

# HILUXURY

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A Knight in Color

SIR ANTHONY  
HOPKINS

WAY OF TEA  
Art Academy Exhibit

CIA CRASH COURSE  
In Napa

BEACH TREE'S  
Travel-Inspired  
Menu Shines

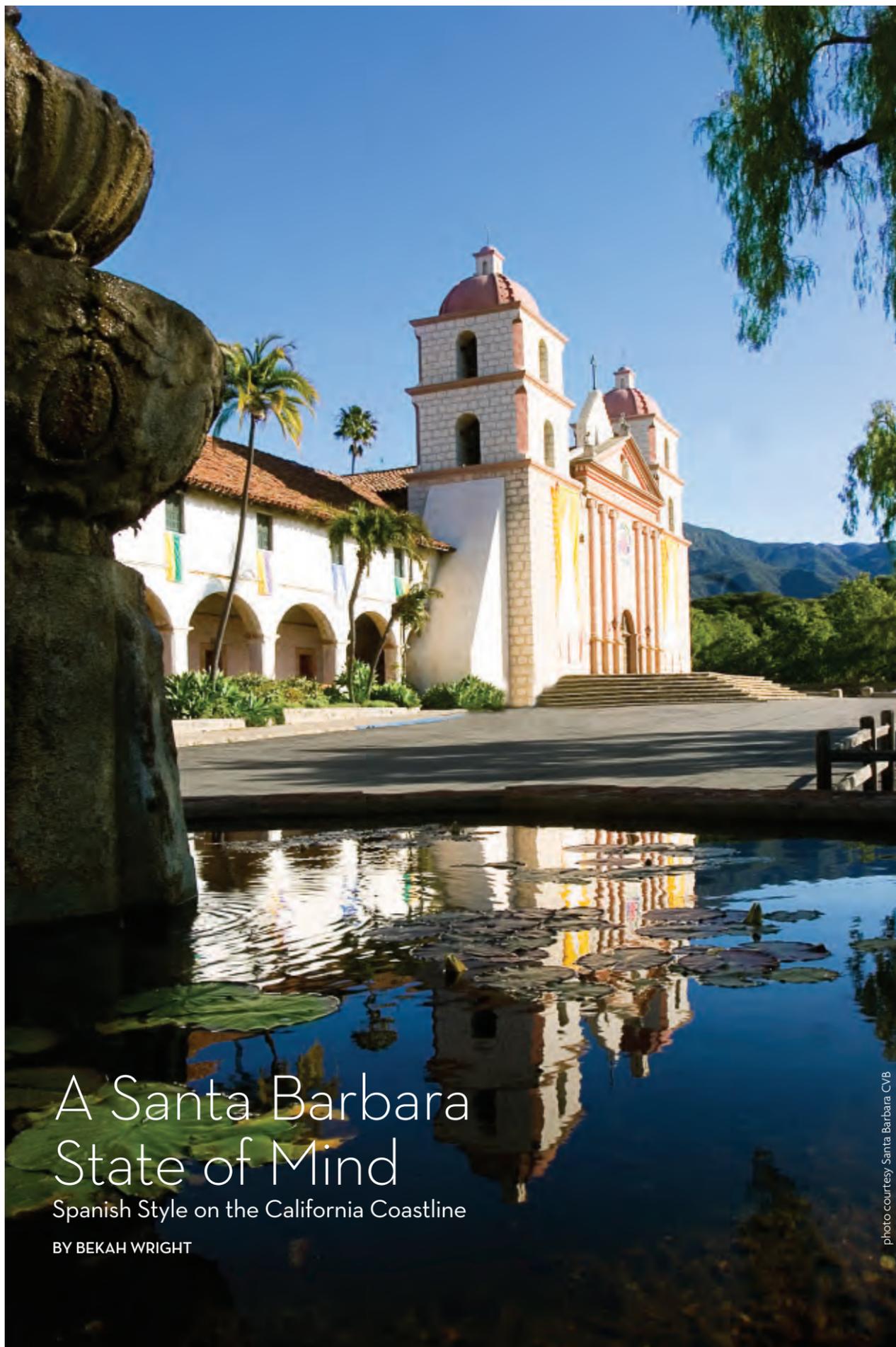
BENTLEY GT  
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AUTUMNAL  
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TEE OFF  
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# A Santa Barbara State of Mind

Spanish Style on the California Coastline

BY BEKAH WRIGHT

photo courtesy Santa Barbara CVB



photo by J. Sinclair courtesy Santa Barbara CVB

**Opposite page:** The Santa Barbara Mission is a gracious landmark. **Above:** Quiet moments on Butterfly Beach.

**ROUND A CERTAIN CURVE ON HIGHWAY 101** and suddenly dramatic cliffs hug a stretch of beach slicked by the Pacific Ocean. With beauty such as this, it's easy to understand how Santa Barbara gained the moniker "The American Riviera." Why leave Hawai'i's paradise for another seaside locale? Those who have can affirm that beyond the breathtaking landscape is a town ripe with distinctive accommodations, diverse cuisine, endless shopping and a cultural scene that will put visitors in a Santa Barbara state of mind.

## ON THE BEACH

The beachside Coral Casino Beach and Cabana Club is a private membership club built in 1937 that boasts a 50-meter pool and rows of private cabanas facing the Pacific. Perhaps no place embodies classic California than the power-lunching social set who hunker down at the Coral Café and Bar. Those slowing to the sunset pace scuttle up to Tydes for Mediterranean fare prepared by all-star chef Nick Barainca. When guests aren't whiling away the hours on the putting green, croquet lawn or tennis court, they can endure an avocado-citrus body wrap at The Spa. A moonlit walk on the beach is the perfect way to end any day.

Golf fans itching to hit Santa Barbara's fairways have an array of offerings. The 18-hole, Pacific Ocean skirting championship course

at The Sandpiper Golf Course is austere; a different vista can be found at Rancho San Marcos Golf Course, where the Robert Trent Jones, Jr.-designed 18-hole championship course is set along the San Marcos Stagecoach Trail and spotlights Lake Cachuma, the Santa Ynez River and Santa Ynez Mountains. Max Behr's private Montecito Country Club is another stunner.

As night falls, travelers can revel in the jasmine-tinged air with a walk to Bella Vista Restaurant. Al fresco dining comes in the form of a retractable glass ceiling, with trickling fountains and a double-sided fireplace (and heated floors) that spill onto a terrace that's just right for lingering over a meal of regional cuisine prepared by executive chef Allesandro Cartumini. Top off the evening with a nightcap at the Biltmore's sleek Ty Lounge. Back at a cottage suite, a fire awaits and heavenly scented bedding beckons. Signaling the end of the day: the whistle of the Coast Starlight train as it makes its nightly journey.

With Butterfly Beach at its front door and the Santa Ynez Mountains serving as a backdrop, bunk down at the Four Seasons Resort The Biltmore Santa Barbara. The 80-year-old Spanish Colonial resort counts among its numerous guestrooms 12 cottages, which help invoke "old California" romance. Graceful fountains, ornamental ironwork, gas lanterns and brick walkways also meander through the lushly landscaped 20-acre property.



photos courtesy San Ysidro Ranch



**Opposite page:** The Stonehouse's menu highlights the restaurant's vegetable garden.  
**Above:** The Lily Pond at San Ysidro Ranch.

**HILLSIDE ROMANCE**

Tucked away in the Santa Barbara enclave of Montecito is a sweet set of 41 cottages with quite a history—San Ysidro Ranch. Over the years, many a luminary has driven up SYR's brick drive, among them, honeymooners Jacqueline and John F. Kennedy.

Getting unpacked may be delayed as SYR's multitude of gardens call for exploring. Roses scent the air as visitors wander up to a pergola where a statue of Saint Ysidro keeps watch over the grounds. A bit farther is the vegetable garden with its fig and citrus trees. Though it may be hard to tear the senses away from nature's bounty, by merely turning around and facing the opposite direction, it's possible to take in views of the ocean.

Equally as inviting as the grounds are the accommodations. Each

cottage has been lovingly decorated by the owners. That being said, "ownership" is given over to guests (and their pets) during a stay, with luscious beds that call for post-wine tasting afternoon naps and outdoor areas that teem with the sounds of a stream.

The resort's two restaurants are nothing short of a culinary experience. The Stonehouse as well as Plow and Angel are both helmed by executive chef Jamie West. At The Stonehouse, West serves up dishes complemented by ingredients from the vegetable garden, like the "Parmesan Crusted Halibut" accompanied by gnocchetti, artichoke, confit tomatoes, olives and pesto. Upscale comfort food takes center stage at the Plow and Angel. Not to be missed—the Angus burger. A romantic, private dinner for two can be had fireside in the historic Old Adobe House built in 1825.

Those guests seeking recreation can head up toward SYR's swimming pool. On the way to the lounging deck there's an area for playing horseshoes, bocce ball and croquet. If the urge to golf is piqued, guests can use the same golf courses as those at The Biltmore, a sister property to SYR. Workout buffs can stop at the open-air pagoda to hop on an elliptical. Perhaps a more inviting option are the 500-acre property's 17 miles of hiking trails. Or, better yet, a precursor to a nap by way of an in-room spa service.

**ABOUT TOWN**

A great way to catch sunrise is via the three-mile bike path that stretches along the shore. Kick things off at East Beach Grill with a breakfast of blueberry wheat germ pancakes. Also near the waterfront

is The Funk Zone. Once a 19th century industrial and manufacturing hub, the facility now houses studios and galleries of local artisans from glassblowers to surfboard shapers.

Stop by Segway of Santa Barbara to schedule a sunset tour for watching surfers catch their last waves of the day from Leadbetter Beach. While in the neighborhood, pay a visit to the Urban Wine Trail, where 12 local wineries offer tastings of wine produced in Santa Barbara County.

Saturday means it's time to head to Santa Barbara Harbor to attend the Fisherman's Market, where the day's catch can be bought directly off the boat. To boot, a farmers market downtown draws quite the who's who. Grab a coffee from Our Daily Bread bakery, then pop into C'est Cheese to purchase Midnight Moon goat cheese



**Above and Top left:** Fresh seafood and produce are just two reasons Santa Barbara is a foodie's dream. **Bottom:** Art, in all its hues and forms, abounds in this seaside city dubbed "The American Riviera."

before scouring stands of organic fruits and vegetables. A definite for dessert: cupcakes from Crusheakes.

Strolling through downtown Santa Barbara is a pastime in itself. Perfect for architecture and shopping buffs is the self-guided, 12-block Red Tile Walking Tour of historic landmarks. The tour begins at the Spanish-Moorish style Santa Barbara County Courthouse, where a climb to the top of the 85-foot tall "El Mirador" clock tower provides 360-degree views of the city, including that of the sunken gardens below. A portion of the route is on State Street, famous for its outstanding boutiques, galleries and home décor shops. A couple to keep on the radar: K. Frank and Diani.

Another shopping Mecca is Montecito's Coast Village Road. Stop here en route to Lotusland, 37-acres of botanical gardens that were lovingly nurtured by Madame Ganna Walska. Advance reservations are required and guided tours are available.

**AFTER DARK**

Santa Barbara nightlife doesn't wait for the weekend to kick into

high gear. Area restaurants are at the ready to fuel diners for evenings chock-full of entertainment. Some to catch include Julienne, Cadiz, Tupelo Junction Café and Wine Cask. Post-dinner, catch a show.

On Thursdays, State Street's Cultural Arts District corridor's museums and galleries open their doors to the public for "First Thursdays," a free, monthly event. Part of the evening, the Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum's after hours "Forum Lounge" is a must. During summer months, Chase Palm Park hosts free Thursday night concerts. Mixing martinis and art are Santa Barbara Museum of Art's "Nights," held five times a year from May to September.

A hot spot for year-round performances is the restored Granada Theatre, home to The Santa Barbara Center for the Performing Arts (SBCPA). Here, theatergoers can take in performances of the Santa Barbara Symphony, State Street Ballet, Opera Santa Barbara and international touring groups.

Then again, an evening back at accommodations sitting outside and soaking in the night sky may be all that's required for getting in a Santa Barbara state of mind. ♦

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