

CASA DEL MAR

Santa Monica, California, USA.

By Robert La Bua



Already a favourite with Australians visiting Los Angeles, Casa del Mar continues to attract a sophisticated clientele with its smartly appointed rooms and excellent cuisine. In an outstanding location directly on the beach in Santa Monica where surfers ride the waves only a short walk from the amusements of the famous Santa Monica Pier, guests at Casa del Mar enjoy a colourful spectacle that embodies the good times associated with a visit to Southern California.

Though all the 112 rooms and 17 suites at Casa del Mar are beautifully decorated, it is the superb presidential suite that steals the hotel's accommodation show. A two-bedroom suite occupying the end of the building on the seventh floor, windows on three sides give the suite the feeling of a home, and the discreet elegance of the decor reiterates the feeling of being at home rather than in a hotel. This is not altogether surprising given the hotel's name is Spanish for 'house by the sea'.

Elegant furnishings and a collection of interesting books for introspective entertainment are supplemented by binoculars and a telescope for observation of a stereotypically Californian parade of joggers, cyclists, and surfers pursuing their activities with gusto. Fireplaces in the living room and master bedroom add to the warmth, literally and figuratively.

By far the most expensive suite in the hotel, the presidential suite (discreetly known in house simply as Room 710) is often booked out, sometimes for weeks at a time, by out-of-towners, local staycationers, or movie people who vie for the privilege to stay in style.

Santa Monica has long been a favourite residential area for Hollywood's casual elite, but the city within a city has recently been discovered by travellers as a destination in its own right where luxe shopping, fine dining, and indulgent pastimes are readily available. All of these can be easily enjoyed at Casa del Mar itself; in essence a precise encapsulation of everything that makes Santa Monica special, the hotel takes great pride in its delivery of excellence in accommodation, dining, and leisure. The Sea Wellness Spa is a favourite haunt of locals seeking expert advice on body and skin care, and with therapists like Josephine who have years of experience in their field, the result is exceptionally agreeable. The same can be said for the dining experiences at Terrazza and Catch, where the seafood served seaside is both interestingly prepared and appealingly presented. Under the supervision of newly arrived Executive Chef Robert Kirchoff, Casa del Mar's restaurant experiences are set to be elevated to a yet higher level of creativity and enjoyment.

With the added convenience of being relatively close to Los

Angeles International Airport, easily accessible with transfers in luxury vehicles provided by Empire CLS, Casa del Mar makes a perfect place for a few days of rest and relaxation before or after travel to other parts of the US. Delta Air Lines flights from Sydney to LAX provide Australians with seamless, one-airline service to numerous destinations across North America, including the fastest service from Sydney to New York. But even travelling New Yorkers occasionally take some time out from rushing around to enjoy the best of Southern California at Casa del Mar. •

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