# LaFayette Hotel, San Diego



A major upgrade for one of the West Coast’s legendary hotels renders it even more deliciously nutty than before!

\*\*So, where are we? \*\*

In the hipsterish North Park area, a few minutes from downtown San Diego, the ‘most expensive town in America’, on the Pacific coast south of Los Angeles and a few miles from the Mexican border. And the gay area of Hillcrest is almost walkably close.

\*\*And where we’re staying...? \*\*

At The LaFayette, a recently-reopened gem of an old Hollywood bolthole that has, in its time since it opened in the 1940s, played host to everyone from Frank Sinatra and Nina Simone to Marilyn Monroe herself, who filmed Some Like It Hot just down the road at the equally legendary Hotel Del Coronado.

\*\*What’s the style? \*\*

Well, minimalist it most certainly ain’t. From the moment you step through the famous Palladian facade - past the neon and the signs for LouLou’s, the in-house nightclub, where the tiger print carpet is the most low-key part of a room with a gold shell stage and ceiling fringing, past the built-in vinyl-only DJ booth - everywhere is festooned with gorgeous things and lighting so low you might trip over it. Over there is the circular bar with the terrace, outdoor bar and pool beyond it, to the right is the 24-hour diner and The Gutter antique bowling alley and games room. With retro-looking neon and that low low lighting the atmos is so sexy it makes you want to start taking your clothes off.

**And the rooms?**

With huge canopied beds, mis-matching wallpaper - classical war scenes on one, bush babies on the other - gold snake handles, Murano glass lamps and fringes on everything, the rooms are a playground of over-the-top proportions. The bathrooms are fittingly late-deco with Diptyque amenities, the mini bar is about as maxi as it could be complete with every liquor and even a cocktail shaker and lemons with a sharp knife! And, this being a pool-side room, the pool is through French windows, past 40s-style raffia outdoor furniture and just two steps from the water. Literally. Two steps. Literally! We measured.

\*\*Is there a story? \*\*

So much story we don’t have time to tell it. Built during the Second World War, Bob Hope was the first person to sign the guest register, with the likes of Ava Gardner, Lana Turner, Lucille Ball and John Wayne not far behind. Now lovingly restored to beyond what it ever was, it’s once again San Diego’s most exciting destination hotel.

\*\*And to eat? \*\*

The 24-hour Beginners Diner is a retro jewel of lacquered ceilings, booths and up-at-the-counter seating serving diner classics from steak and eggs with hash browns to sky-high burgers. But the real food story is Quixote, an almost-impossible-to-get-into restaurant downstairs that comes over like a Spanish cathedral with its low lighting, a bar that was probably an altar in some church and a huge statue of a chained devil in front of the stained glass windows. The Mexican food is the best and most authentic this side of the border with crab donuts, a mescal menu to dazzle and the most delicious guacamole we have had in our entire mouths.

\*\*So, to sum up... \*\*

This lavish, quirky, sexy, cheeky little scamp of a hotel set around a gorgeous pool giving off Beverly Hills Hotel vibes with its stripy umbrellas and retro loungers is one of the best things about a town everyone is falling in love with all over again. And it’s as nutty as a fruitcake.

[lafayettehotelsd.com](https://lafayettehotelsd.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.lafayettehotelsd.com/> - The official website of The LaFayette Hotel in San Diego, providing details about its history, amenities, and recent renovations.
2. <https://www.sandiego.org/explore/things-to-do/neighborhoods/north-park.aspx> - This link from the San Diego Tourism Authority confirms North Park as a hipsterish area near downtown San Diego, as mentioned in the article.
3. <https://www.hoteldel.com/about/history/> - The Hotel Del Coronado's official history page corroborates the claim that Marilyn Monroe filmed 'Some Like It Hot' nearby.
4. <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/business/tourism/story/2023-08-10/the-lafayette-hotel-reopens-in-north-park-after-years-long-renovation> - A news article from the San Diego Union-Tribune detailing the recent reopening and renovation of The LaFayette Hotel.