

CHARTING A VOYAGE

of

DISCOVERY

Looking for a diversion from the golf show? San Diego offers a multitude of waterside activities. *by Helen M. Stone*

Conquistador Juan Cabrillo set sail to the north September 1542 looking for the mythic gold cities of Cibola. Cabrillo also hopes he can find the Straits of Anian, a waterway connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Instead, he and his crew pull into a “very good enclosed port” and become the first Europeans to set foot upon what is now the California coast – and breathtaking San Diego.

Whether the GCSAA conference and show is your first visit or you are a regular guest of this dynamic area, a voyage of discovery awaits you. Yes, there are nearly 100 golf courses in the area to keep you busy, but if you want to go beyond the convention center and indulge in other activities besides golfing, this seaside paradise satisfies.

Even if you decide to stay close to the conference and want to skip the hassle of renting a car, there is a multitude of waterside activities and eats. Just a short stroll down the waterfront brings you to Seaport Village (www.seaportvillage.com), a complex offering a wealth of small shops and restaurants in every price range, many with bay views.

If you are feeling energetic, stroll past the bustling Village and check out the waterfront action. If you need to fuel up, both locals and tourists rave about the Fish Market (www.thefishmarket.com/locations.aspx?id=6)

The house-smoked fish trio appetizer is a terrific prelude to the signature cioppino, an amazing combination of seafood in a savory marinara sauce. You can choose from casual dining on the patio, a fully stocked sushi bar or an upscale fine dining experience all in the same place.

Continue on to explore the Navy Pier. If you're lucky, there will be a Navy ship docked and offering free tours, or spend a few bucks and visit the USS Midway, a retired aircraft carrier that now serves as a museum featuring 27 restored aircraft (www.midway.org). If that doesn't wear you out, keep heading north.

You'll pass Broadway Pier, a docking area for all kinds of bay tours and a ferry to Coronado across the bay (www.sdhe.com). Do yourself a favor and book one of these. You can learn a bit about the area while enjoying spectacular views. February is also a great time of year for whale watching (with guaranteed sightings!).

Keep heading north and check out one the world's best collection of historic ships at Maritime Museum (www.sdmartime.org). Lucky you. February just happens to be Museum Month (www.sandiegomuseumcouncil.org/museum_month) so you can visit both museums, along with 38 others in San Diego for half price. Everything from art to natural history to railroads to botanic gardens await exploration

If you don't feel like walking back, head

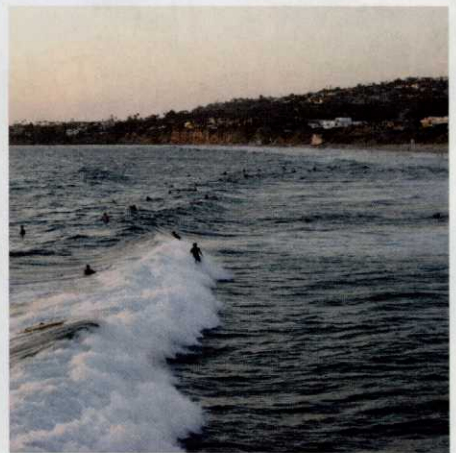
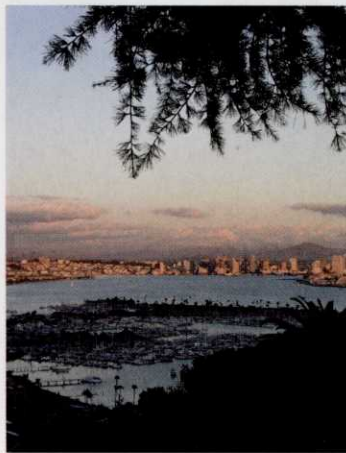
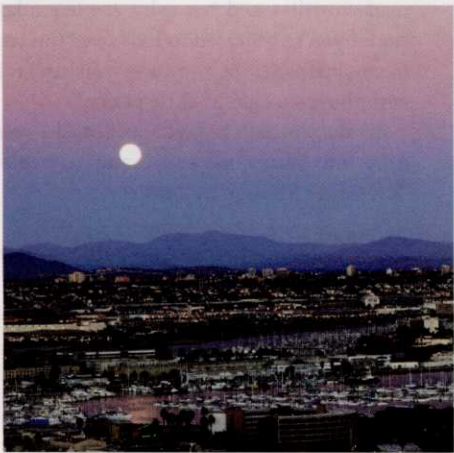
“inland” on Broadway and hop on the San Diego Trolley, which takes you right back to the Convention Center in no time (www.sdmts.com/trolley/trolley.asp). With a little bit of planning, the trolley can take you just about anywhere and the price can't be beat – only \$5 for a full day pass and even less if you purchase multiple days.

Speaking of trolleys, a great way to get to know the area is the San Diego Trolley Tour (www.trolleytours.com/san-diego). This takes you to all the “hot spots” with a guide who can steer you to the sites that best suits your interests. You can get off and on any time you please to explore further, grab a bite to eat or just relax.

If you only have a couple hours to dash out between the show and seminars, there are a host of restaurants, shopping and night life near the convention center or a short cab ride away. You'll be right next to the “Gaslamp District,” downtown revival at its best.

For “new American,” try the Croce's (www.croces.com). A trailblazer during downtown redevelopment, it was founded by musician Jim Croce's widow, Ingrid, and features live music every night to compliment your dining experience.

With its proximity to Mexico, you'd think that San Diego would offer some amazing Mexican restaurants, and you'd be right. Downtown, the locals' choice top choice is La Puerta (www.lapuertasd.com). The



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homemade salsas served with tortilla chips are a prelude to a great meal featuring traditional Mexican specialties and a few surprises. (Hint: Try to make it down for “Taco Tuesday.” Happy hour from 3-7 p.m. offers two buck tacos and brews that will bring out the matador in you.)

If Asian is more your style, give Taka a try (www.takasushi.com). The freshest sushi you can get (many locals call it the best in San Diego), plus teriyaki dishes and steaks, make this a great addition to your dining rotation.

If you're in the mood for Italian, San Diego has its own “Little Italy.” The area was home to Italian fisherman and their families in the 1920s, and is still known for its terrific food and friendly shops. If you're in need of one of the best sandwiches in town, San Diego locals flock to the deli at Mona Lisa Italian Foods (www.monalisalittleitaly.com). You can also order a full meal or fabulous pizza at the adjacent restaurant.

Why not stay an extra day and have a blast at the Carnavale on Feb. 9? This event, now in its tenth year, is like Mardi Gras with an Italian twist! Great costumes, plenty of music and dancing in the streets await! (www.littleitalysd.com/events/little-italy-carnevale).

One last “must-see” nearby is Petco Park, home of the San Diego Padres. Although you won't be there during baseball season, the

80-minute tours are a great way to get out and stretch your legs while seeing this venue up close and personal (<http://sandiego.padres.mlb.com/sd/ballpark/tours/index.jsp>).

Do you fish? If catching barracuda and yellowtail tuna sounds like fun and you can spare a half day, join one of the popular sport fishing outings that leave from nearby docks on the harbor (www.sportfishing.org). Early birds can depart at 6:30 am, or opt for the afternoon departure if you are attending morning classes. Don't worry if you don't have tackle; it's available for rent. You can even have your catch of the day processed and shipped home.

If hiking – or strolling – in amid lush landscapes and fine architecture is more your style, Balboa Park is a great way to while away an afternoon or the day. The world-famous San Diego Zoo is nestled in the heart of the park. Enjoy ornate structures and gardens built for the Panama-California Exposition in 1915, admire rare and colorful plants in a huge lathhouse, or enjoy drinks or a meal amidst a lush landscape. If you want to take advantage of Museum Month, everything from fine art to natural history to “oooh-aaah” science surprises await.

If you have a day and a car, treat yourself to a tour of San Diego's famous beaches. From downtown, head north on Harbor Drive to Point Loma. There are spectacular views as

you reach the Point. You can stop and visit the lighthouse and museum if you like, or explore the abundant ocean life in the tidepools. There's a good chance you will see migrating whales as well.

Head back and go north to Sunset Cliffs Boulevard and Ocean Beach. You can grab a cup of coffee and a pastry at Azucar Cuban Coffee (www.iloveazucar.com) on Newport Avenue and visit the municipal fishing pier to enjoy the ocean breeze. Then keep heading north to check out Mission Bay and the Aquatic Park. (You can also catch Sea World Drive and visit Sea World for a day of adventure if you chose.) West Mission Bay Drive ends at the beach and boardwalk. Stop for some truly world-class people watching. Rent a bike, grab a quick bite to eat or a beer and watch the surfers ride the waves.

Keep going on Mission Boulevard, hugging the coast until you reach La Jolla Boulevard (pronounced “La Hoya”). This upscale enclave boast some truly inspiring views, great opportunities for shopping and snacks, and the famous Children's Pool. This gentle beach is home to a colony of seals and you can enjoy the sight of these ocean mammals sunning, splashing and even nurturing their young.

After watching the sunset at La Jolla Cove, you can either extend the day by dining at one of the many restaurants in town, or hit the freeway for the drive back downtown. If you're up for one last adventure, or if you want to crown the day with another terrific Mexican meal, stop at Old Town.

This state historic park boasts more than 30 restaurants, but what might be the crown jewel is Old Town Mexican Cafe. The home made tortillas and hot salsa are legendary. And if you're too tired to look over the large menu, just order the carnitas – you can't miss with these succulent “little porks.”

So do yourself a favor and build some time into your conference stay to explore “America's Finest City.” **GCI**

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Balboa Park is a 1,200-acre urban cultural park in San Diego. In addition to open space areas, natural vegetation green belts, gardens and walking paths, it contains museums, several theaters, and the world-famous San Diego Zoo