

RECIPES FOR FALL PARTIES

# Sunset



## THE TRAVEL ISSUE

207 Ways to Experience the West

Rad Ranches, Beach Retreats, Mod Motels, Wine Country Escapes, Top Tables, Perfect Parks, and more!

+ What's new in Waikiki and Joshua Tree

THE CHICEST  
A-FRAME

THE COZIEST  
COTTAGE

THE CUTEST  
KITCHEN GADGETS



# TRAVEL & ESCAPES

WHERE TO STAY.....64

WHERE TO EAT AND DRINK.....76

WHERE TO GO.....80

WHAT TO DO.....84

HOW TO GET THERE.....86



## Travel Awards

Hot hotels, new and classic restaurants, and the top destinations and activities from the desert to the coast—these are the 125 best ways to experience the West now.

Murrieta Hot Springs



# WHERE TO Stay



Every time we sit down to judge the annual travel awards, we realize how spoiled for choice we are in the West. We truly have it all: the grandeur of our parks, national and otherwise; the charm of small towns and thrills of big cities; thousands of wineries; luxury resorts and retro motels; spas and kayaking excursions and museums and so much more. There are literally thousands of thrilling choices for the Western traveler looking for a hotel to stay in, a meal to eat, an activity to pursue, or a method of transportation to get there in the first place. This year we had yet another record-breaking number of entrants of the highest level, and picking just 125 winners proved to be a daunting honor. Read on for the winners! And be sure to visit [sunset.com/traveldirectory](https://www.sunset.com/traveldirectory) for a searchable database of the winners and all of the entrants to help plan your next trip wherever you want to go in the West!

## COASTAL GEMS

### Four Seasons Resort Los Cabos at Costa Palmas

Situated on the Sea of Cortez with views of the Sierra de la Laguna Mountains, this beachfront property on Baja's East Cape features multiple pools, a world-class golf course and fitness facility, a sprawling spa, and an outpost of Estiatorio Milos. The highlight, though, is the access to the quiet coastline, complete with every beach toy one could ever wish for, which comes complimentary with your stay.

### Laguna Surf Lodge

Perched atop Thalia Street's gentle yet consistent break, the newly revamped Laguna Surf Lodge makes rising early for its signature dawn patrol experience a whole lot easier with calming essential oil diffusers, cozy Avocado mattresses, and nature's ultimate sound machine—waves caressing the shore below. Load into the owners' vintage Land Rover and head South to what's undoubtedly SoCal's vibiest surf spot at San Onofre for a guided session with surf pro Izzi Gomez. The morning begins with freshly roasted cowboy coffee and a meditation



Four Seasons Resort  
Los Cabos at  
Costa Palmas

around the firepit and ends with a warm RinseKit shower and freshly made farmers market frittata.

**The Lodge at Bodega Bay**

The Lodge at Bodega Bay offers tranquil ocean views and rustic elegance along the Sonoma Coast. With 83 guestrooms, guests enjoy cozy fireplaces, coastal trails, birding, whale-watching, and a heated pool. Dining options include Drakes Sonoma Coast and Fireside Lounge, focusing on locally sourced cuisine. The Lodge's serene setting and sustainable practices make it a perfect retreat for relaxation and nature exploration.

**The Royal Hawaiian**

Waikiki's The Royal Hawaiian blends historic charm with modern luxury. Known as the "Pink Palace of the Pacific," it offers oceanfront rooms, authentic Hawaiian cuisine, and award-winning spa treatments. The resort's cultural programming ranges from the Ahaaina Luau to the Mai Tai Bar that carries on the Island's mixology tradition. Combined with the resort's iconic architecture and impeccable hospitality, it's a text-book Hawaiian getaway.

**The Ritz-Carlton O'ahu, Turtle Bay**

The North Shore is known for its world class competitions at Banzai

Pipeline and Sunset Beach—no doubt incredible feats to spectate, but downright dangerous, even for seasoned pros. But that's not to say a newbie is totally out of luck, especially at this spectacularly redone property, home to one of three of Jamie O'Brien's surf schools. There's a soft spot in front of the hotel for beginners to learn. And perfect mai tais to sip during golden hour at Off the Lip. There's plenty to do aside from catching waves, too. Think snorkeling at Shark's Cove, hiking at Waimea Valley Trail, and shopping and dining in historic Hale'iwa Town.

**Hotel Californian**

Competition is tough when it comes to hotels situated on the Santa Barbara coastline that's known as the American Riviera, but this Spanish-revival style hotel designed by Martyn Lawrence Bullard seamlessly blends history with imagination. After a day of traipsing around the Funk Zone or surfing SB's breaks, unwind at Majorelle Spa or soak up views from the Tan-Tan rooftop pool deck.

**Casa Loma**

An iconic oceanfront property perched on Laguna Beach's rocky cliffs above Main Beach reopened this summer with



The Lodge at Bodega Bay



The Royal Hawaiian

a breezy bohemian redesign that blends sandy neutrals, organic clay tones, and seaside greens, playing up its proximity to the sea. Laze in the sun with a book on your private terrace, or socialize with like-minded travelers in the outdoor pool and lounge before heading out on the town to explore the area's many restaurants and galleries.

**Estancia La Jolla**

Having recently undergone a multi-million-dollar renovation, this rancho-style property located in North County San Diego has the feel of a hacienda, complete with adobe fireplaces and equestrian-inspired guest rooms. Indulge in a luxe spa treatment or wander the impressive botanical gardens and drink in the timeless California charm.

**Orli La Jolla**

This historic 1910s-era residence designed by Irving Gill

FAR RIGHT, FROM TOP: TRAVIS WATTS; THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN





Le Petit Pali



Kona Village

blends top-notch hotel amenities with the creature comforts of home. Each of the 13 uniquely designed rooms offers personalized touches you'd desire in a dreamy pied-à-terre, from lush greenery and hand-blown glass fixtures to Marshall Bluetooth speakers. Located near the Museum of Contemporary Art and steps from the beach, you can easily explore outside or indulge in the hotel's daily happy hours and gourmet snacks for some downtime closer to home.

#### **Le Petit Pali**

This gem from Palisociety injects Carmel-by-the-Sea's hospitality scene with bespoke charm and laid-back luxury. Just steps from the village and shoreline, guests savor complimentary Champagne breakfasts, hosted happy hours, and

the hotel group's signature Pawlisociety pet amenities for their four-legged friends. With Diptyque bath amenities and warm cookies at bedtime, Le Petit Pali offers up a new style of B&B where European flair meets California cool.

#### **Kona Village**

The legendary resort on the Big Island's Kona Coast has finally opened after a multi-year renovation, and it's a stunner. Situated on one of the most idyllic and picturesque coves, the low-slung resort is a super luxe antidote to cookie-cutter sprawl. Spanning 81 acres with just 150 guest hales it's as iconic as a Hawaiian hotel can get. With five restaurants, four beach-view pools, a full-service spa, a serious cultural education program, and an extensive aquatic center, it provides an immersive cultural experience at the highest level of sustainability and luxury.

#### **Waimea Plantation Cottages**

Set on 43 acres on the West side of Kauai, this resort featuring lovingly restored plantation-style cottages provides a serene escape by the sea. Guests can enjoy the oceanfront pool, hammocks, and nearby attractions like Waimea Canyon and Na Pali Coastline. The resort's historic charm and lush landscaping are perfect for families and couples looking for a tranquil throwback retreat.

#### **Timber Cove**

Timber Cove on Sonoma's rugged coast, blends midcentury architecture with modern comforts in a rustic chic setting that oozes boho charm. Think vintage furnishings, Malm fireplaces, and epic views of the ocean. Guests can enjoy hiking trails, picnics, and amenities like local live music, a curated vinyl library, and turntables in every

room. Guests and drive-by roadtrippers alike can take advantage of the coastal wine country cuisine and killer views from the restaurant Coast Kitchen.

#### **Salishan Coastal Lodge**

Oregon's Coast Range is a place of unparalleled natural beauty, and SCP Hotels' Salishan Coastal Lodge slots in seamlessly as a home base for adults and kids looking for eco adventure. Choose your own adventure, whether it be exploring the Aerial Park obstacle course, traversing the mountain bike tracks, or hiking and tidepooling. This Earth-Check-certified sanctuary offers sound baths, meditations, farm-to-table dining, zero-waste initiatives, and coastal preservation efforts to help rejuvenate Oregon's stunning landscapes. An Earth- and family-friendly escape.





## NATURE LOVERS LODGING

### Nat Hab's Alaska Bear Camp

Located in a remote and beautiful corner of Lake Clark National Park, this wildly unique camp provides exclusive access to observe coastal brown bears in their natural habitat. Guests stay in comfortable safari-style tents equipped with modern amenities, enjoying guided bear-viewing excursions led by expert naturalists. The camp emphasizes sustainability and conservation, providing an unforgettable adventure for wildlife enthusiasts seeking an intimate encounter with Alaska's most majestic residents.

### Aspen Meadows

Designed by legendary Bauhaus architect Herbert Bayer, Aspen Meadows is a cultural haven in Aspen's West End. Newly restored to its midcentury glory, it offers 98 suites, a restaurant with mountain views, and free guest access to the Bayer Center museum and its exhibitions celebrating Bauhaus design. In addition to providing ski shuttles and a serene retreat, it also hosts the Aspen Ideas Festival making it a perfect getaway for culture-loving adventurers.

### Inn the Ground

A new wave of regenerative travel is taking hold in the Willamette Valley, with this design-forward, eco-conscious nine-room inn at the forefront. The hotel component works in tandem with their restaurant and sprawling sustainable permaculture project that includes multiple natural springs supporting grass-fed and -finished cattle, heritage-breed hogs, and pasture-raised laying hens. There's also a massive garden growing heirloom



fruits and veg for the farm-fresh breakfasts, making for an experience that feeds the soul and the belly.

### Outlook Inn

Outlook Inn on Orcas Island offers luxurious accommodations in an iconic Pacific Northwest vacation destination. With spacious rooms overlooking Fishing Bay it's an idyllic oceanfront getaway. Guests enjoy locally inspired cuisine at New Leaf Café, easy access to shops, galleries, and outdoor adventures. For the ultimate experience, book the Water's Edge Deluxe Suites

for stunning views and upscale amenities.

### Harvest Hosts

Discover the charm of the West with this unique RV membership program that allows #vanlifers to park overnight at unique stays at over 5,000 locations across North America, including vineyards, farms, and quaint museums. Imagine waking up at a lavender farm in California, a Wyoming ranch, or a desert winery in Arizona, all while supporting small business owners along the way.





West while being just 20 minutes outside the resort town of Vail. Activities range from horseback riding and fly-fishing to simply relaxing while roasting s'mores underneath the clearest Colorado night skies.

**Kenai Fjords Glacier Lodge**

Reconnect with nature, dine finely, and relax in the sauna while immersed in Alaska's breathtaking landscape at Kenai Fjords Glacier Lodge. Here you can access the stunning seacoast wilderness of Kenai Fjords National Park. Enjoy whale-watching, marine wildlife tours, and views



access and dark-sky stargazing, Ambiente provides a harmonious and luxurious escape in Sedona's breathtaking landscape.

**The Sea Ranch Lodge**

The iconic '60s utopian housing development situated on 53 acres of dramatic Sonoma coastline is home to the newly resorted and super stylish Sea Ranch Lodge. With guest rooms redesigned by Nicole Hollis, a dining room serving elevated coastal California cuisine, and a meadow with epic views of the sea, this architectural gem blends rustic elegance with modern comforts in a stunning natural setting. An essential Northern California architectural pilgrimage.

**Trailborn Rocky Mountains**

This year has seen a bevy of design-forward boutique properties opening up within close proximity to National Parks and monuments, and Trailborn Estes Park is well worth the visit. Its flagship outpost in Colorado has access to snow-capped peaks, alpine lakes, and 300 miles of hiking trails. In addition to the restaurant, bar, and cafe, there are two retail markets offering a selection of curated local products and grab-and-go items, plus outdoor pools, patios, porches, and communal firepits, all with views of the surrounding Rockies.

**Collective Vail**

Rugged luxury makes this Rocky Mountain retreat stand out from the rest. Surrounded by 1,000 pristine acres of high desert landscape, guests get an authentic sense of the American

of Pedersen Glacier from the lodge. Adventurers can hike and kayak, while the nearby Pedersen Lagoon Wildlife Sanctuary ensures unique wildlife encounters.

**Lodge at Marconi**

The Lodge at Marconi in West Marin is the latest high-end lodging on Tomales Bay. Recently renovated, the sprawling hillside compound feels like a summer camp for grownups with a lobby stocked with board games, views of the bay, local artisanal snacks, and natural wine. With hiking trails, stylish appointed rooms, multiple event spaces, and no televisions, the Lodge is the perfect place to unplug and unwind.

**Sacred Rock Inn**

Perched above the dramatic Mendocino Coast, the newly renovated and expanded Sacred Rock Inn in Elk, CA, offers luxury seaside accommodations in a charming compound comprising serene gardens, historic bungalows, and a Victorian mansion—all with breathtaking views of this stretch of sea that's home to the gray whale migration route. Use this as your home base for exploring Anderson Valley wine country before returning to unwind at the Inn's New Californian restaurant Greenwood.

**El Capitan Hotel**

El Capitan Hotel in Merced, CA, offers modern rooms and amenities in a historic turn-of-the-century property. Located on Main Street, it serves as a gateway to Yosemite and features dining options like Rainbird, Native Son,

**Ambiente Sedona**

Designed to blend with its natural surroundings, the adults-only resort features floor-to-ceiling windows and rooftop decks on guest suites offering stunning Red Rock views. Guests enjoy courtesy transportation, dining at Fortyl, poolside relaxation, and pampering at Velvet Spa. With hiking trail

FROM TOP: JEFF ZARUBA; THOMAS J. STORY





and the open-air El Capitan Courtyard. Guests enjoy local attractions and outdoor activities, reflecting California's Central Valley traditions. El Capitan combines modern comfort with historic charm, making it an ideal base for exploring the region.

#### **Ofland Escalante**

Formerly known as Yonder Escalante, Ofland Escalante, located in Southern Utah's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, is our kind of glamping experience. With mod tiny cabins, sleek Airstreams, deluxe cabins, plus an outdoor lodge, spa-quality bathhouses, a general store, food truck, pool, hot tub, and drive-in movie theater, it's a mini outdoorsy utopia. Bonus: Guests can enjoy easy access to nearby national and state Parks.

#### **Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge**

Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge on Vancouver Island offers luxury in the remote Clayoquot Sound. Accessible only by seaplane or boat, it provides

an immersive experience in a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Guests enjoy personalized itineraries with activities like horseback riding, canyoning, and glacial plunging. The lodge features luxury tents, sustainable dining, and fine wines, offering a unique blend of adventure and relaxation in Canada's pristine wilderness.

#### **Limelight Ketchum**

Limelight Ketchum in Idaho's Wood River Valley offers 99 rooms and suites, plus 14 residences, near Sun Valley Resort. Guests enjoy winter sports, summer hiking, biking, and stargazing in America's first Dark Sky Reserve. The hotel features seasonal programming, an adventure concierge, and bespoke experiences. Limelight Ketchum provides a perfect blend of outdoor adventure and luxurious comfort.

#### **SCP Hilo Hotel**

SCP Hilo Hotel on the Big Island of Hawaii is committed to sustainability and Hawaiian hospitality. With every stay

providing support for reforestation, at-risk youth, the Hawaii Wildlife Fund, and more, it's a win-win for guests and locals. Amenities include complimentary bikes and paddleboards, plus the location allows for easy access to attractions like Rainbow Falls and Volcanoes National Park. An affordable, ecologically minded hotel for active travelers.

#### **Snow Peak Campfield Long Beach**

Located on Washington's Long Beach Peninsula, Snow Peak Long Beach Campfield brings Japanese luxury camping to the Pacific Northwest. This first U.S. campground from Snow Peak offers 56 tent sites, Jyubako Suites by architect Kengo Kuma, and a Japanese Ofuro spa. With a focus on sustainability, the camp restores wetlands and hosts community events like Takibi Time by the campfire. Explore coastal hikes and watersports or unwind in nature—a perfect retreat for adventure and tranquility seekers alike.