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HISTORICAL COASTAL GETAWAYS



Catalina Island

Coastal settings not only provide a dramatic backdrop for any celebration, but offer a diverse opportunity for exploration. The four destinations in this feature section are different from one another, but one thing they have in common is their topography. When you visit any one of the locations we've uncovered – the Central Coast of California, Catalina Island, Panama or Madeira – you'll find unforgettable experiences unique to that location, but with the key characteristic of coastal beauty.



Catalina

CALIFORNIA'S ISLAND GETAWAY

WORDS BY CAROLYN STEERE

For an island experience and urban escape, conveniently located just off the coast of California, Catalina Island may just be the perfect fit. One hour on the Catalina Express ferry whisks you from the mainland to the main port of Avalon where you immediately get the vacation “feel.” Avalon cove has the same vibe as a “mini” Monte-Carlo, except the yachts are replaced by small sailboats and the casino is used for events – not gambling.

The Wrigley family (of chewing gum fame) first visited Catalina in 1919, fell in love with its beauty and began purchasing interest in the island. The Wrigley’s beloved Chicago Cubs held their spring training on Catalina for 30 years and the island has served as the backdrop for over 500 movies, TV shows, documentaries and commercials.

Our home for our visit was Mt. Ada, where history surrounds you at every turn. Perched high on a hilltop, this bed and breakfast was the former island escape for William Wrigley Jr. and his wife Ada. The inn is tastefully decorated in 1920s décor and the views of Avalon Bay from the wrap-around deck are amazing.

Our quest was to check out Catalina Island as a location for a destination wedding and it did not disappoint. In Avalon, the four venues that caught our eye were the Catalina Casino, Catalina Country Club, Catherine’s Terrace at Descanso Beach Club and Overlook

Hall; each being distinctly different. The art deco casino, with the largest circular ballroom in the country, has sea views from every vantage-point and should be the choice for a large wedding (300-plus). The setting of the Catalina Country Club (the original Cubs clubhouse) has a distinct Spanish flavor with its cozy courtyard draped in twinkle lights and adjacent ballroom with a large, majestic fireplace. The location and airy décor of Catherine’s Terrace is ideal for those looking for a casual, beachside wedding and reception. Historic Overlook Hall, with its brick façade and tall, beamed ceilings has been renovated and is perfect for a small, intimate wedding.

A cocktail of exciting eats can be found at the Avalon Grille, The Lobster Trap and Bluewater Avalon. When it is time to play, there is kayaking, zip lining, land and ocean tours, basking on the beach or indulging at the spa. The best part is, Catalina has an island experience without the lengthy sea journey. **D**

