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The Best Luxury Hotels and Resorts in California

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Shutters on the Beach









There's a lot that makes Shuttters on the Beach special, starting with its location—it's one of only two Santa Monica hotels right on the beach (the other is sister property Casa del Mar next door). Its waterfront spot gives it a palpable sense of place—especially when you're eating at the hotel's café, listening to the waves, and seeing the world go by on the boardwalk. The design by White House decorator Michael S. Smith takes its cues from Cape Cod, with the blue and white interiors, and floor-to-ceiling shutters opening up to ocean views. The 198 rooms and suites all feature sunken Jacuzzi tubs complete with the hotel's playful signature—a rubber whale—and many have balconies, too. Life revolves around the beach here, and an activity center is well-stocked with boogie boards, beach cruisers, and umbrellas. It's also worth spending downtime indoors at the serene ONE Spa (try the Sun Relief Hydration Quencher). Locals know that at dusk, the bar is the place to be, with a sunset-hued Italian Collins cocktail in hand. After sunset, dine on Kumamoto oysters and prosciutto-wrapped halibut at the hotel's fine-dining restaurant, 1 Pico. Pro tip: You don't need to step far from your room to soak in some culture. The hotel has a noteworthy art collection, with pieces by Ellsworth Kelly, John Baldessari, and William Wegman, among others, on display throughout the property.