

Checking In: Monarch Beach Resort in Dana Point

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Checking In: Monarch Beach Resort in Dana Point

SUZANNE KOCH, AUGUST 29, 2019

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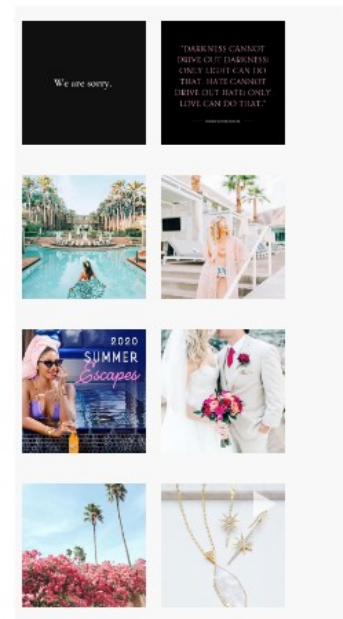
Located in sunny Dana Point, California, **Monarch Beach Resort** exudes California cool from the entrance all the way down to the coast. After passing through the grand lobby, on-site Cartier store and a huge boutique shop full of designer beach goods, I checked into a bright and airy room overlooking the golf course and ocean.



Relax the Miraval Way

The highlight of Monarch Beach (if you could possibly pick one) was easily the 30,000-sq.-ft. Miraval Life in Balance Spa. The first resort partnership and coastal location for the wellness brand, who's Tucson and most recently Austin locations are popular for their wealth of relaxing amenities, was a retreat in itself. As a huge fan of facials (and really anything else on a spa treatment menu), I opted for the Sublime Skin Lifting Facial, which was a difficult decision

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considering there's more than 70 signature treatments to choose from. But when my therapist let me know it's a great pick for anyone living in a dry climate, I was sold even more. And the ultra-dewy post-treatment look proved it. While the results were visible, the fact that it nearly put me to sleep was a testament to how relaxing it was. Usually I find myself going through to-do lists and stressing about anything and everything. But this relaxed my body *and* my mind.

The spa is also home to a lap pool, boutique, Drybar, Deborah Lippmann nail salon and fitness studios. Resort guests can enjoy complimentary classes like spin and mat pilates. I powered through the TRX class which gave me such a good workout my shaky legs couldn't even handle a day of stand-up paddle boarding. It was more like sit-down paddle boarding for me. But the coastal views of Dana Point and neighboring Laguna Beach were well worth it.



Coastal Indulgence

If the spa doesn't top your list, Bourbon Steak surely will. The entrance is a showstopper in itself. Floor-to-ceiling glass panels filled with bottles of wine greeted me upon arrival. The classy neutral-tone interiors are inviting yet still upscale, putting the focus on the seriously decadent dining. Anywhere that serves french fries with a trio of dipping sauces instead of a boring bread basket is already a winner in my book. The menu is filled with beefy cuts (they're known for butter-poached and dry-aged steaks) and fresh fish, accompanied by mouth-watering shareable sides like black truffle mac-and-cheese and crispy brussel sprouts. Even the resort's more casual AVEO Table + Bar is a must try. Its patio overlooks the stunning pool, golf course and beach and is easily the best seat in the house for coastal views.

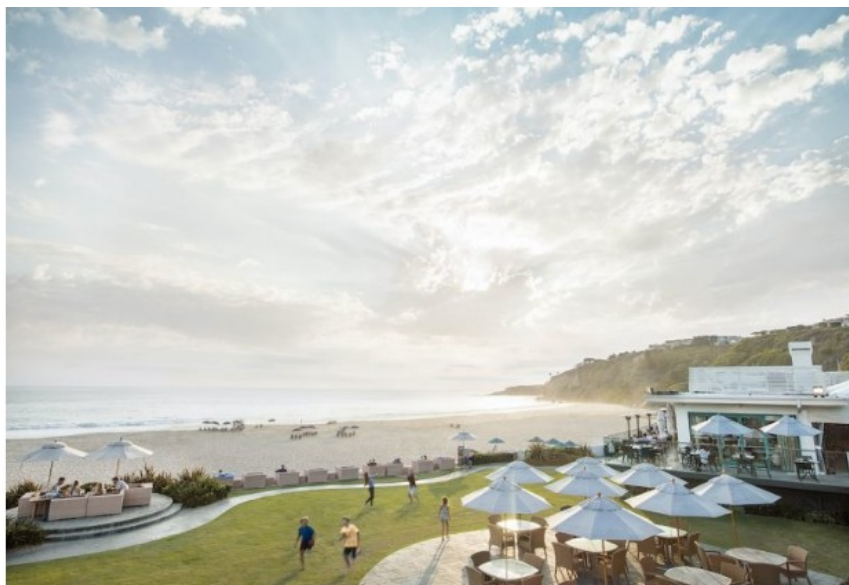


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The Newest Club

Those who have been to Monarch Beach before, now have a reason to return. On July 1, 2019 the resort debuted the completely renovated Monarch Bay Beach Club (formerly Monarch Bay Club), an all-day seaside retreat exclusive to resort guests and members. Just steps from the sand and a quick seven-minute tram ride from the lobby, the oceanfront club offers a bar, indoor-outdoor dining and a private dining room with floor-to-ceiling windows. The menu showcases the best in coastal cuisine plus an all-California wine list. The club also has a bevy of Adirondack chairs with accompanying fire-pits for beachfront s'mores and a large grassy area for outdoor play. During the daytime, head down to the club to enjoy water activities like stand-up paddle boarding, kayaking, surfing and more. They even have experienced staff available for lessons.



Golf For All

Golfers of all skill levels can tee up at the award-winning, championship-caliber Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed oceanfront Monarch Beach Golf Links. While I didn't hit the tee box, I cruised around the course on the new golf boards. A weird hybrid that reminded me of a scooter mixed with a skateboard plus the added feel of a surfboard, they're easy to master once you get the hang of it and are a fun alternative to golf carts. Not to mention, easy entertainment for any non-golfers out there (me!).

For those who are looking to hit the greens, the 6,600-yard is styled after the traditional

Scottish link style and features rolling greens, tight fairways and winning views.

For more information, visit: monarchbeachresort.com

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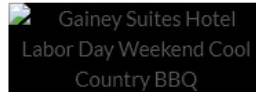
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