

Malibu Beach Inn

CARBON BEACH

The Great Escape

The inn on Carbon Beach.

by Matt Tyrnauer

January 2008



A view from the Malibu Beach Inn terrace. *Photograph by Tim Street-Porter.*

David Geffen has pushed through a lot of tough projects in his time, but perhaps none tougher than his new, 47-room luxury hotel on Malibu's Carbon Beach. Between local building codes, semi-annual wildfires, and the tetchy California Coastal Commission, it would take a Hollywood mogul with billions to accomplish what had always been considered the impossible: a first-class resort on the water in L.A.'s fashionable beach enclave. **The Malibu Beach Inn**, opening after a \$10 million renovation of an older, less glamorous place, adheres to Geffen's vision for a small resort that would be like an extension of a home on Carbon Beach. (Geffen's own home, formerly the Doris Day house, is not far away.) The hotel is infused with a California casualness and "a palette that lets the Pacific Ocean provide the drama," according to Alan Goldschneider, the managing director. Shades of sand and brown wenge wood dominate, and the elegant, window-lined corridors recall old steamships. A beach club is attached to the property; membership is \$6,000 a year per person and is restricted to fewer than 100. There is already a waiting list. Once upon a time, the unofficial town motto of this strip of coast was "Welcome to Malibu, now go home." Some versions were less polite. The city itself—which broke off from L.A. in 1991—seemed to live up to its xenophobic reputation. There were few restaurants and motels, a few more liquor stores, and a Hughes Market where you could see

Johnny Carson and Barbra Streisand in the same checkout line. That was part of the charm, which was destined to become a thing of the past. Now, finally, for a few hundred dollars a night—instead of a few million in escrow—virtually anyone can be swaddled in luxury and have an exclusive Malibu view.

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