

## From sandy beaches to redwood forests, hotels offer unique amenities

By Jeanne Cooper

Every hotel has had to develop new health and safety protocols to make travelers feel comfortable in the post-lockdown era. In [Santa Cruz](#), historic inns and modern lodgings have also reflected their region's renowned creativity by enticing visitors to overnight with everything from outdoor concerts to in-room spa treatments, breakfast in bed, feasts on the beach and patio movie nights.

A 300-acre campus with just 156 guest rooms and 3 miles of hiking trails through the redwood forest already gives Chaminade Resort & Spa an advantage when it comes to offering room to roam. But the historic compound, built in Spanish Revival style in 1930 as a Catholic boys high school, recently completed a renovation of all its public spaces that not only enhanced its architectural heritage but also gives guests even more choices for outdoor R&R.

The resort redesigned Linwood's Bar & Grill and aptly renamed it the View, greatly expanding its patio seating with vistas of Monterey Bay and, at night, twinkling market lights. Bay Area and local musicians often perform live such as Alex Lucero, Ripatti & Rose, 7th Wave and Harpin' Jonny — "there are so many great ones here," noted Connie Hagston, Chaminade's director of sales and marketing. Music at the View happens from 5

to 8 p.m. Sundays and 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.

Chaminade offers special VIP packages that include a bottle of wine from Alfaro Family Vineyards, a \$100 food and beverage credit, a reserved table and choice of room or suite.

Resort guests and locals alike are enjoying Wine Down Wednesday Movie Nights on Chaminade's Courtyard Terrace, according to Hagston. The resort screens classic movies such as "The Parent Trap," "Jaws" and "Erin Brockovich," with food, wine and other beverages for sale. Patrons must register in advance but tickets are free (click on "Event Calendar" on [www.chaminade.com](#).)

Down by the beach, the 165-room Dream Inn Santa Cruz is continuing its "vertical concert" series, in which internationally recognized musical acts perform on the iconic hotel's pool deck while guests take in the show — and views of Monterey Bay — from their private balconies or patios. The Patti Smith Trio with Jackson Smith and Tony Shanahan will perform Sept. 8, followed by Big Brother & the Holding Company Oct. 30 and Pablo Cruise Oct. 31.

The series debuted last fall with a Halloween concert by Los Lobos, which sold out in three days and also inspired guests to dress up in costumes and decorate their balconies for the holiday, according to

Darren Pound, the hotel's vice president and general manager. Ticket packages include an overnight stay, the concert and access to food and beverage service from Jack's Patio or room service; prices vary by room category, with packages for the Patti Smith Trio starting at \$549.

"The pandemic and the need to socially distance has challenged us with creative ways to attract guests," Pound said. "We are fortunate to have the perfect setup for live vertical concerts. Guests are thrilled because it's like they are in a private suite of an arena, eating burgers or salmon while a band performs below."

Both Chaminade and the Dream Inn also have new executive chefs who are busy creating culinary experiences to attract even more guests. Avram Samuels joined Chaminade about four months ago and is working with local wineries on a monthly dinner series called Vine to View. The July edition highlighted Storrs Winery vineyard with a four-course locavore meal that featured gazpacho, seared ahi, fried organic chicken thigh with herb Belgian waffle, and roasted organic chicken breast, plus a dessert of olallieberry cobbler and an array of appetizers. Upcoming dinners will be held Sept. 23 and Oct. 28; tickets are \$125, including tax and gratuity.

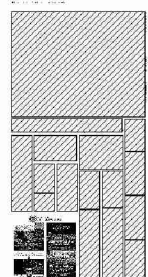
Gustavo Trejo, formerly of Monterey's acclaimed Esteban Restaurant and

Carmel Valley Ranch, became executive chef at Dream Inn in February, overseeing menus at the outdoor Jack's Patio and beachfront Jack O'Neill Restaurant & Lounge. This month, he'll begin offering Beach Feasts, multi-course meals for groups served right on the sand and featuring locally sourced proteins and produce in dishes like seafood paella.

"Great meals begin and end with great ingredients," Trejo said.

Beach fires with hot and gooey s'mores are a big draw for guests at Seascape Beach Resort in Aptos, which has 283 suites and villas above a 17-mile stretch of beach. By reservation through the concierge, the resort will build a fire on the sand and provide chairs, bottled water and all the necessities for making s'mores for \$150 for up to two guests and \$15 for each additional guest.

For those who miss spa treatments but are still worried about going to a communal spa, Seascape also offers in-suite spa services like glycolic facials (\$160-\$200), personalized Swedish massage (\$140-\$185 for one person, \$260-\$340 for a couple) or a reflexology session (\$50 as a 30-minute add-on service, or \$135 for an hour-long treatment.) A 3-hour package that combines a massage, facial, reflexology session and aromatherapy scalp treatment is available for \$350. Many rooms also come with two-person



whirlpool tubs to add to the sense of a spa getaway.

Romantic and restful escapes have always been part of the appeal of Santa Cruz's West Cliff Inn, built in 1877 on a bluff above Cowell Beach that became known as "Millionaires' Row." Extensively remodeled in 2007, it's now a 10-room Victorian-style bed-and-breakfast with modern amenities and part of the Four Sisters Collection boutique hotel group.

COVID-19 has inspired some changes to the inn's popular buffets for breakfast and afternoon wine and hors d'oeuvres, and its "bottomless cookie jar,"

according to Sharon Rooney, director of public relations for Four Sisters Inns. Breakfast is currently a cooked-to-order "breakfast in bed," she said, with a hot and cold entrée choice that changes daily, along with house-baked muffins and breads, fresh fruit, granola and yogurt, delivered directly to guestrooms.

"Our afternoon complimentary buffet of wine and hors d'oeuvres is now what we are calling our 'mini picnic,' " she added. "Initially, we didn't know how this would be received by our return guests who have come to love the afternoon wine hour, but it turns out

guests love it because it is portable, and they can take it along on their days' adventures. The mini picnic is a generous portion of cheese, crackers, those fabulous house-baked cookies, fruit, olives as well as wine, but packed in a to-go bag instead of on a buffet."

Guests like to enjoy the mini-picnic on the beach, their balcony, "or anywhere they want to tote it," Rooney said. "Necessity is the mother of invention, and this one is a keeper even once we move into a post-virus world."



PHOTOS BY LAURA MORTON

Clockwise from top left: Chaminade Resort & Spa recently completed a renovation of its public spaces, including the lobby; guests of the Dream Inn Santa Cruz enjoy a heated outdoor swimming pool and hot tub with direct access to Cowell Beach; retro-chic guest rooms at the Dream Inn feature incredible Monterey Bay views.



## Details

**Chaminade Resort & Spa:** 1 Chaminade Lane, Santa Cruz, 831-475-5600, [www.chaminade.com](http://www.chaminade.com)

**Dream Inn Santa Cruz:** 175 W. Cliff Drive, Santa Cruz, 831-740-8069, [www.dreaminnsantacruz.com](http://www.dreaminnsantacruz.com)

**Seascape Beach Resort:** 1 Seascape Resort Drive, Aptos, 866-867-0976, 831-688-6800, [www.seascaperesort.com](http://www.seascaperesort.com)

**West Cliff Inn:** 174 W. Cliff Drive, Santa Cruz, 831-457-2200, [www.westcliffinn.com](http://www.westcliffinn.com)

Chaminade Resort & Spa is on 300 wooded acres with 3 miles of hiking trails through the redwood forest.