



## Finding a bit of paradise in San Diego

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Posted: 08/11/2012 07:13:40 AM PDT



The first beach vacation we had in California was at Mission Bay in San Diego. It was a great success and we always have had wonderful memories of that time. As a result, we go back to the area from time to time and even have stayed there on occasion.

### **Paradise Point**

**Where:** 1404 Vacation Road, San Diego

**Website:** [paradisepoint.com](http://paradisepoint.com)

I was very happy therefore to have the opportunity to visit what originally had been called Vacation Village, the 40-acre resort located in the middle of the bay. After considerable renovations totaling \$20 million it now is known as Paradise Point and it lives up to its name.

When we had that first vacation we were located opposite the island, and having just learned to windsurf, I often used to sail over to the white sandy beaches, but I never had set foot there.

My



recent entry to the new Paradise was via the roadway off Ingraham Street, and the tree-lined route gave promise of the wonderful gardens and tropical wildlife that the resort offers to guests who inhabit their 462 rooms. Many of these are beach-side bungalows. If you are not in one of those, then you'll probably stay beside a clear-water lagoon - it's hard to find a place that is not exceptional.

I'm pleased to say that very little has changed at Mission Bay. It still has the same wonderful sand, and the same soft breezes coming off the ocean a few blocks away. The water is always flat and I regretted not bringing my board along.

Paddle boards seem to have replaced the craze of windsurfing from a few decades back, but the little sailing school was still out teaching young people the joys of sailing. The view out across the water was just the same.

The resort is having its 50th anniversary. It was built in 1962, by movie producer and entrepreneur Jack Skirball. The bay was dredged to form the island on which the resort sits.

The hotel soon became a retreat for L.A.'s rich and famous, and stars such as Paul Newman, Johnny Cash

and Andy Williams stayed there. Skirball incorporated several pieces from famous movie sets into the location, including the porpoise fountain from "Cleopatra."

There is a 75-foot observation tower in the middle of the resort and it is topped by an intricate sculpture representing the joining of land and sky.

One of the delights for guests is a water taxi service that ferries them directly to Sea World and drops them off at a site where there are few lines, and the wait to get in is very short. Alongside the ferry is a dock where you can rent various water craft like sailing boats, jet skis, and the ubiquitous paddle boards.

There are two restaurants to serve guests - one, The Baleen, is reasonably formal with exotic dishes, and the other, the Barefoot Grill, serves very good food and is ideal for the entire family. Both restaurants have full-service bars as well.

One of the popular features for guests is a line of 14 fire pits dotted along the mile of beach. Here on balmy nights you can enjoy cooking s'mores under the stars; the materials needed are available from the guest shop on site.

You can play golf on the miniature 18-hole golf course, or tennis on the five championship courts. You also can rent bocce ball equipment and other amusements. There are five swimming pools; one of them for adults only. There also is a full-scale spa here for total pampering.

As we finally drove back down the wonderful curving driveway to return to our normal lives, we both knew we would be back for another touch of Paradise before too long.

