

Newport Beach

Epitomizes all that's Fun, Glitzy and Unique
about the Holidays in Southern California
by Tim O'Day



The 100th Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade sets sail in Newport Harbor, featuring brilliantly illuminated multimillion-dollar yachts, December 17 – 21.

The weather outside won't be frightful and the landscape may not be snowy and white, but it is guaranteed that the holiday season in Southern California is always charming, merry and bright, especially in the seaside resort destination of Newport Beach. This holiday season, the opulent getaway will be brimming with holiday cheer, featuring long-standing traditions, plus an all-new ultra-luxurious resort getting "unwrapped" just in time for the holidays. Where trends and fads come and go as quickly as jets at John Wayne-Orange County Airport (SNA), Newport Beach is ready to mark the upcoming 2008 holiday season with the 100th anniversary of its glittering Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade.

Cited as "one of the top holiday happenings in the nation" by The New York Times, the Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade (ChristmasBoatParade.com, 949.729.4400) is the oldest holiday boat

parade in the United States and perhaps the most spectacular in the country, delighting generations since 1908. The annual parade has been described as the aquatic equivalent to the spectacle of Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade or the Pasadena Tournament of Roses.

The centennial edition of this Southern California holiday tradition kicks off on December 17 and continues through December 21 at 6:30 p.m., each evening in Newport Harbor. With the theme of "100 Years of Christmas Cheer," the stunning parade is expected to again attract an audience of over one million spectators over the five consecutive evenings. The parade features an armada of nearly 100 yachts (some boat owners through the years have spent over \$50,000 to decorate their vessels!) and winds its way nearly 14 miles around Newport Harbor (one of the largest small yacht harbors in the world) to give viewers in restaurants, yacht



Towering Christmas tree at Fashion Island; The Resort at Pelican Hill, one of the world's finest luxury destinations, opens November 26.

clubs, hotels and in private homes an incredible sight.

Another Newport Beach holiday tradition occurs at Fashion Island (ShopFashionIsland.com, 949.721.2000), Southern California's premier Mediterranean-style open-air shopping center with views of the Pacific Ocean. Every year, Fashion Island hosts what is thought to be the nation's tallest Christmas tree display, a grand 115-foot white fir direct from the forests of Northern California's Mt. Shasta. The impressive tree features 17,000 white lights, bows and ornaments, and weighs approximately 20,000 pounds. It takes a 10-man crew nearly two weeks to decorate the enormous tree.

Every year, Fashion Island works closely with Victor's Strictly Custom Christmas Trees (VictorsChristmasTrees.com) and the U.S. Forestry Service (FS.Fed.us) in finding the towering tree. Victor's replants an average of

10 trees for every one tree harvested, and trees are only removed from designated timber areas where harvesting will have no detrimental impact on the environment. The tree is recycled into mulch after the holidays.

The town gets an extra-special cheer this year with the early arrival of The Resort at Pelican Hill (PelicanHill.com, 800.315.8214), a spectacular new ultra-luxurious resort that is scheduled for "unwrapping" on November 26 on Newport Coast. A masterpiece in the making, the highly anticipated resort blends the principles of Italy's most renowned Renaissance architect, Andrea Palladio, with California comfort and style. The new resort vacation destination promises to set a new paradigm for style, comfort and beauty among the world's finest resorts.

Set on 504 acres boasting expansive views of the Pacific Ocean and one of the most serene and pristine locations on the Southern California coast, the mega-luxury resort is made to look as though it had sprouted from a northern Italian hillside in the 1500s. Palladian-inspired architecture and 21st-century luxury define the 204 private and spacious bungalow rooms and suites and 128 two-, three- and four-bedroom villas that include private garages, kitchens and ocean-view terraces – complete with your own personal butler and house staff!

Golf legend Tom Fazio has fine-tuned his two championship golf courses at the resort, while artisans have been installing glass tiles in a 136-foot diameter, circular saltwater pool inspired by Rome's Coliseum and includes tiered decks and deluxe cabanas. Landscapers have planted 750 mature olive trees, while final touches are being made to the 22 treatment rooms in the state-of-the-art spa and hand-cut ceiling beams are being applied to La Cappella, the wedding venue with unbelievable ocean views.

Situated on Newport Coast overlooking the Pacific Ocean, The Resort at Pelican Hill is located adjacent to renowned Crystal Cove State Park and in close proximity to Corona Del Mar, Balboa Island and Fashion Island. Convenient John Wayne Airport serving Orange County is also within a short 10-minute drive of the resort and all Newport Beach area hotels. VisitNewportBeach.com, 800.94.COAST, Airport: John Wayne-Orange County (SNA).