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THE GOOD LIFE MAGAZINE FOR MEN

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good life guide places



La Quinta Resort & Club

It says something about the La Quinta Resort & Club that its grandness is rooted in its practiced simplicity, that its status as the icon of Palm Springs resorts remains from its founding in 1926 by Walter Morgan, that its reputation as an escapist mecca is intact.

La Quinta is big, but doesn't seem so. Even with 796 rooms, 41 pools and 53 hot spas on the property, the size of the place is barely evident. From your arrival at the cozy lobby building through your walk to one of the residentially appointed casitas, suites and villas, a distinct feeling of intimacy and privacy pervades. There are no hallways here, only paths. La Quinta is far more like a private hacienda than a hotel, and therein lies its essence.

You can be as laid back as you like at La Quinta. Treat yourself to the spacious Spa La Quinta and generally just lounge around on your patio or at one of the pools, maybe taking a stroll through the grounds and plucking an orange from one of the many trees. Or you could get genuinely active in a very big way, playing golf on one of the five golf courses associated with the resort or playing tennis at the large facility run by the affable former U.S. Davis Cup captain Tom Gorman.

The golf is varied and highly sporting, with designs by Pete Dye, Jack Nicklaus and Greg Norman. Dye's TPC Stadium Course, rather infamous for its difficulty, is nonetheless quite manageable and enjoyable if played

from the correct tees. New executive director of PGA West golf properties Mike Kelly is re-energizing the facilities, overseeing refurbishment of the courses and injecting a private-club familiarity among the staff.

La Quinta is a particularly good place for the gathering of family and friends or a golf outing among buddies. It's possible to reserve a block of rooms surrounding one of the pools to create a retreat-like atmosphere. You can smoke cigars outdoors here and barbecues can be arranged around a pool.

A new restaurant, Morgan's in the Desert, has recently opened with celebrated chef Jimmy Schmidt at the helm. Schmidt is into top-quality ingredients prepared simply but with big flavor notes. Porcini crusted filet mignon, breast of duck and foie, and wild Washington State Coho salmon are typical offerings. The wine list is heavy on California, Oregon and Washington. The piano bar at the restaurant is an elegant gathering spot—and you can smoke cigars on the patio.

Two other full-service restaurants are on the property, Twenty6 and the Adobe Grill, plus there is the recently overhauled Ernie's at the TPC Stadium Course clubhouse. On the deck in front of Ernie's are fire pits surrounded by seating, a perfect spot for after-round beers and cigars.

Visit laquintaresort.com.

—Jeff Williams

moments to remember

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PGA West staffers David Hagan, Nate Williams, Jennifer Orcutt, Greg Robinson, Bill Shaw and (back row) Dale Butler, Jerry Eye, Josh Ampe, Jim MacDonough, Mike Kelly and Jason Brock celebrate the 2010 Bob Hope Classic.