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# G R E A T E S C A P E S

POINT LOMA | TRAVEL BAG | CITIZEN HIKER

By LAUREN LOFTUS

## Shelter Island & Little Italy

I start to really embrace my inner “Zonie,” as so many San Diegans deem fit to call us Arizonans who clog their roadways come June, around the time of my Himalayan salt stone massage at *Kona Kai Resort & Spa* (1551 Shelter Island Dr., San Diego, 619-221-8000, [resortkonakai.com](http://resortkonakai.com)) on the far tip of Shelter Island, a manmade strip of land in Point Loma just 10 minutes from the airport. Lying atop a bed of warmed, detoxifying salt crystals while the therapist coaxes moisture into my parched skin, I lean hard into the vacation life and suddenly don't care so much whether I'm recognized as, gasp, an out-of-towner.

Purchased by the boutique hotelier Noble House in 2013, Kona Kai has undergone extensive, multi-million-dollar renovations, unveiling 41 new guestrooms and suites this past January following a refresh of its upscale New American restaurant, *Vessel*, a breezy, Baja-style lobby and an adults-only pool overlooking a marina full of swoon-worthy yachts. The resort still plays host to the Kona Kai Club, one of the first developments to go up on the Polynesian-themed Shelter Island in 1953, which welcomed bigtime vacationers like John F. Kennedy, Dick Van Dyke and Clark Gable back in the day.