

ModernLuxury

SAN DIEGO

A man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a dark suit, is looking down and slightly to the left. The background is a solid, muted brown color.

THE
INCREDIBLE
RISE OF
AARON PAUL



WINTERWEEKEND
ESCAPES
Catalina, Sedona,
Joshua Tree & More!

FALL
FINESSE

Menswear Takes a Glamorous Turn

La Isla BONITA

California's Catalina Island celebrates a century of history-making thanks to one gregarious entrepreneur and his ambitious vision.

By Casey Gillespie

On the surface, Catalina Island (visitcatalinaisland.com) is an enchanting beach getaway located 22 miles off the coast of Los Angeles. Scratch the surface, though, and you will find a destination steeped in Hollywood history, baseball lore and, most significantly, the enduring legacy of the enterprising man who put the island on the map—chewing gum magnate William Wrigley Jr.

Following Wrigley's acquisition of what was once a sleepy Catalina, he immediately set about turning it into a thriving vacation destination. Between 1919 and 1929, Avalon (the only incorporated city on the island) saw its population more than double as Wrigley built infrastructure, hotels, homes, tourist attractions and local industry. The resort's popularity also grew dramatically from 90,000 to 750,000 visitors per year (today, the island has about 4,000 year-round residents and more than a million visitors annually). This is in no small part thanks to Wrigley bringing another of his investments—the Chicago Cubs baseball team—to the island for spring training from 1921 to 1951.

The story goes that from his home perched on the hill (fondly named Mount Ada after his wife and now a Forbes four-star hotel), he would use his telescope to watch the team practice. If he was unsatisfied with the way it was going, he would “invite” the team to run up the steep, winding hill to his house and bid him good night.

Old Hollywood enthusiasts will love the Catalina's filmmaking history. Ask any islander and they will happily impart a story or two about Charlie Chaplin's three decades here, Natalie Wood's untimely death after a boozy

From top: The city of Avalon wraps around stunning Avalon Bay, located on the southeast end of Catalina; Mount Ada, once Wrigley's family home, is now a luxury inn.



« “I am putting money into Catalina because I am happy and I want others to be happy. The development of Catalina Island will be one of the greatest pleasures of my life.”

—WILLIAM WRIGLEY JR. »



From top: Descanso Beach Club offers Presidential Cabanas—covered cabanas with teak floors, chaise lounges, towel service, a beach butler, and a full drink and food menu. Mount Ada's living room boasts one-of-a-kind views over Avalon and Avalon Bay, and also offers a relaxed setting where guests can mingle during the evening cocktail hour.

evening quarreling with her husband, Robert Wagner, and Christopher Walken (with whom she was allegedly having an emotional affair), or one of the many movies filmed there—most notably *Mutiny on the Bounty*, *Treasure Island*, *The Ten Commandments*, *Ben Hur* and *Jaws*. But one of the most beloved stories is about a young radio announcer by the name of Ronald “Dutch” Reagan who accompanied the Chicago Cubs to Catalina for spring training.

Visitors wanting to experience more of Wrigley's Catalina and the centennial celebration can take guided Anniversary Tours that explore venues like the iconic casino (the Italian word for “gathering place;” it served as a theater, dance hall and ballroom). The historic Hotel St. Catherine has been transformed into Descanso Beach Club, where Mediterranean vibes, chic cabanas, bottles of Veuve Clicquot and prime rib sandwiches (first served at Hotel St. Catherine Aug. 4, 1930) are de rigueur.

While true Wrigley enthusiasts will want to stay at Mount Ada, the newest jewel in Catalina's crown is the recently refurbished Hotel Atwater—upgraded amenities include deluxe modern suites (from \$579) and an on-site restaurant due to open in 2020—which is ushering in a new age of luxury on the island. And no visit would be complete without an afternoon at Island Spa Catalina. Situated steps from the waterfront, the 15,000-square-foot oasis is a tranquil retreat with breathtaking views over Avalon Harbor. Just, as we expect, Mr. Wrigley would have wanted it. ■