Kona Kai Resort & Spa: Shelter Island Sanctuary

Written by Melissa Larsen
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Though there are some families who adore big, bustling beaches for their summer escape, some prefer to do things a little more low-key, yet luxurious. That is where Kona Kai Resort & Spa, a Noble House Resort, on San Diego's Shelter Island comes in. Here are four reasons to make this your San Diego respite this summer season.

1. The private beach. You won't find miles upon miles of sand and big waves at this destination. Instead, Kona Kai is home to the Kona Kai Marina, which allows for a quiet, private beach that oversees the beautiful water and vessels (you may even see a boat belonging to a celebrity or two docked there). Guests are invited to reserve an on-sand cabana for the ultimate relaxation destination while kiddos can play in the sand without being overwhelmed by a traditional busy beach scene. Though the water isn't accessible for swimming (there is a great pool and hot tub a few feet away), the resort can arrange plenty of water-sport rentals.

2. S'mores galore. So, this campfire classic doesn't usually make or break a hotel—but, at Kona Kai, s'mores are an absolute must and a way to bring families together at the end of the day. Every evening, for about four hours, the staff ignites the firepits that line the private beach, inviting families, friends and couples to unwind for the evening, sip some wine and, of course, roast some marshmallows. Kona Kai even carries gourmet s'mores kits from Nineteen27 in artisan combos like cola, raspberry and original. Plus, a portion of the proceeds from each kit will benefit Girl Scouts of the USA.

3. Cool, refreshing digs. In each of its 129 guest rooms, with more to come when the resort completes a renovation in January, guests are greeted with an airy, colorful, family-friendly atmosphere. The California-contemporary rooms are drenched in beachy hues of teal, coral and yellow, and the quirky-chic lobby carries the palette through the entry of the hotel. (Don't miss a chance to head to the lobby loft to play a board game and check out the fun library-inspired wallpaper.) PS: The renovation will also bring a new adults-only pool and more event space.

4. Fab food. The on-site Vessel Restaurant dishes out breakfast, lunch and dinner in a recently re-done dining space. Though the restaurant interior is cozy and colorful, with a great bar, grab a seat outside for front-row views of the marina and gorgeous hillside homes. For breakfast, the eggs benedict or Belgian waffle (paired with whipped cream that you will want to bottle up and take home) are both a.m. all-stars. For some amazing small plates and cocktails, pop in for happy hour from 2 to 6 p.m. every day (special pricing is even available on the patio). Amazing fish tacos, poke with tangy sesame-ginger ponzu, kona beef sliders and much more are on the menu—and don't miss out on the "Put the Lime in the Coconut" margarita just to get extra settled in the vacation frame of mind.

To Learn More

To learn more about Kona Kai Resort & Spa's summer specials, click here.