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KONA KAI REVAMP PAYS OFF

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Part of the \$13 million expansion of the Kona Kai resort was the addition of an adults-only pool. Forty-one new suites (below) were also built, bringing the total number of rooms to 170. The suites are designed with a California or coastal theme.

Manager says July, August busiest months on record after \$13 million expansion was completed in June

A \$13 million expansion and reboot of the more than half-century-old Kona Kai resort seems to have paid off for its owners, delivering one of the best summers the Shelter Island property has ever had.

The enlarged hotel, completed in June, now has 41 more suites, bringing the total number of rooms to 170, all of which have views of San Diego Bay or the

Kona Kai Marina. A second pool area for the exclusive use of adult guests also was added, as was a new outdoor event space overlooking the Point Loma hillside.

“July and August were by far the busiest months we’ve ever experienced,” said hotel general manager Hugh Hedin. “It is clear that San Diego visitors have been waiting for a brand new suite product at the beach.”

The suites were designed to



reflect two distinct themes — “California endless summer,” featuring splashes of burnt orange, reminiscent of a Southern California sunset, and “coastal Mediterranean,” dominated by cobalt blue tones.

The expansion represented the second phase of a \$27 million makeover that began with extensive room renovations; a new hotel restaurant, Vessel; the addition of a spa; and a re-designed lobby.

The project was launched after Noble

House Hotels acquired the Kona Kai leasehold, which sits on Port of San Diego tidelands, in 2012 for \$12.5 million. Sean Mullen, now president of acquisitions for Noble House, said at the time that the property was no longer “top of mind” among visitors to San Diego and that the company hoped to raise its profile as a destination by reinvesting millions of dollars in the resort.



Some of the new suites at the Kona Kai resort on Shelter Island feature a coastal Mediterranean decor.