

TALES OF *Annie Bean*

ADVENTURE AWAITS, GO FIND IT

FOOD, TRAVEL

Where to eat and drink in San Diego

July 19, 2019

La Jolla

After an action-packed day spent with EVERYDAY CALIFORNIA at La Jolla Shores, paddling our kayak around the bay and learning about the unique ecology of the local area, we stopped off at a great little ice cream parlour called Scoops for ice cream and coffee, post kayak. By the time we finished our activities, we were so ready for dinner on day 2! A leisurely drive back through the beautiful, winding streets of the Muirlands neighbourhood, soaking in the sunshine with the roof firmly down on our Camaro, we're really starting to like this place! So next up...Nine-Ten at the Grand Colonial Hotel, La Jolla.

NineTen Restaurant – La Jolla

We're spending our 2 days north of the city staying at the Catamaran Resort, but a quick Uber took us up to La Jolla centre and the Regency splendour of the Grand Colonial Hotel. This stalwart of the La Jolla coastline has been welcoming guests since 1913, before there was organised tourism, paved streets, or even house numbers! Whilst it's been through many owners, and many renovations, you can definitely feel the history, and changing economic fortunes, of this corner of Southern California.

We were offered the choice of dining inside or outside, and with Nine-Ten having one of the most stunning terraces, and Pacific Ocean views, that we'd come across, it was a no-brainer. The sun set as the wine was poured, the sky changing colour with each course, perfect.

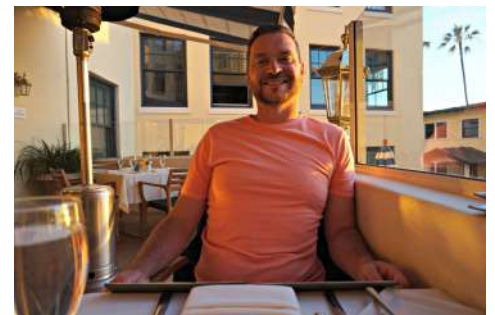
We both decided to choose exclusively from the daily specials menu and take advantage of the local flavours. We both chose an endive salad starter with local crayfish, chilli and mango, finished with a really refreshing citrus dressing. Simple doesn't have to be boring. In fact, simple food done well trumps poorly executed 'fancy' food all day long. And this was simply fantastic. Really well balanced between heat and tart, not heavy handed and overpowering, an impressive start.



This time Annie taking the duck with roasted squash, blackcurrant coulis and finished with crushed walnuts, whilst I bucked my trend of ordering something outrageous (wish for the Nile!) and took the excellent stuffed chicken with charred beetroot and asparagus puree. It's definitely fair to say that this wasn't a 'restaurant-in-a-hotel experience', this was a great restaurant, that happened to be attached to a hotel. It was creative, playful flavours, brought together with a fantastic presentation. Throw in 'that' sunset and you've got a pretty unforgettable package. Skip the chain restaurants and ignore the hotel restaurant tag. Nine-Ten is special.

Conclusion of a San Diego foodie experience

San Diego is easily the smallest 'big' city that we've spent time in over the last 2 years. Strangely, that, for me, is its most endearing quality. San Francisco, whilst beautiful, and certainly dramatic, didn't really grab me. Los Angeles has its moments, but, like the city itself, the best bits are few and far between. San Diego has a warmth, heart, and charm all of its own, in people, in architecture and attitude, that draws you back. We had 4 unforgettable days across the Greater San Diego area, and a pretty good idea of what we wanted to do. I'm pretty sure we could do 4 days a year for the next 10 years and never get bored. San Diego is NOT Los Angeles, or Las Vegas, or San Francisco. And thank goodness. It's the best bits of all of those places, and so much more.



*Some of these food experiences were gifted but all views and opinions are that of our own