

# TRAVEL ISSUE

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# SOUTHLAND

# GOLF

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GOLF AND LIFESTYLE

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## ISLAND HOPPING

**SURF AND TURF MIX BEAUTIFULLY  
DURING VISITS TO HAWAII, COASTAL  
CANADA, THE CARIBBEAN AND  
THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

\* **MAKAI GOLF  
CLUB IN KAUAI**  
IS ONE OF  
MANY ISLAND  
STUNNERS.

**GOING TO EXTREMES (AND HOW!) IN SOUTH AFRICA**

# NATURAL BEAUTIES

IF **CARMEL** IS IN YOUR TRAVEL PLANS, TWO RESORT OPTIONS TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THE RUSTIC REGION'S CHARM AND GOOD LOOKS.  
BY AL PETERSEN

**AT ONLY 6,115 YARDS** from the tips, the golf course at Carmel Valley Ranch sure takes up a lot of space.

That's because the only Pete Dye layout in Northern California touches nearly every edge and corner of the 500 acres at the resort, a bucolic and sprawling location in the Santa Lucia Mountains just inland from Carmel-by-the-Sea.

Although only 8 miles from the ocean and the exit to 17 Mile Drive, Carmel Valley Ranch has a distinct rural feel enhanced by its bungalows, hiking trails, vegetable gardens, a vineyard and rustic fairways. Perhaps the mellow vibe had a calming effect on Dye, the course designer known for tough layouts, because many of the diabolical touches he's known for don't pop up at Carmel Valley Ranch.



■ CARMEL VALLEY RANCH IS VAST YET COMFORTABLE.





■ QUAIL LODGE HAS BUCOLIC GOLF AND COZY ROOMS.



"There are a few railroad ties by water features and some large bunker complexes," said head pro Brant Wilson, "but generally it's a fun and scenic trip around the golf course."

Most of the fun, in terms of elevation drops and strategy, comes on the back nine, which starts with a gentle rise from the more tranquil front side and includes the course's two most dynamic holes – the 426-yard, par-4 11th and the 141-yard, par-3 13th. Both offer stunning views of the surrounding valley and, because of the elevated tee boxes, a chance for your ball to soar for several seconds.

Other holes skirt vineyards, lavender fields, ponds and oak groves, and sharing the layout with deer and wild turkey is par for

## CHECK'EM OUT

**Carmel Valley Ranch**  
Carmel

[carmelvalleyranch.com](http://carmelvalleyranch.com)

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**Quail Lodge**

Carmel

[quailodge.com](http://quailodge.com)

the course, which underwent a major renovation project eight years ago.

The course's good looks blend in beautifully with Carmel Valley Ranch's lodging options that include eight suite styles in three neighborhoods, all providing glimpses of the valley, bluffs or course. All are just up the hill from the resort's restaurant headed by executive chef Tim Wood, whose love for food and land is evidenced by

the resort's on-site organic garden. Many of the fruits and vegetables in dishes are grown a few hundred yards from the kitchen, and a salt house and group of Italian beehives add to the garden's eclectic appeal.

"This is another way we can get people excited about coming to the resort," said organic gardener Mark Marino. "Combined with world-class golf, an awesome spa, tennis and salt-water pools, this is just something that we can do to set ourselves apart from the Pebble Beaches of the world and, in my opinion, be even better."

Getting better was the plan just down the road at Quail Lodge when the resort closed in 2009 and reopened in March 2013 as a sleeker and more-affordable version of its former self.

The lodge, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, has 93 guestrooms that include garden suites, deluxe suites and fairway villas in historic California Ranch motifs. Many are set up for multiple-night stays, and the business motivation behind the \$28 million renovation was to attract families and casual travelers who don't require services most often associated with

ritzy resorts.

"We found in Carmel that there are a lot of high, high-end hotels and lots of lower-end hotels but there wasn't much in the moderately priced category," said Max Schroeder, Quail Lodge's director of sales and marketing. "We want to become known as the best value on the Monterey Peninsula, offering the best quality product at an affordable price. So far, the result has been very positive."

A renovation project also is planned in October at Quail Lodge Golf Club, whose clubhouse is about a half mile from the lodge but with fairways that can be seen from some rooms. The 6,500-yard course that opened in 1964 and was designed by Robert Muir Graves is a good layout for walking because of its old-school format and soft fairways that cater to people who have trouble with tight lies.

"If you're a good golfer you're going to be challenged," said director of instruction Katherine Marren, "but if you're a person who doesn't play a lot you're still going to love the course because of how pretty it is."

That's especially true on the course's five par-3s that Marren calls "the best on the Monterey Peninsula." And with the Carmel River and several water features adding to the scenery and challenge, the course is a good blend of golf and nature.

"It's a fun course, and it's really a great course to walk," Marren said. "Going in and out of the river and down in the valley makes for interesting holes, and the conditions are always immaculate. Most golfers who play here love it." **SG**