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Welcome to Fantasy Island!

Still recovering from that holiday hangover? Recover, Relax, and Recharge in Newport Beach. Just an hour flight from the Bay Area you can soak up the sun on pristine beaches, enjoy world-class shopping, and indulge in championship golf.

DAY 1 • The beauty of a Newport Beach getaway is that before you know it, you've touched down in heaven. Just minutes away from John Wayne Airport, the Island Hotel is a one-minute walk to the boutiques and hip restaurants at Newport Beach's famed Fashion Island. No matter what time of day you arrive, an impressive lineup of rare and exotic cars greets you at the valet. If you can pull yourself away from gazing at the collection, check-in is a breeze.

After an 18-month renovation, the hotel's new look is inspired by the prestige and appeal of Newport Beach, with modern splashes of color that create a coastal ambiance that's casual, elegant, and fun. As you make your way to the elevators, it's impossible not to notice the sensual yet upbeat mood lighting exuding the hotel's Aqua Lounge. Just let those bags head up to the room without you and stop in for tableside mixology, freshly squeezed juices, craft cocktails, shareable bites, and a late night menu. At select times, the entertainment scene can be vibrant with live DJs, pop-up performances, and special events, making this lounge all the more enticing.

Eventually, you may get hungry. Exclusive to the Island Hotel, the Oak Grill is an airy, light-filled new restaurant with more than 2,000 square feet of patio for *al fresco* dining. The talented Chef Marc Johnson is both attractive and charming. His contemporary California menu is equally striking with California cuisine and influences from around the globe complemented by a vast selection of curated wines, beers, and spirits. Johnson says this month's must-have dish is the Hiramasa ➡





with tempura avocado and winter citrus. “It’s best paired with Rombauer Chardonnay,” he recommends. “After dinner, you must try the cocktail of the New Year called “The Lady in Red” at our Aqua Lounge. You’ll have to stop by to find out what’s in it.”

Luckily for guests, when it’s time for bed, one of the most delightful places to rest your head in Southern California is just upstairs. All 292 guest rooms and suites have recently been reinvigorated and refurbished to reflect the

chic coastal lifestyle and natural vibrancy of Newport Beach. This includes lively pops of new color, including ocean-inspired aqua, brilliant sunset orange, coral, lilac, and sage. Ranging in size from 1,305 to 1,470 square feet, the Catalina & Governor’s Suites offer residential touches that deliver the comforts of home, plus panoramic coastal or Newport Back Bay views. Each features a full-size living and dining area with service pantry and two step-out balconies. The timing for the hotel’s transformation is apropos as this year the hotel celebrates a 10-year milestone.

DAY 2 • The next morning your toughest decision: shopping or r&c? Should you feel supercharged, the Fitness Center is open daily and is adjacent to the outdoor pool. Fitness professionals are available by appointment for group programs and individual personal training sessions. Jogging maps are available at the Concierge desk and offer varying degrees of difficulty with routes through nearby neighborhoods, beaches, and parklands.

Ready to shop for yourself for the first time in months? The aforementioned Fashion Island is Newport Beach’s premier coastal shopping destination, featuring over 200 specialty boutiques, world-class department stores and a variety of fine dining and alfresco restaurants and cafes. Be careful, as the place is dangerously full of opportunities to overwhelm your credit cards. Make it out relatively unscathed? Then reward yourself with pampering back at the hotel.

The Spa at the Island Hotel invites guests to wind down, relax, and reconnect. Located below ground, it’s an oasis of privacy and calm as select guests in comfy robes enjoy complimentary waters and fruits, a shower with a vanity area, and a eucalyptus steam room. Spa Director Holly Monson says, “2016 is all about personalization in terms of wellness, and the Island Spa is the place to experience it at its best.” Monson recommends focusing on hydration and exfoliation. “On day one of your stay, try the Winter Roses Scrub & Massage, a full-body exfoliation and aromatherapy massage using the finest elixirs,” she advises. “On day two, go for the mineral mint body wrap followed by a customized facial. After time in the eucalyptus steam room and a dip in the 81 degree pool, you’ll never sleep better.”

In the morning, enjoy a variety of nearby activities such as Crystal Cove beach outings, hiking, mountain biking, surfing, kayaking, and paddle boarding along the coast. Or, why not just sleep in for the first time in months? zzz ♦

—CORRINE E. MEHIGAN

