves to party the night away. It's a scene that shouldn't be missed.