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SAN DIEGO EAST COUNTY

An Awesome Side Trip

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San Diego East County, An Awesome Side Trip

JUDITH GLYNN

For some, it's unthinkable to venture outside of San Diego. Why bother when California's second-largest city has an idyllic climate, 70 miles of pristine beaches, a world-class zoo, the lively Gaslamp Quarter, Legoland California and numerous family and individual attractions.

But an hour's drive northeast is San Diego's East County, which is a fantastic rural experience. For example, there's year-round apple-pie sampling in Julian. Nature lovers head for the Anza-Borrego Desert and its kaleidoscope of springtime wildflowers. Foodies dine in tiny Wynola at a Cordon Bleu-chef restaurant with a Spanish Mission visit nearby. And for the adventurous, an abandoned gold mine guided tour is top-notch. Taken individually, a suggested itinerary includes the following.



Eagle Mining Company.

The 265-acre Rancho Bernardo Inn Golf Resort & Spa is 30 minutes from the San Diego Airport and in East County. The Preferred Hotels and Resorts Worldwide member recently completed a \$25 million-dollar renovation. Each of its 287 Guest Rooms and Suites feature amenities such as 42-inch TVs, wireless Internet, custom furniture and private patios or balconies. On site there's an 18-hole championship golf course, luxurious spa and the award-winning El Bizcocho Restaurant.

Special to *Travel World News* is a one-night deluxe accommodation for two with breakfast, complimentary parking and resort fee. The Couple's Spa Escape includes for her an 80-minute chocolate indulgence or strawberry and grapefruit Made Fresh Daily spa treatment (depending upon date). For him, it's a 50-minute deep tissue massage followed by a warming back scrub finish. Price is \$499 plus tax, double occupancy. Black out dates and some restrictions may apply. Offer available through April 30, 2011. Agent commission is 10% on room revenue. **877-517-9340/"Sweet Retreat"; <http://ranchobernardoinn.com>**

San Diego Convention & Visitors Bureau for East County
www.sandiego.org/nav/Visitors; Julian, www.julianca.com

AQUA HOTELS & RESORTS WELCOMES QUEEN KAPIOLANI HOTEL

Aqua Hotels & Resorts has added the 312-room Queen Kapiolani Hotel to its Waikiki portfolio.

Based in Los Angeles, YHB Hospitality Group purchased the Queen Kapiolani Hotel in 2009. Since then, it has quietly worked to renovate and restore the hotel to its original ambiance and prestige.

"We are elated to have this significant and culturally focused Waikiki hotel join our group," said Bill Henderson, VP of Development for Aqua Hotels & Resorts. Since acquiring it in 2009, YHB Hospitality Group has spent over \$5 million in upgrades to the Queen Kapiolani hotel. Renovations include improvements and enhancements to the exterior and entrance; renovation of the sundeck with new pool furniture and pool bar; upgrades to guest rooms including new carpet, furniture, bedding, etc., creating a distinguished and attractive new option for travelers.

Queen Kapiolani Hotel offers a range of guest rooms with private lanai and magnificent views, high-speed Internet access, refrigerator and coffeemaker. Hotel amenities include a third-floor swimming pool and sundeck, ballroom and Kulana Terrace Restaurant & Bar. Aqua Hotels & Resorts, www.aquaresorts.com