

GENTRY DESTINATIONS

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BEAUTY ON THE BAY

The Monterey Plaza Hotel & Spa emerges from a multi-million renovation as a gem on the Monterey Peninsula.

STORY BY STEFANIE LINGLE BEASLEY

I am not an early riser. I have always been a “night person,” finding that I work best late in the evening when the house is quiet and all are asleep. But that changed on a recent stay at the **Monterey Plaza Hotel & Spa**. I had gone to bed with the room’s wonderful glass doors open to hear the lapping of the waves outside (such an incredible treat) and at 5:30AM felt compelled to draw the drapes and watch the wonder and majesty that is sunrise over Monterey Bay.

At first just a few twinkling lights dotted the landscape, but they gave way to swirling grey mists and the first shafts of sunlight spreading out like a fan across the water. Otters dotted the swaying kelp beds cracking shells on their chests while the occasional seagull would swoop and soar. Early morning stand-up paddle (SUP) boarders took advantage of the Bay’s early morn-

ing glass-like surface, and fishing boats headed out from the harbor. With a steaming cup of coffee in hand and this brilliant, almost magical show before me, I was mesmerized. Such are the joys of a stay at the remodeled Monterey Plaza Hotel & Spa.

The hotel has always boasted an extraordinary location set on the rugged shore, but as with all grand dame hotels, a recent refresh was in order. The team at the Monterey Plaza has done a terrific job updating the décor while still paying homage to its classic luxury. The exquisite teak paneling and railings in the lobby and public spaces have been restored and polished to a sheen. Lingering in the spectacular **Helmsman Lounge** in the lobby with a cocktail in the evening is a must as is dining at **Schooners Coastal Kitchen + Bar** for lunch on the marvelous sundeck. Tables crafted from vintage wooden surfboards are →



set against glass railings so that you can take full advantage of the view while dining on some of Monterey Bay's best seafood (the clam chowder with a hint of sherry is an absolute must!).

Each of the hotel's 290 rooms has received an update too. Laura Cook Interiors crafted a soothing new blue and stone color scheme that draws inspiration from the coastal setting. The guest rooms now feature tastefully selected bedding, chairs, desks, wallpaper and drapes, as well as new balcony furniture, walk-in showers and natural stonework in all bathrooms. The hotel's new spacious suites include large glass sliding doors that lead to private balconies with dramatic oceanfront views, and elegant living spaces complemented by spa-like marble bathrooms and modern entertainment amenities.

The hotel's marvelous **Vista Blue Spa** has a newly renovated rooftop sundeck with whirlpool spas and a glowing fireplace with panoramic views of gorgeous Monterey Bay (the hotel's jaw-dropping Presidential Suite boasts its own rooftop deck and private hot tub, too). The renowned spa offers rejuvenating, wellness-focused, European-style services inspired by the sea and the seasons in seven soothing treatment rooms.

For a weekend getaway, you might never want to leave the hotel property, but if you do, the magic of Monterey Peninsula and its myriad activities, adventures, dining, and shopping awaits. ♦

For more information and to make a reservation, please visit www.montereyplazahotel.com or call 877.636.1618.

