

VOGUE

You'll Never Want to Leave Laguna Beach's Newest Hotel



Orange County—made a household name by shows like *The OC* and *The Real Housewives of Orange County*—sits comfortably between Los Angeles and San Diego, housing over 3 million inhabitants. While towns such as Anaheim (home to Disneyland) and Newport Beach have always been standby spots to swing by in between visits to major cities, a new boutique hotel in Laguna Beach makes the case to stay past lunch. Opening its doors to guests this August, Hotel Joaquin draws inspiration from the beaches of St. Barth's while paying homage to classic Southern California with an elegant, laid-back aesthetic.



Designed by Robert McKinley of Montauk's The Surf Lodge and SoHo food staple Sant Ambroeus, the oceanfront property is just the place for an idyllic weekend escape. Vinyl record players replace television sets, and a private beach paired with access to the Adventure Garage—home to surfboards, hiking and diving gear, beach toys, and more—encourages guests to unplug during their time in Laguna. "When guests show up, they disconnect from their phone and want to reconnect with themselves in a place that has such natural beauty," says Paul Makarechian, the owner and CEO of Auric Road, the collection of "petite resorts" that includes Hotel Joaquin. "We want you to find the best version of yourself during your stay."



Makarechian grew up in Orange County, and he's had his eye on Laguna Beach for years. With an artistic community, and residents who are passionate about the ocean and outdoors, he deemed the coastal town a "soulful location," and the most desirable spot for his next hotel (he is also the mastermind behind Korakia in Palm Springs, among other properties). "I was waiting for the right opportunity," he says. "Something cool, cute, and historical that was on the right side of the Pacific Coast Highway, was walking distance to downtown, and close to the beautiful beaches I grew up on."



Extensive travels through Europe and the Caribbean exposed Makarechian to small hotels with a lot of charm. McKinley shared the same vision for the property: a California beach bungalow with French Riviera style. The designer sourced much of the decor abroad. "We did a really big buy in France, in both Normandy and Paris in the flea markets and got great artwork, sculptures, lighting, and some great furniture," McKinley says. Other designs are closer to home, with custom art by Sage Vaughn, Danny Fuller, and Sean Spellman.