

MODERN LUXURY

MICHIGAN AVENUE

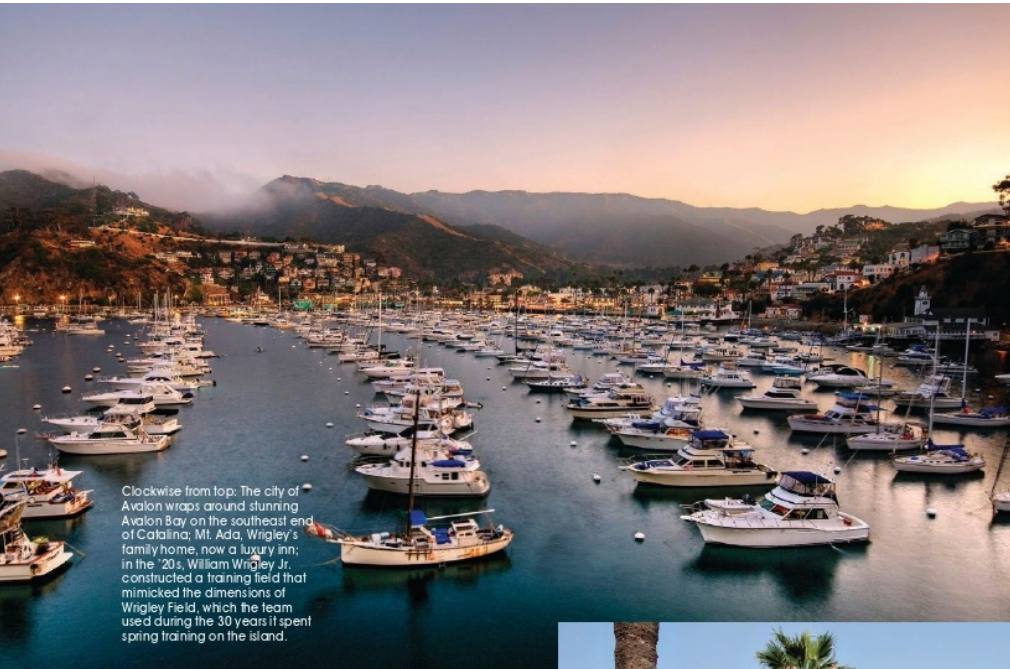


BEN PLATT

La Isla Bonita

CALIFORNIA'S CATALINA ISLAND AND THE WINDY CITY ARE CELEBRATING A CENTURY OF CONNECTION, THANKS TO A GREGARIOUS ENTREPRENEUR NAMED WRIGLEY.

BY CASEY GILLESPIE



Clockwise from top: The city of Avalon wraps around stunning Avalon Bay on the southeast end of Catalina; Mt. Ada, Wrigley's family home, now a luxury inn; in the '20s, William Wrigley Jr. constructed a training field that mimicked the dimensions of Wrigley Field, which the team used during the 30 years it spent spring training on the island.



On its surface, Catalina Island (visitscatalinaisland.com) is an enchanting beach getaway located 22 miles off the coast of Los Angeles. Dig a little deeper, though, and you'll find a destination steeped in Hollywood history, Chicago 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. The iconic Chicagoan once said, "The development of Catalina Island will be one of the greatest pleasures of my life." This year marks the centennial anniversary of Wrigley purchasing Catalina and turning it into the storied destination it is today.

THE CHICAGO CONNECTION In 1916, Wrigley bought a minority stake in the

Chicago Cubs, eventually purchasing the team in 1925. To draw more tourists to Catalina, he brought the Cubs to the island for spring training from 1921 to 1951. The story goes that from his home perched on the hill (fondly named Mt. 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 their progress, he would "invite" the team to run up the steep, winding hill to his house and bid him good night.

HOLLYWOOD LEGENDS Ask any islander (around 4,000 live on the island full time), and they'll happily impart a story or two about Charlie Chaplin's three decades in Catalina; Natalie Wood's untimely death after a boozy evening quarreling with her husband Robert Wagner and Christopher Walken (with whom she was allegedly having an affair); or one of the many movies filmed there—most notably *Mutiny on the Bounty*, *Treasure Island*, *The Ten Commandments* and *Ben-Hur*. But one of the most beloved

tidbits is that a young radio announcer by the name of Ronald "Dutch" Reagan once accompanied the Chicago Cubs to Catalina for spring training.

WHAT'S OLD BECOMES NEW 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, which served as a theater, dance hall and ballroom, and the Catalina Country Club (originally the Cubs' clubhouse). The historic Saint Catherine Hotel has been transformed into Descanso Beach Club, where Mediterranean vibes, chic cabanas, bottles of Veuve Clicquot and Wrigley Dogs (said to be the same as those served at Wrigley Field) are de rigueur. While true Wrigley enthusiasts will want to stay at Mt. Ada, the newest jewel in Catalina's crown is the recently refurbished Atwater Hotel, whose deluxe modern suites (from \$579) and a soon-to-open on-site restaurant are ushering in a new age of luxury on the island.