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5 Couples' Retreats

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5 couples' RETREATS

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If your kids are either out of the house or signed up for a million activities this summer, it's time for you and your sweetie to rendezvous for some much-needed rejuvenation without the worry of finding kid-friendly zones and the constant use of anti-bac gel. This month, sit back, relax and let *Style* take you on a couple-guided tour of five not-that-far-away destinations perfect for exploration, relaxation, romance and adventure with your closest companion, and we spill the secrets to find some of the best spots for sizzling summer getaways.

Hotel Solamar

1. DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO

Romantic Routes: To shoot straight down to San Diego take I-5 South for approximately 500 miles and you're there; or book an easy flight out of SWE.

Sweet Dreams:

Hotel Solamar: A hip luxury pet-friendly hotel immersed in the dynamic energy of downtown San Diego is the perfect contemporary setting for the vibrant couple seeking sun-and-sea attitudes in a modern-chic surrounding, such as that of the Historic Gaslamp District in San Diego. This boutique-style Kimpton Hotel offers an ideal destination for leisure lovers and lovers alike. The hosted wine and appetizer happy hour every evening is a fabulous treat to either end your day or start your night hotelsolamar.com.

Table for Two:

Café 222. As if kids again and you'll flip for the 222's Green Eggs and Spam... it's

unbelievably good! Or, try their Pumpkin Waffle featured in *Gourmet Magazine*. cafe222.com

The Cowboy Star. Every good glass of red wine deserves a great steak to savor alongside. The 40-ounce Porterhouse for two should do the trick. thecowboystar.com

Jiix. Offering "slow food" inspired cuisine -- you can tell they put a lot of love in each of their dishes...especially their Handcrafted Burger or the signature Chicken & Dumplings. jiixrestaurant.com

Hash House A Go Go. If you both burned way too many calories burning up the dance floor the night before, you'll want to get your fill here. And, I do mean fill. The portions are gargantuan, meaning one plate could feed a small family. But, the thing is, their Sage Fried Chicken with Bacon Waffles is so good, I could never share. hashhouseagogo.com

Activities Amaré:

Del Mar Thoroughbred Club. Get your hearts racing with a little good ole fashioned horse betting! Bring your fancy hat and get dressed up to enjoy the excitement of blind faith. dmtc.com

The Old Globe. Nothing says romance like a night at the theatre. Take in a performance and get lost in make-believe. oldglobe.org

San Diego Zoo. Find your wild sides at the widest spot downtown. A zoo of all zoos, the San Diego Zoo does not disappoint and will get you up-close-and-personal with everything from hippos to gorillas. sandiegozoo.org

Guilty Pleasures:

Whether you want a Smoked Salmon Hash Benedict or great Veggie Pizza, you can get the ultimate midnight snack at **Brian's 24**. brians24.com

Splurge on a spa treatment at **Rock Spa** at Hard Rock Hotel San Diego. hardrockhotels.com

Savor "Sinful Petit Desserts" and cheeses at **Karen Krasne Extraordinary Desserts**. extraordinarydesserts.com

2. SYCAMORE MINERAL SPRINGS RESORT – SAN LUIS OBISPO AND AVILA BEACH

Romantic Route: A little under five hours, this trip via the automobile is a pretty quick trip, with 200 of the total miles spent cruising on I-5 South. Stop along the way and wine taste in the now-expansive Paso Robles wine region (pasowine.com). You can also pick up great bites to eat to pair with your vino.

Sweet Dreams:

Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort. Here, restful sleep can be reached in moments at this property where nature meets luxury. In one of the Resort's King Suites, you'll get a secluded location with no car access (you get a golf cart ride to the suite door), and your own private balcony with hot tub using pure mineral water indigenous to the area. sycamoremineralsprings.com

Table for Two:

Gardens of Agha Restaurant. Cross forks and spaghetti kiss when you order the tasty and fresh Pasta Pomodoro (add chicken or shrimp for a little more protein); or spice up the night with the Grilled American Lamb Sirloin at the restaurant on the property of the Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort. Surrounded in the beauty of nature, the dining experience will leave your body feeling not only peacefully relaxed, but satisfied from food not missing anything.

Pete's Pierside:

It's not always all about the linen quality of the white table cloth. Sometimes you just want good unpretentious food...like authentic fish tacos. Order their Mahi Mahi Tacos, or just about anything on their handwritten menu board, and you're sure to be more than surprised. The low price, hodgepodge lawn furniture dining patio is barely noticeable when you've got the best view in town from the Pier at Avila Beach. 3 Pier # 3, Avila Beach.

Activities Amore:

Couple-Guided Hikes. Take the self-guided

hikes with your partner and enjoy an "adventure filled with spectacular vistas." Sycamore has trails right from the property for all levels of hikers; from one and a half miles to six miles in length, all of the trails offer phenomenal ocean views and/or coastal access, and plenty of places to sneak in a smooch.

Wine Exploration. Take a little side trip and get out to taste the region's wines. A stop at **Alapay Cellars** in downtown Avila Beach (alapaycellars.com) will yield some of the best of the area; also enjoy both local art and local wine at the Morovino Tasting Room inside the **Haub Art Gallery** in Avila Beach. morovino.com.

Guilty Pleasures:

Go Nuts! Doughnuts, that is. Swing by **Sunshine Donuts** for a tasty confection any time of day or night. Offering everything from the Frosted Devil's Food and Maple Bois to French-style doughnuts and custard- and jelly-filled varieties. The only thing that could ruin the moment is not bringing cash; they don't accept credit cards. 195 Higuera Street, SLO.

Tranquility for Two. Enjoy this partner-necessary massage treatment featuring side-by-side, therapeutic full body integrative massage. Follow it up with one of the **Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort Wellness Center's** "wine therapy" body treatments. sycamoremineralsprings.com

Just Dance. Pretend like no one's watching and move to some great dance music, including classic hits, rock 'n' roll and cover bands spanning the decades – there's something for everyone at **Harry's Nightclub & Beach Bar**. At this joint you can let your hair down for the live music seven days a week. qualitysties.com/harrys

3. HALF MOON BAY

Romantic Route: Just 25 miles south of San Francisco, this is another pretty quick car ride, taking no more than 3 hours from most areas in our region; be sure to bring cash for the bridge toll!

Fall "Inn" Love:

For couples who like to unwind B&B style, **Half Moon Bay Inn**, situated in the heart of downtown Half Moon Bay, is an award-winning boutique Inn built in 1932 and

recently renovated to preserve its Spanish Revival architecture. Definitely European-feeling, this downtown historically rich and richly adorned property exudes romance and attention to detail. The innkeeper, Jamie, is so inviting and warm – you instantly feel taken care of. halfmoonbayinn.com

Table for Two:

Sandwich your Love. Infamous for their fall-in-love sandwiches, **San Benito Deli** at the San Benito House offers simple combinations that are straightforward and even better shared. Voted "Best Sandwich in Half Moon Bay...you can bet it's for good reason. Sandwiches come in your choice of homemade whole wheat, French or olive walnut. sanbenitohouse.com

Half Moon Bay Brewing Company. Enjoy a much-adored love potion at this hotspot dive for both locals and visitors. With a great patio for seaside dining any time of day, the Brewery – producing top-quality Mavericks Beers & Ales in addition to hearty local cuisine – is the place to order the Yucatan Coyicha and beer-battered, deep-fried artichoke hearts. hmbrewingco.com

Sam's Chowder House. Enough said – get the chowder here. And, rumor has it – Sam's Baked Oysters Rockefeller have been known to make sparks fly. samschowderhouse.com

Activities Amore:

Coastal Elegance Tours. Experience the beauty of the Pacific Coast up close and personal...on a bike! Hitch up with CET and experience several ecorecycling tours featuring rides for all skill levels through only the must-see spots. Look out for the local wildlife! coastalelegancetours.com

Sea Kayaking. Whether you're an adventurer or a low-key leisurist, there's a kayak exploration waiting just for you. **Half Moon Bay Kayak Co.** offers paddling among the harbor seals, seabirds and other marine sanctuary wildlife in protected Pillar Point Harbor. hmbkayak.com

Harley Goat Farm Tour. Who says cheese isn't sexy? The goats here may not be runway ready, but they sure are cute and fun to pet! In addition to learning how a dairy runs and cheesemaking techniques, a visit to these award-winning goat cheese