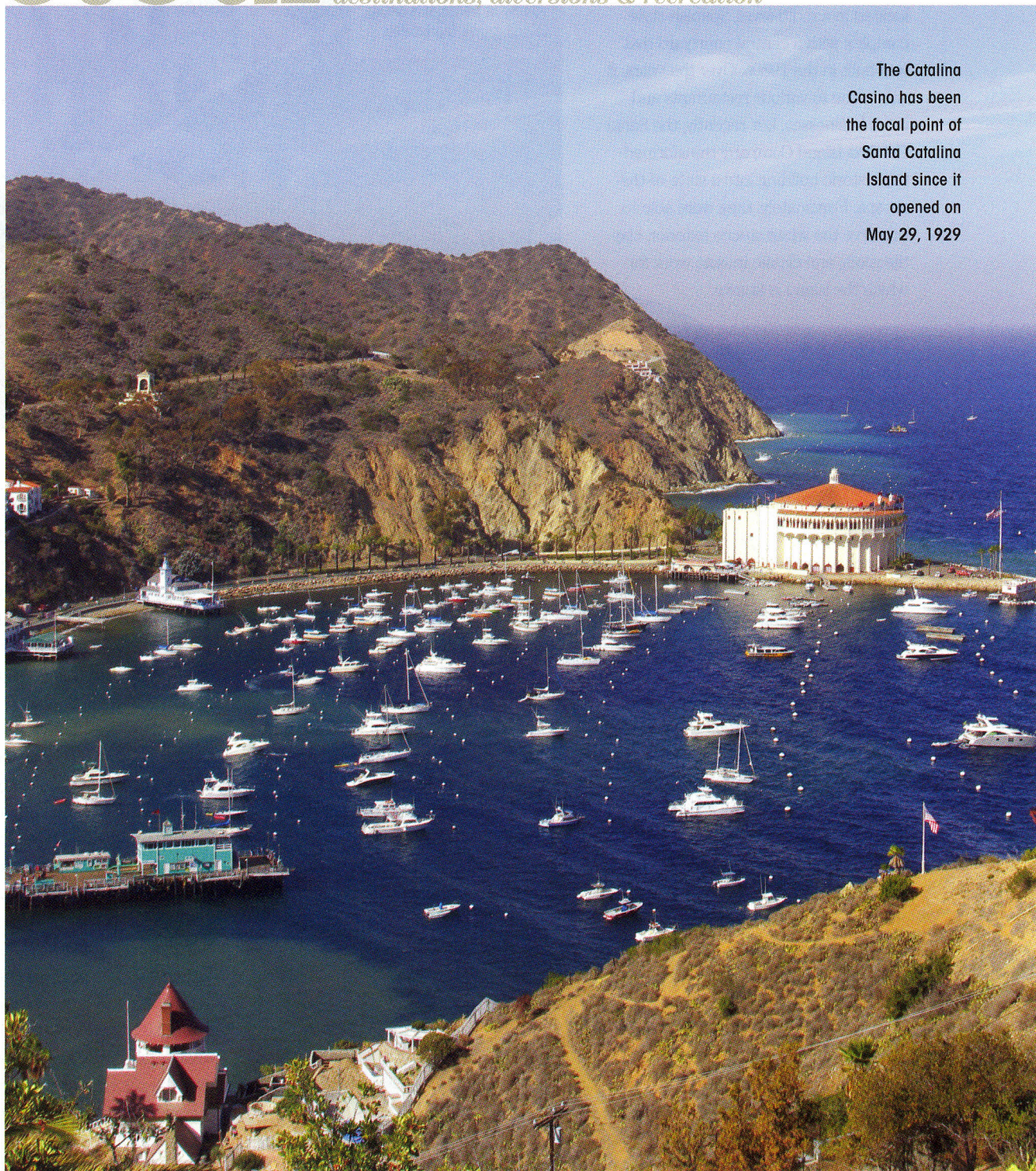


# detour

destinations, diversions & recreation

The Catalina Casino has been the focal point of Santa Catalina Island since it opened on May 29, 1929



PHOTOGRAPH BY ADAMS/HANSEN STOCK PHOTOS AND ISLAND EXPRESS HELICOPTERS

## New Year, New You: Cast Away Your Cares on Catalina

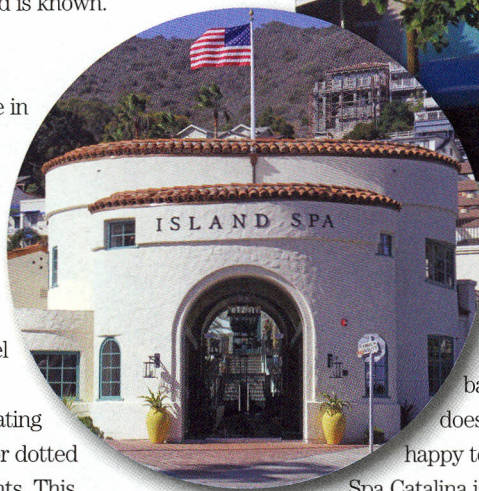
You decorated, you entertained, you were a great guest — and now that the holidays are over you deserve self time and some serious pampering. In a perfect world, you found a gift certificate for a spa in Tuscany under the tree — but, failing that, I have another idea. Island Spa Catalina (yes, that Catalina, the one that's "26 miles across the sea") opened in mid-November. I was there a few days later to check it out and was really impressed. In more than ten years as the travel editor of *Ranch & Coast*, I've seen *lots* of spas but never one quite like this. >>



« To begin with, the full-service spa is located in a multi-level, Spanish-style complex with a central courtyard that was built in the 1930s. Over the years, it was home to various restaurants and retail businesses, but recently, the Santa Catalina Island Company transformed the historic building into a state-of-the-art spa. Fortunately, they were able to preserve the white stucco exterior, clay tile roofs, and classic mosaic work for which the island is known.

The result is a charming space in which to relax and de-stress. I am especially enamored with the *al fresco* deck on the second level where comfortable seating faces the harbor dotted with white yachts. This spacious co-ed relaxation area invites lingering with good friends or a good book. You could even pick up lunch or a beverage at the Spa Café and enjoy it here. I also really like the cozy sitting niches for one or two dotted around the complex, and I absolutely love the fact that there is a small tiled pool and a hot spa pool in the courtyard. (So

Island Spa Catalina offers a variety of treatments using island-grown ingredients



remember to bring your suit.)

If your mind, body, and soul need balancing (and whose doesn't?), you'll be happy to know that Island

Spa Catalina is home to the only warm rose quartz table on the West Coast. Take a Catalina cat nap here and, I'm told, you'll wake up feeling refreshed. Other facilities include six single treatment rooms, one couple's suite, and two bi-level tower suites where a small group of friends can relax and enjoy treatments together. There's also a wellness studio (with signature

aqua mats) and a salon.

A staff of 25 therapists and estheticians offer popular treatments including the Seaweed Surrender Wrap (good for detoxing away holiday indulgences), The Hydra Facial, and Island Deep Massage. Hubby even got daring and had his first-ever facial — the Men's Catalina Classic.

## Getting There Catalina

Express boats leave regularly from Long Beach, San Pedro, and Dana Point, but I'm glad we opted for the birds-eye view offered by Island Express Helicopters. The drive from La Jolla to the Long Beach heliport took about an hour and a half and the flight to the island was just 15 minutes. The staff was super friendly, the seating comfortable, and the visibility excellent. We didn't see any whales, but it was really interesting to view the colorful container port and the Queen Mary from the air and I appreciated the Avalon Harbor overview coming into Catalina.

([www.islandexpress.com](http://www.islandexpress.com))

## Where to Stay & Dine

We appreciated the waterfront location and the garden setting of the Pavilion Hotel. The generous breakfast buffet and complimentary wine/cheese hour were other bonuses. Standard rooms

Island Express Helicopters whisks guests from Long Beach to Catalina in 15 beautiful minutes





aren't overly spacious, so you might want to request one of the two second-floor suites. Very near the Pavilion, we enjoyed an excellent dinner in the stylish surroundings of the Avalon Grille.

Alternatively, it would be really fun to stay at The Inn On Mt. Ada. The six-room heritage guest house was formerly the home of William Wrigley Jr. and his wife Ada. He used part of his chewing gum fortune to buy the island and had the house built for his wife in 1921. The traditionally furnished mansion, located on Mount Ada with a breathtaking view of the harbor, is temporarily closed, but is scheduled to re-open on February 8, just in time for Valentine's Day. Rates here include use of a golf cart for exploring Avalon, breakfast, lunch, and drinks and snacks throughout the day.

Frankly, regardless of where you stay, I think you'll have fun casting away your cares on Catalina.

([www.visitcatalinaisland.com](http://www.visitcatalinaisland.com))

ELIZABETH HANSEN



Avalon is a picturesque seaport with a permanent population of about 3,500 and close to one million annual visitors



The Inn On Mt. Ada, built by William Wrigley, Jr. in 1921, overlooks Avalon Harbor