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Best of the East Bay 2016: Travel

Summer fun at Heavenly Mountain Resort; a local Fourth of July festival.

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California Park: Yosemite

Perennial Winner Iconic Yosemite recently celebrated its 125th birthday and looks as stunning as it did when John Muir first laid eyes on it. Explore the thundering waterfalls (try Nevada or Vernal Falls in late summer) and epic hiking. (The 11.5-mile Yosemite Valley Loop Trail is a must.) In-the-know travelers are heading to Rush Creek Lodge—the area’s first new lodging in more than 25 years. Cap off a day at South Gate Brewing Company for the region’s best pulled pork sandwich. nps.gov/yose, rushcreeklodge.com, southgatebrewco.com. —*Michele Bigley*

Destination for the Fourth of July: Clayton

The best thing about Clayton’s Fourth of July Parade is that it’s full of kiddos decked out in red, white, and blue—and stars and stripes—carrying flags, balloons, and anything else that ups the festive flavor of this patriotic parade. My son has walked, ridden a trike and a two-wheeler, and even rollerbladed down Clayton’s Main Street—always cheered on by the crowds out to see this celebration. Don’t miss the 10

a.m. start. For information call (925) 673-7300, or go to ci.clayton.ca.us.—**Susan Safipour**



Arrive, Palm Springs // by Jaime Kowal

Desert Escape: Palm Springs

Sun seekers' favorite escape just got a little cooler. The new Uptown Design District's Arrive hotel caters to those eager to laze on poolside daybeds and sip cold-pressed juice. Plus, the on-site restaurant Reservoir serves mean wagyu sliders. Nearby, V Palm Springs offers mountain-facing hammocks around the pool, and cocktails paired with green curry guacamole at its Elixir Pool Bar and Grill. Up the street, the team behind the beloved brunch hang Cheeky's Palm Springs has opened Mr. Lyons Steakhouse.

visitpalmsprings.com, arrivehotels.com, vpalmsprings.com, cheekysps.com, mrlyonsps.com. —**M.B.**

Wine Country Resort: Silverado Resort and Spa

After 49 years in business, Napa Valley's Silverado Resort and Spa continues to add reasons to stay for a long weekend. Its latest endeavor, the new Silverado Market and Bakery, lets you sink your teeth into sweet treats from Silverado's pastry chefs—plus Napa Valley mainstays Bouchon and Model bakeries—as well as savor locally crafted wine, beer, cheese, and charcuterie. *1600 Atlas Peak Rd., Napa, (707) 257-0200, silveradoresort.com.* —**Jessie Fetterling**

Hawaiian Island Resort: Four Seasons Resort Maui

Four Seasons Resort Maui was pretty close to perfect when it opened in Wailea 26 years ago. Since then, the five-diamond resort has added brilliant flourishes, including updating its spa and salon to world-class levels. More recent fine-tuning, such as letting guests reserve the Serenity Pool for private nighttime swimming and having an executive producer of *Modern Family* create a hilarious guide to the hotel's family activities, continues to redefine perfection. *3900 Wailea Alanui Dr., Wailea, Maui, Hawaii, (808) 874-8000, fourseasons.com/maui.* —**Peter Crooks**

NorCal Beach: Muir Beach

Although smaller than Stinson Beach to the north, Muir Beach provides a less touristy escape and some of the area's best hiking trails. For breathtaking views, try the Coastal Trail to the south, or the newly restored Dias Ridge Trail to the east, a roughly six-mile loop that offers similar vistas but also passes former dairy ranches while ascending about 700 feet. After a day's hike, grab a pint and check out the international currency pinned to the ceiling at Pelican Inn. *nps.gov/goga/planyourvisit/muirbeach.htm, pelicaninn.com.* —**J.F.**

Golf Destination: Quail Lodge and Golf Club

Editor Pick The lodge at this slice of golf heaven has a nine-hole putting course, spacious bungalow suites, and a delightful pool—and we go here every chance we get. Next door is the championship course, with lush fairways, manicured greens, and enough white sand



Courtesy of Quail Lodge and Golf Club

bunkers and lakes to make it interesting. The course is walkable yet challenging, and with Carmel Valley's sunny skies and mild weather, it's paradise 365 days a year. 8205 Valley Greens Dr., Carmel, (831) 624-2888, quailodge.com. —S.S.

Family Destination Resort: Great Wolf Lodge

Editor Pick the new kid Roughly 15 minutes from Disneyland, the new Great Wolf Lodge offers bunk bed nooks for the kiddos and free activities, most notably the 84-degree indoor water park's four-story waterslide, 40-foot spinning drop slide, and pools for all ages. Did

we mention the arcade, an XD theater, a kids' spa featuring an ice cream-themed manicure, and seven eateries ranging from pizza to wood-fired steaks? 12681 Harbor Blvd., Garden Grove, (714) 530-9653, greatwolf.com/southern-california. —M.B.

NorCal Hotel: Lafayette Park Hotel and Spa

Reader's Quote "I've interacted with [Lafayette Park Hotel and Spa] in a number of ways—from holding a fundraising event there, to entertaining in The Park Bistro and Bar, to using the spa," says Lafayette's Kathy Merchant. "In every capacity, the staff has been superlative." Lafayette, lafayetteparkhotel.com.



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Scenic Drive: Pacific Coast Highway/Highway 1

Big number: 655.8 Number of miles that Highway 1 winds its way along the California coast, including the cliff-hugging 120 miles from Morro Bay to Carmel-by-the-Sea. —**J.F.**



Courtesy of Heavenly Mountain Resort

Long Story Short: Alpine Adventure Park Tahoe Ski Resort: Heavenly Mountain Resort

After a brilliant ski season, Heavenly Mountain Resort promises an even more divine summer. In June, the South Lake Tahoe destination unleashed the new Epic Discovery recreation area on Adventure Peak. Hitch a ride up the 2.4-mile gondola to this new complex, which features a 3,300-foot-long zipline, canopy tours through the pines with unparalleled Lake Tahoe vistas, a rock climbing wall, and a kids' ropes course.

But the pinnacle of the new project is the Ridge Rider Mountain Coaster. Riders zip along a track in individual sleds, speeding down an exhilarating 300-foot vertical drop through rock formations and alpine forest.

For food and entertainment, head to Heavenly Village, which hosts free music performances on summer weekends. For a bite, check out The Loft, a new dinner theater that specializes in hearty pastas and magic shows.