

THE GRANDE COLONIAL HOTEL REVIEW

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Categories: California, Hotels, Partnership, Restaurants

*Thank you to [The Grande Colonial](#) for hosting us.
All opinions are my own. For more information, see my disclosures [here](#).*

During our vacation in San Diego, we stayed at a couple of amazing hotels. Today, I'll be talking all about our stay at The Grande Colonial in La Jolla. This post is going to be long, so grab a cup of coffee or tea and enjoy!

Upon landing in San Diego, we picked up our rental car and headed over to check into The Grande Colonial. The hotel was a 25 minute drive from the airport, and was very easy to find. When we pulled up, I was pleased to see that the hotel had valet service, because finding parking in La Jolla would have been tough. The valet drivers were very friendly and welcomed us to The Grande Colonial.



The Hotel

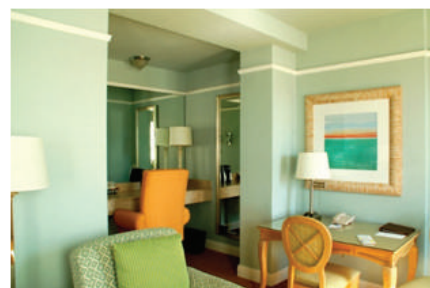


Here's some background on the The Grande Colonial. It's an intimate boutique hotel right near the beach in La Jolla. It opened in 1913, which makes it La Jolla's oldest hotel, but it has been completely modernized. It has a five-story main building, and three adjacent private buildings.

The hotel was designed by Richard Requa who was the master architect of the California Exposition in Balboa Park. He described the hotel as "a perfectly appointed apartment hotel, with the finest sun parlor and lobby overlooking the ocean on the Pacific coast." I'd have to agree with him. The hotel is gorgeous. The European-style lobby is filled with black and gold decor, and a lounge area with a fireplace, a chess set, and numerous coffee table books. I wish we had spent more time there. It seemed like the perfect place to cozy up after a long day.

There's also an outdoor terrace where guests can enjoy a meal from NINE-TEN, the hotel's award-winning restaurant. Diners get a view of the ocean and the heated outdoor pool.

The Rooms



Bryan and I loved everything about our room. We stayed in a King suite, which had a king sized bed, HD TV, two huge comfy chairs to watch TV, two desks, a goose down comforter, free high-speed wired and wireless internet, Gilchrist & Soames bath products, two plush bathrobes, a Keurig machine, and standard items like an iron and blowdryer. The room was a good size for us. It had all the extra space we needed to store our luggage, clothes, and other personal belongings.

After checking in, we had lunch, then came back to the hotel and took the most amazing three hour nap. We were completely exhausted from flying, so the bed was just what we needed. It felt like we were sleeping on clouds! It was probably the best nap I've had in a while.

However, the highlight of the room was what I woke up to the next morning – a stunning view of the ocean. While Bryan was out grabbing a quick breakfast, I opened up the window in our room to let in some fresh air, and was stunned at the gorgeous ocean view. If you're following me on Snapchat (@nicoleraudonis) or [Instagram](#), you've seen a video of this. I wish I could wake up like this everyday.

Amenities

- Complimentary high-speed wired and wireless Internet
- Outdoor heated pool
- NINE-TEN restaurant
- Complimentary day pass to the La Jolla Sports Club
- Bicycle rentals (*\$4 per hour/\$20 per day; helmets & locks included*)
- Concierge services
- Dry Cleaning services
- In-room massage, spa and wellness services
- Valet parking

Dining

During our stay, we had dinner at NINE-TEN. As mentioned above, NINE-TEN is the hotel's award-winning, ZAGAT-rated restaurant. Due to the intimate atmosphere of the restaurant, I didn't want to bother guests by taking flash photography. That being said, all the photos below were taken on my old iPhone.

The executive chef is Jason Knibb, who has spent over a decade at NINE-TEN. He was born in Montego Bay, Jamaica and came to the US when he was nine years old. Surprisingly, he never attended culinary school, but instead learned his skills in the kitchen from some of the country's most celebrated chefs, including Wolfgang Puck. He has won numerous awards and accolades for his style and cuisine – Zagat Survey® Food Score of 25 (very good to excellent); Gayot's Top 10 Molecular Restaurants in the U.S.; 2012 Zagat Top 10 Restaurants in San Diego; and a 2010 Rising Star Chef Winner/StarChefs (one of only 2 chefs in San Diego to be recognized for this coveted honor). He was also featured as a contender on the Food Network's Iron Chef America, where he battled Bobby Flay in a seafood/caviar showdown. It was the first time a San Diego chef was invited to compete on Iron Chef. Most recently, Jason was honored by the California Restaurant Association as the 2014 San Diego Chef of the Year!

To say I was excited to try his food was an understatement. I did a lot of research about Jason Knibb and NINE-TEN before arriving in San Diego. Before I go into details about our meal, let me tell you a funny story. On our way to go explore La Jolla, Bryan and I walked through the lobby of the hotel. A guy came off the elevator and I couldn't stop staring at him because I thought I knew him. However, I couldn't put my finger on where I knew him from. He probably thought I was a complete psycho because I was legit staring him down. It wasn't until we got outside of the hotel that I realized it was Jason Knibb, the chef from NINE-TEN. I had researched him so much online that I thought I knew him! It was weird.

Anyway... let's move on to what we ordered.

APPETIZERS



Given the chef's Jamaican roots, Bryan ordered the Jamaican Jerk Pork Belly. It had baby carrots, swiss chard, plantains, black-eyed peas, spicy jellies and sweet potato purée. It was cooked perfectly and melted in his mouth. I got the Pears with Bucheron Cheese, which also had figs, shaved hazelnuts, treviso, frisee, arugula and honey truffle thyme vinaigrette. OMG it was heavenly. I'm still dreaming about this dish, and need to recreate it at home. There's not many dishes at restaurants near us that feature figs, so I made sure to take advantage of them in California.

Our waiter wasn't going to let us leave without sharing the homemade gnocchi with white truffles. Oh boy, I'm glad we did. I love gnocchi, but homemade gnocchi is another level of deliciousness. Add a HUGE helping of white truffles and it's basically the best gnocchi we've ever had.

ENTREES

We both really enjoyed our entrees. They were flavorful and decent portion sizes. Bryan ordered the squab, which I learned is a young pigeon. Squab is dark meat and is tender, moist and richer in taste than other poultry meats. Bryan said it had the consistency and flavor of steak, which wasn't what he expected. I ordered the Steelhead Trout which had Brussels sprouts, lobster mushrooms, baby turnips, celery roots, chervil, celery root puree and a truffle dashi emulsion. I loved the Brussels sprouts and actually wished there were more in the dish.

DESSERT

Many of the online reviews of NINE-TEN mentioned the Half Baked Chocolate Cake, so that's what we ordered. A lot of the tables around us also ordered the cake, so I felt reassured that we made a solid choice. The cake was nice and gooey and was topped with caramel sauce, whipped cream and vanilla ice cream. We order chocolate cake frequently at restaurants at home, but this one certainly stood out.

In conclusion, I highly recommend checking out The Grande Colonial hotel if you're ever in the La Jolla area. Definitely make a stop at NINE-TEN restaurant. You won't be disappointed!

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