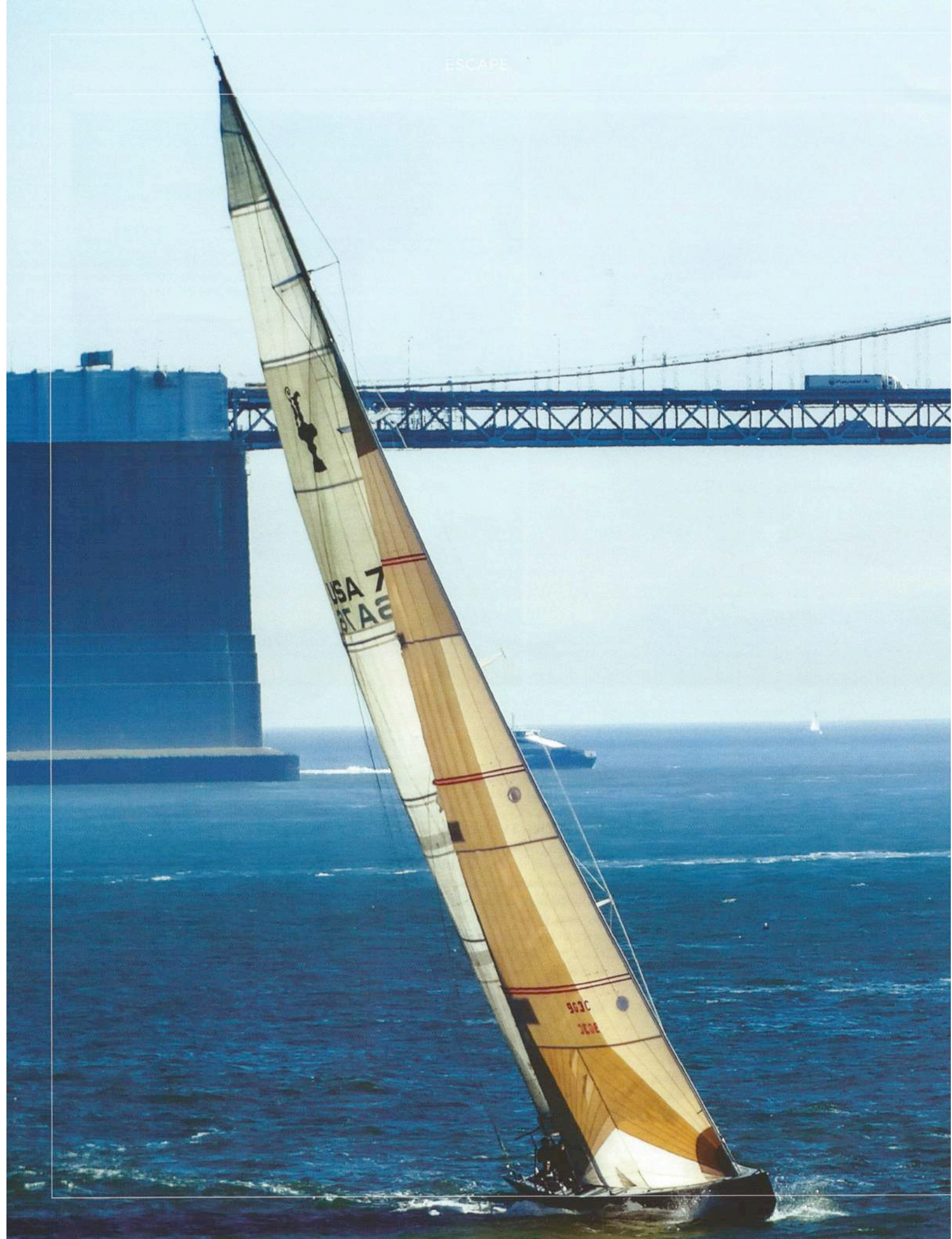
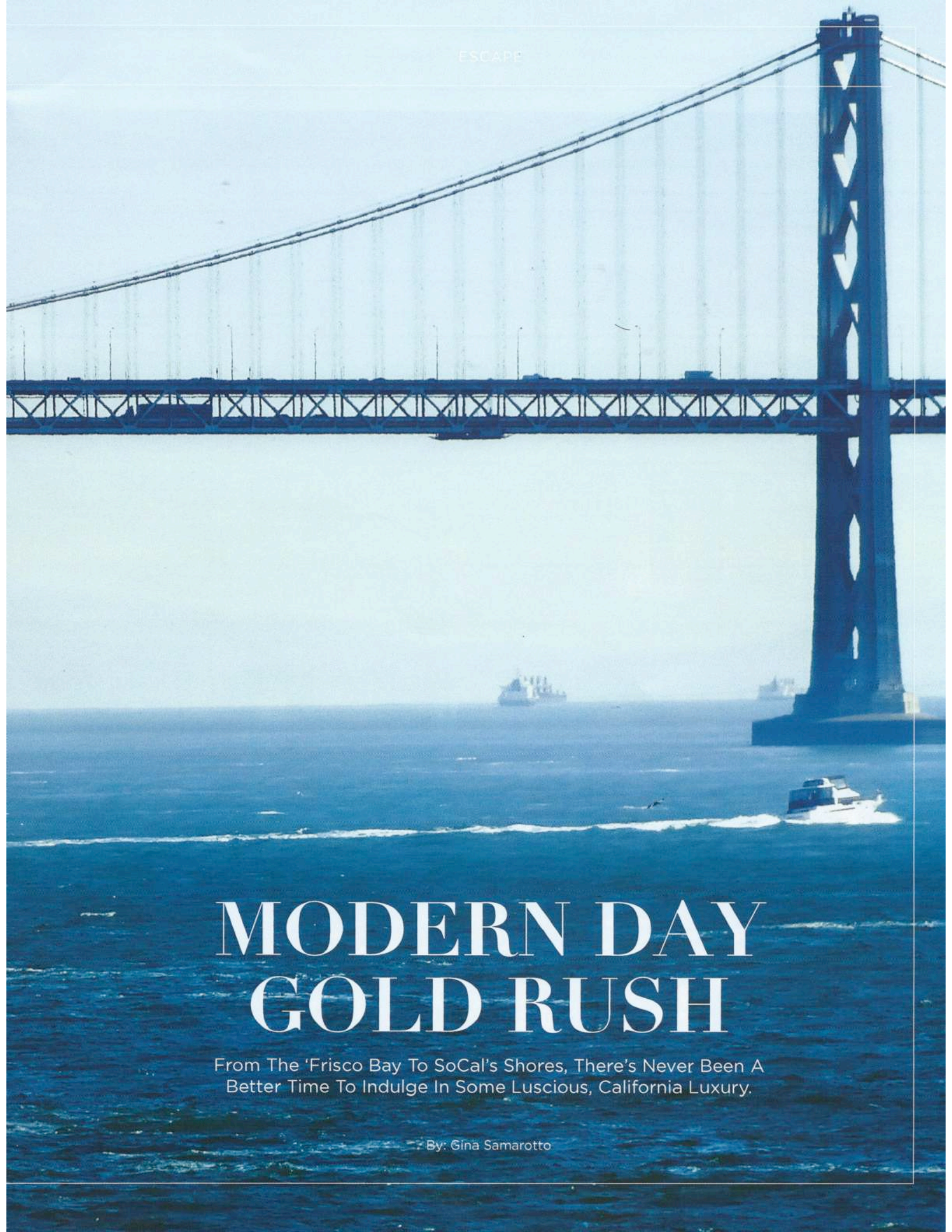


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MODERN DAY GOLD RUSH

From The 'Frisco Bay To SoCal's Shores, There's Never Been A Better Time To Indulge In Some Luscious, California Luxury.

By: Gina Samarotto



Montage Exterior, courtesy of the Montage



Montage Beverly Hills Dinner, photo by Gina Samarotto



Montage Rolls, photo by Gina Samarotto

In California, where you can find grapevines as readily as Ivy (The Ivy, that is...), there is never a shortage of indulgent offerings. From the laid back charm of Fisherman's Wharf to Malibu's sun-kissed allure, to Beverly Hills where all that glitters truly is gold, California is a place that is more than just a destination, it's a lifestyle. Here we offer just a few of our favorite samplings from the America's Golden State.

In Beverly Hills over the top superlative luxury and show stopping opulence isn't just commonplace - it's an accepted way of life. At less than six square miles she may be tiny, but this infinitely posh hamlet within Los Angeles County lives very, very large. Home to a symphony of luxurious homes, a staggering collection of breathtaking hotels, a seemingly endless array of glittering restaurants, indulgent shopping famous the world over and with more stars than most galaxies, Beverly Hills is a veritable amusement park for the well-heeled.

Among the myriad hotels in Beverly Hills, the Peninsula stands out with a quietly bespoke elegance. A gem in the crown of this well-lauded Asian hospitality brand, the Beverly Hills Peninsula is an oasis of gracious tranquility flavored with a dash of Hollywood sparkle. Up on the roof, guests can choose to begin their day over a steamy latte and blueberry buttermilk pancakes or select from an extensive menu of restorative juices - all crafted by hand and served al fresco. Come nightfall, the stars - both literal and figurative - shine above the Peninsula's pool where one can make a wish on a star and toast the day while watching evening settle across some of the world's most covetable addresses.

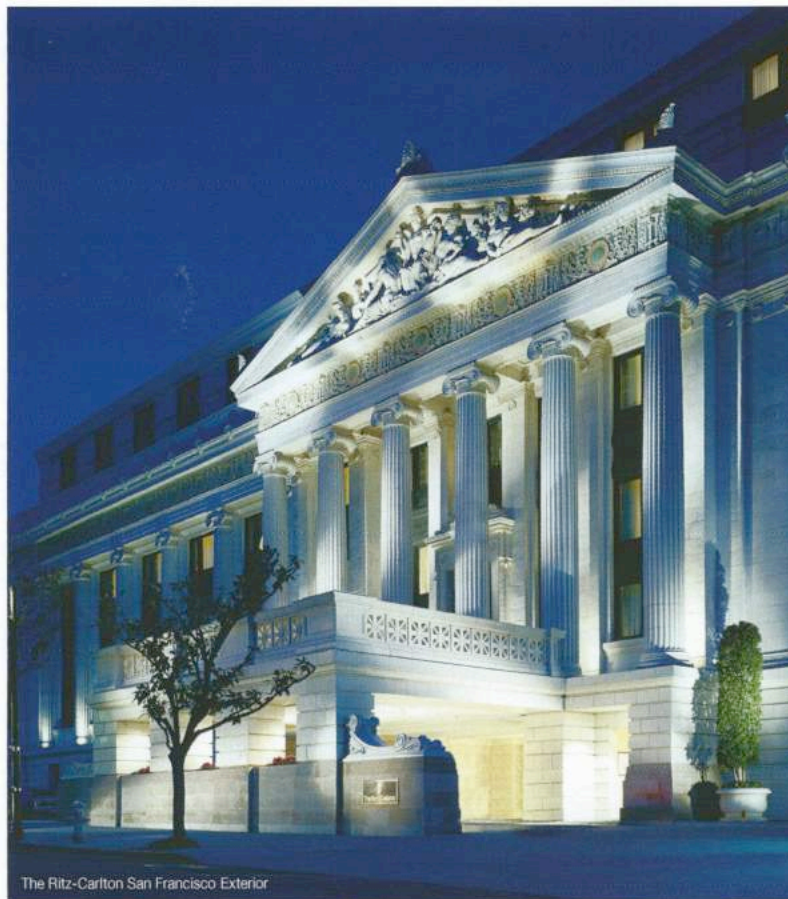
At the nearby Beverly Hills Montage Hotel, finely honed European hospitality meets old world Hollywood glamour in a hotel that sits at the very heart of the area's infamous Golden Triangle. With a special penchant for making guests feel as if they are visiting nobles, part of the Montage's allure comes from the staff's effortless welcome - a heady sensation usually reserved for global celebrities. While there, guests can take advantage of the services provided by The Montage's in-house stylist to the stars, Joe Katz or avail themselves of the convenience provided by the hotel's chauffeur driven Rolls-Royce Ghost - just one in an impressive fleet of luxury house cars maintained by the chic venue.

As alluring as a day wrapped in hotel luxury may be, in Beverly Hills shopping can be likened to an extreme sport - one that shouldn't be missed. While Rodeo Drive may be the Mecca of luxury retail on the West Coast, the entire Golden Triangle that surrounds it is a formidable collection of eye-popping, treasures housed within elegant shops and boutiques. At Peter Marco, window shopping is brought to elevated heights with a collection of diamonds so staggering in size, they seem to defy you to look away while at Farbod Barsum's atelier, exotic skins are crafted into one of a kind handbags and accessories that are nothing short of spectacular. At Barney's Beverly Hills, experience the contagiously electric atmosphere or for a shopping experience that whispers with indulgence, pay a visit to the House of Bijan - arguably the most breathtakingly beautiful retail space one might ever step into.

Not to be outdone by the area's shops and suites, in Beverly Hills dining is yet another reason to celebrate. Home to Nobuyuki "Nobu" Matsuhisa's very first restaurant and the place where Wolfgang Puck started his Spago empire, Beverly Hills is the indisputable birthplace of celebrity chefdom. One of the latest and greatest to hit the area, Culinary Lab's Hinoki and The Bird in neighboring Century City is an edgy, Milo Garcia-designed hotspot. Featuring urban aesthetics and insanely delicious plates including Hinoki scented black cod with dashi and shoshito, the east meets west fusion at Hinoki impresses in a town where the locals can be hard to impress.

If you long to dip a toe into blue Pacific waters, venture north from Beverly Hills to idyllic Malibu to find Geoffrey's. Located in a spot formerly occupied by Holiday House Resort, the Richard Neutra-designed restaurant now serves house specialties like fragrant Moroccan shrimp served alongside ocean views that go on for days.

While heading north, drink in the sights and flavors of a coastline dotted with cities like San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Monterey before ending up in San Francisco, that beloved city by the bay. Known for its avant garde attitude and diverse rich cultural offerings, San Francisco seems to belie any one description. From quirky, little inns to some of the most notable, luxury hotels and from pop up gourmet stands and food trucks to progressive, inspired fine dining; there is truly something for everyone here.



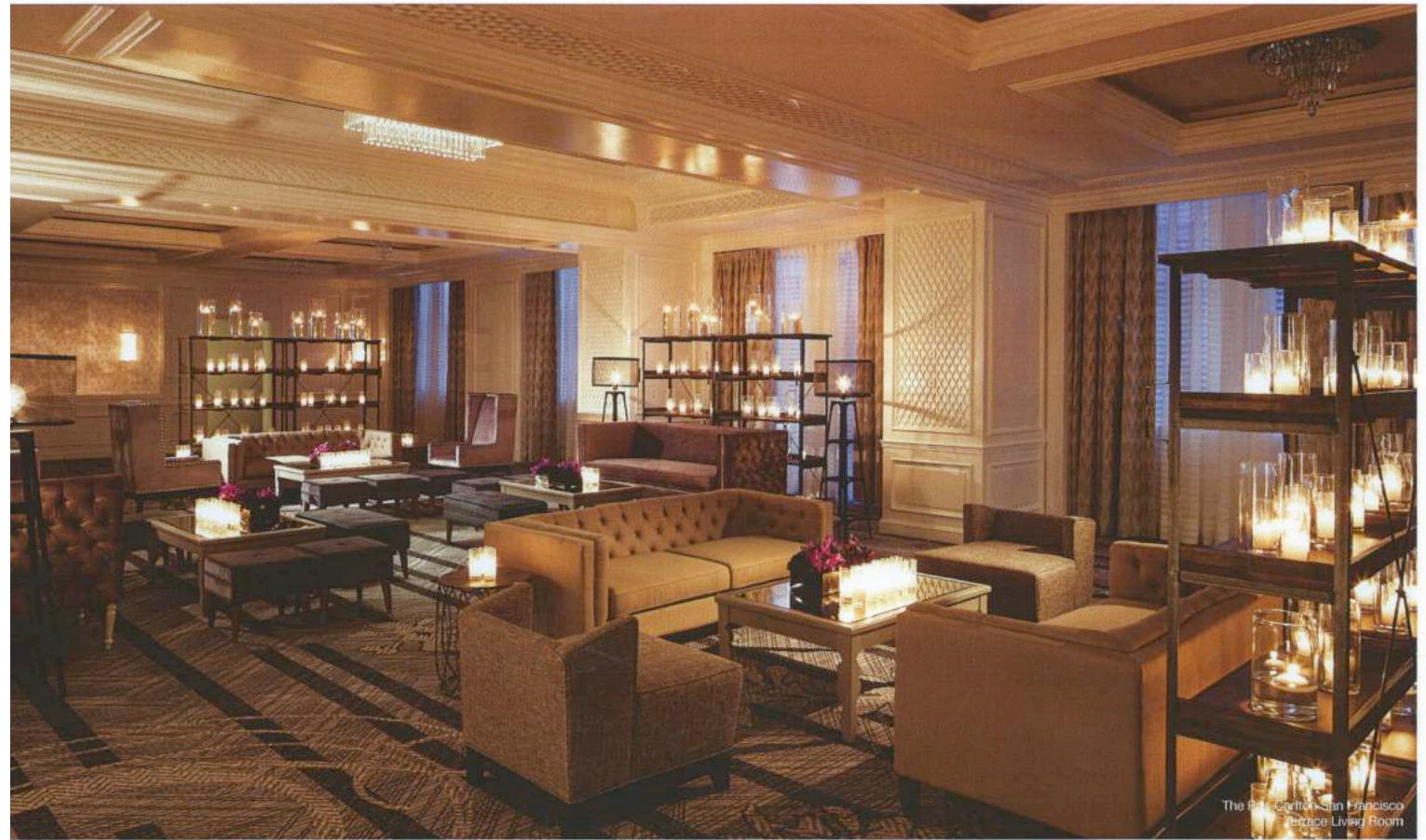
The Ritz-Carlton San Francisco Exterior



Barney's BH, photo by Gina Samarotta



Peter Marco Beverly Hills, photo by Gina Samarotta



The Ritz-Carlton San Francisco
Escape Living Room



Montage Presidential Suite,
courtesy of The Montage



The Ritz-Carlton San Francisco Lounge,
photo by Gina Samarotto



The Peninsula Beverly Hills
Launches Tastefully Thai

Leading the pack in the luxury genre is the Ritz-Carlton San Francisco. Where the 1909 landmark building is perched above the ocean near Nob Hill, the Ritz-Carlton is deliciously swanky. Spacious rooms, breathtaking suites and public spaces are elegantly turned out without being stuffy - a perfect melding of Ritz-Carlton's graciousness and San Francisco's bohemian vibe. From its location adjacent to the cable car line and just steps from Chinatown's Dragon Gate, the heart of San Francisco is at the hotel's doorstep. Popular with locals and residents alike is afternoon tea held in The Lounge. A veritable institution in San Francisco, tea at the Ritz-Carlton is where artfully crafted small plates are accompanied by tea and cocktails all served in a room that is at once Neo-classic and modernly edgy. Another "do not miss" element of the Ritz-Carlton is the eclectic fashioned, uber hip, and entirely posh JCB Tasting Lounge located on the lobby level. The brainchild of winemaker Jean-Charles Boisset, the JCB Tasting Lounge offers a selection of fine wines served from within an intimate setting fairly bursting with vibrant opulence. Take a seat on the amethyst velvet settee to sip a glass of wine, sample some light fare and peruse the curated collection of gifts

and accessories from JCB, Baccarat, Christofle, and Bernardaud made available for purchase. After tea and perhaps a glass or two of bubbly, the whole of San Francisco is waiting to be explored. From the largest Chinatown outside of Asia to miles of shopping, arts, culture, and dining - it's all yours for the asking. A trip to Alcatraz Island not only introduces you to one of the most fascinating tourist attractions of all time, while an afternoon aboard one of the city's myriad sailboats or luxury yachts available for charter, is a fabulous way to enjoy a day spent watching mischievous sea lions, or the iconic bridges and views that frame the bay.

From the tiny, Mexican-influenced town of San Ysidro in the south to the northern tip of Port St. George where it lays nestled against the Oregon border and across the nearly eight hundred miles of gorgeous coastline between the two, each of California's cities and towns gives a different flavor to the West Coast experience. Indeed, one could spend a lifetime exploring and discovering every one. But for now, reveling in just this tiny slice of what California has to offer is enough to whet the appetite. Open up your golden gates, California here we come.