

Robb Report

# LUXURY RESORTS

PREMIERE ISSUE

THE 100 BEST  
PLACES TO STAY IN 2006

THE MOST EXCLUSIVE ACCOMMODATIONS IN ANGUILLA \* ASPEN \* COSTA RICA  
LAS VEGAS \* LOS CABOS \* MALDIVES \* MARBELLA \* MARRAKECH \* MARTINIQUE  
PORTOFINO \* SANTA BARBARA \* SANTORINI \* ST. MORITZ \* TANZANIA & MORE

SUMMER 2006



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## In Plein View

No matter which direction you are driving along the Pacific Coast Highway, Montage Resort & Spa is on the right side—or, at least, the correct side—of the road. The Laguna Beach property is one of the few resorts in Southern California that actually is adjacent to, instead of across the street from, the beach. And the beach Montage overlooks is not a rocky patch of shore, but rather a long stretch of sand populated by sunbathers, skim boarders, shell seekers, body surfers, and castle builders.

Montage guests access the beach via paths that lead along a grassy clifftop park from the resort's shingle-and-stone main lodge. The five-story structure, which houses the majority of Montage's 262 guest rooms, is a grand example of California Craftsman architecture, a style that reached its peak at about the same time that Laguna Beach evolved as an artists' colony in the early 1900s. The city today is home to several galleries and annual art fairs, and Montage helps continue the century-long tradition

with a collection that features plein-air oil paintings by William Wendt and Edgar Payne.

Vintage photographs of California beach scenes, as well as sketches by William Morris (considered the founder of the Arts and Crafts movement, from which Craftsman architecture developed), adorn the walls of Montage's 20,000-square-foot spa. Treatments at the seaside facility include the Laguna Beach Kur, which consists of a warm soak in mustard seed followed by a wrap in sheets that have been dipped in ice water—a detoxification therapy first practiced in 18th-century Italy. From the spa, paths lead to the resort's glittering tile pool and to Studio restaurant, where executive chef James Boyce prepares some of Southern California's most compelling cuisine, and window-front seats offer up-close views of the beach.

Montage Resort & Spa, 866.271.6953, 888.715.6700,  
www.montagelagunabeach.com

### LOCATION

Directly above a sandy cove in Laguna Beach, Calif., between Los Angeles and San Diego.

### ACCOMMODATIONS

The Craftsman-style main lodge and several cliff-top cottages house 211 rooms and 51 suites, all with ocean views.

### RECREATION

Swimming and exploring tide pools on the beach below the resort, kayaking and fishing offshore, touring the art galleries of Laguna Beach, and enjoying scalp therapy, sea-salt scrubs, and a range of other treatments at the resort's spa.

### DINING

If Michelin awarded stars in Southern California, Studio, the resort's contemporary American restaurant headed by executive chef James Boyce, would possess at least one. Dining is more casual, although no less delightful, at the Loft in the main lodge, where *fromage maître d'* Starr Cornwall recommends goudas, bries, and other fine cheeses.

### WORTHY DIVERSION

During the summer racing season, head 50 miles south to the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club to wager on horses by the sea.

### RATES

From \$595 for a guest room in the main lodge to \$5,900 for a four-bedroom bungalow above the beach.

