

# CALIFORNIA WEDDING DAY

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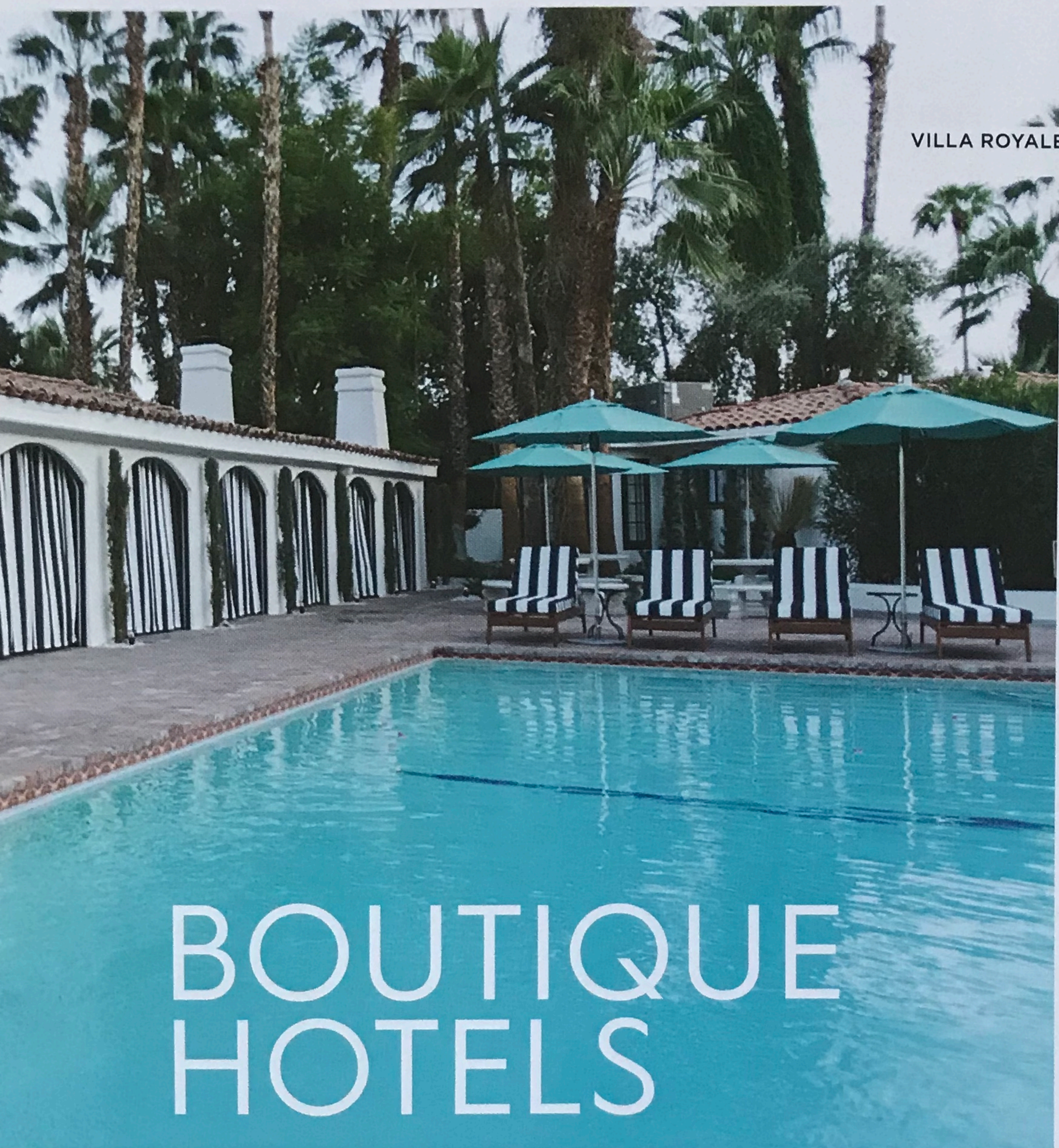
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VILLA ROYALE

# BOUTIQUE HOTELS

**BIGGER ISN'T NECESSARILY BETTER** when it comes to picking a wedding venue. Intimate gatherings get lost in grand ballrooms, and elopers have different needs than Indian families inviting 1,500 to a three-day, jewel-toned extravaganza. Those seeking cozier settings without sacrificing the convenience of on-site accommodations need look no farther than these chic boutiques and cool upgraded motels, which pride themselves on being the perfect fit for mini matrimonial celebrations.

**OCEANPOINT RANCH** ([oceanpointranch.com](http://oceanpointranch.com))

Country chic and coastal classic coalesce at this recently reimagined 50-year-old Moonstone Beach motor lodge in Cambria. Rooms and public spaces are now awash in plaids, Arcadian patterns, white-washed brick and antiques. On the 9 cypress-dotted acres, there are multiple outdoor venues of varying sizes and states of manicure. One is a legit meadow, complete with a windmill to the side of the private trail leading to the sand, where you can also stage a soiree. Features vary from space to space, but can include lawn games, a water tower, a footbridge, light strands, fire circles, fake calf-roping stations, a food truck and Adirondack chairs. The Canteen provides a quaint indoor option for a winter wedding. Kitchen-equipped suites that sleep six, a game room, s'more kits for purchase and a heated pool make this a good choice for pairs who are already parents or have several young guests attending.



THE GUILD HOTEL

**THE DUCHAMP** ([duchamphotel.com](http://duchamphotel.com))

Although buyouts aren't required at Healdsburg's minimalist creek-side compound, fill the six suites with friends to have the run of the place, including the parking and the pool (which can be covered to create a more formal look). The serene, shady mulberry grove, with a raised deck and trellis, is a picture-perfect setting for the main event or dinner with live entertainment. It's advantageously positioned a block from the town's charming central square, wine-tasting rooms (Duchamp provides complimentary winery experiences), and some of Sonoma County's best restaurants, such as Valette, Campo Fina and Spoonbar. Nearby sister properties, including a recently redecorated urban loft, can handle other invitees. Tents are the only rain plan, so stick to the usually safe May–October time frame.

COURTESY OF VILLA ROYALE; ROBERT BENSON;



## PARK JAMES HOTEL

([parkjames.com](http://parkjames.com))

Superlative boutique sophistication meets Silicon Valley tech savviness at this new hotel, opened last year in Menlo Park. The textured design and eye-catching details—a neon sign above the entrance, Irish marble, quotes inscribed in the floor, floral installations, furry walls and beveled mirrors—make for fun photo shoots. The Galway Room seats 80 and is connected to a courtyard with living walls and fire pits. Or set up in the farm-to-table restaurant, which handles catering and has a smaller side patio with bistro lights and a hearth. Some of the 61 quarters are designated as pet-friendly, and a relief area is located just off the main public area, so your pup can be part of the party.

## VILLA ROYALE ([villaroyale.com](http://villaroyale.com))

Set at the foot of the San Jacinto Mountains in Coachella Valley, the funky adults-only, Villa Royale encompasses 3.5 acres tucked into an unassuming neighborhood in south Palm Springs. Originally built in 1947, the California ranch-style hotel still maintains aspects of postwar charm, which are blended with 38 Mission Revival-style rooms and villas, beautiful geometric-tiled courtyards and three glistening pools. Modern touches include art created by the LA-based tattoo artist and muralist Sagent Staygold, including the graphic spray-painted artwork that greets guests upon arrival, as well as standout pieces by Spanish artist and poet Juan Francisco Casas, such as portraits of Dennis Hopper, Debbie Harry and Charles Bronson—all of

which make for great wedding photo ops. But the real wedding standout at the lush valley escape is the massive and grassy 33,000 square-foot lawn, which is ideal for sunny ceremonies followed by dinner under the

open sky and dancing. Opt for a buyout and take over the beautifully curated guest rooms, dazzling pool, bar area and the swanky Del Rey restaurant. Plus, with Electra bike rentals available, guests can go out for a spin and explore the city.

## HOTEL JOAQUIN ([hoteljoaquin.com](http://hoteljoaquin.com))

The folks behind Palm Springs' beloved Korakia Pensione, another stellar spot for celebrations, worked their magic on a Laguna Beach motel for two years before finally revealing a 21-room global boho wonderland in late 2018. Ceremonies are typically held in the dreamy garden above the pool or down below on the sand of Shaw's Cove; the terrace and restaurant can host as many as 50 for a seated dinner. The posh but unstuffy property has a two-day buyout policy and a steep food and beverage minimum on weekends, but the upside is, it feels like you've joined the cast of an Orange County reality show. The restaurant focuses on Mediterranean seafood

fare, but menus can be customized to reflect fiancé favorites. Outdoor entertainment must shut down by 8:30 p.m., but the party can shift inside to the living room and continue until 1 a.m.

## RANCHO VALENCIA RESORT & SPA

([ranchovalencia.com](http://ranchovalencia.com))

Set on 45 ambrosial acres, this Rancho Santa Fe resort delivers rustic romance with tiled patios, immaculate lawns surrounded by bougainvillea and towering palms, and the open-beamed ceilings of great rooms, which have been punched up with wrought iron, autumnal shades and French doors. Its 49 casitas are miniature haute haciendas with all the bells and whistles (daily delivery of freshly squeezed juice, plus fireplaces, 600 thread count linens and soaking tubs). It can host as many as 500 guests, but also offers excellent elopement and vow renewal packages. The Pony Room stocks 100 kinds of tequilas, which can be used for inventing signature drinks or custom tastings.



RANCHO VALENCIA RESORT & SPA

HOTEL WINTERS



### HOTEL WINTERS

*(hotelwinters.com)*

As the only full-service hotel in Yolo County, adjacent to Sacramento, Hotel Winters is carving out a big chunk of central California's wedding business. It offers 78 plush rooms; a spa; three restaurants, including a rooftop lounge and a courtyard with a brick oven for gourmet pizza; a bridal suite with a walkout balcony and an oversize bathroom; and 5,000 square feet of classy event space. As many as 300 loved ones can party with the newlywed couple in the Orchard Ballroom (complete with picture windows and a 6-foot fireplace). Smaller wedding guest lists will find the Napa-style Vineyard Room to be a good fit. Complimentary tastings at two area wineries are given to people in room blocks, while brides are sent sparkling wine and an arrangement from floral boutique The Local Floret (*thelocalfloret.com*).

MAYFAIR HOTEL

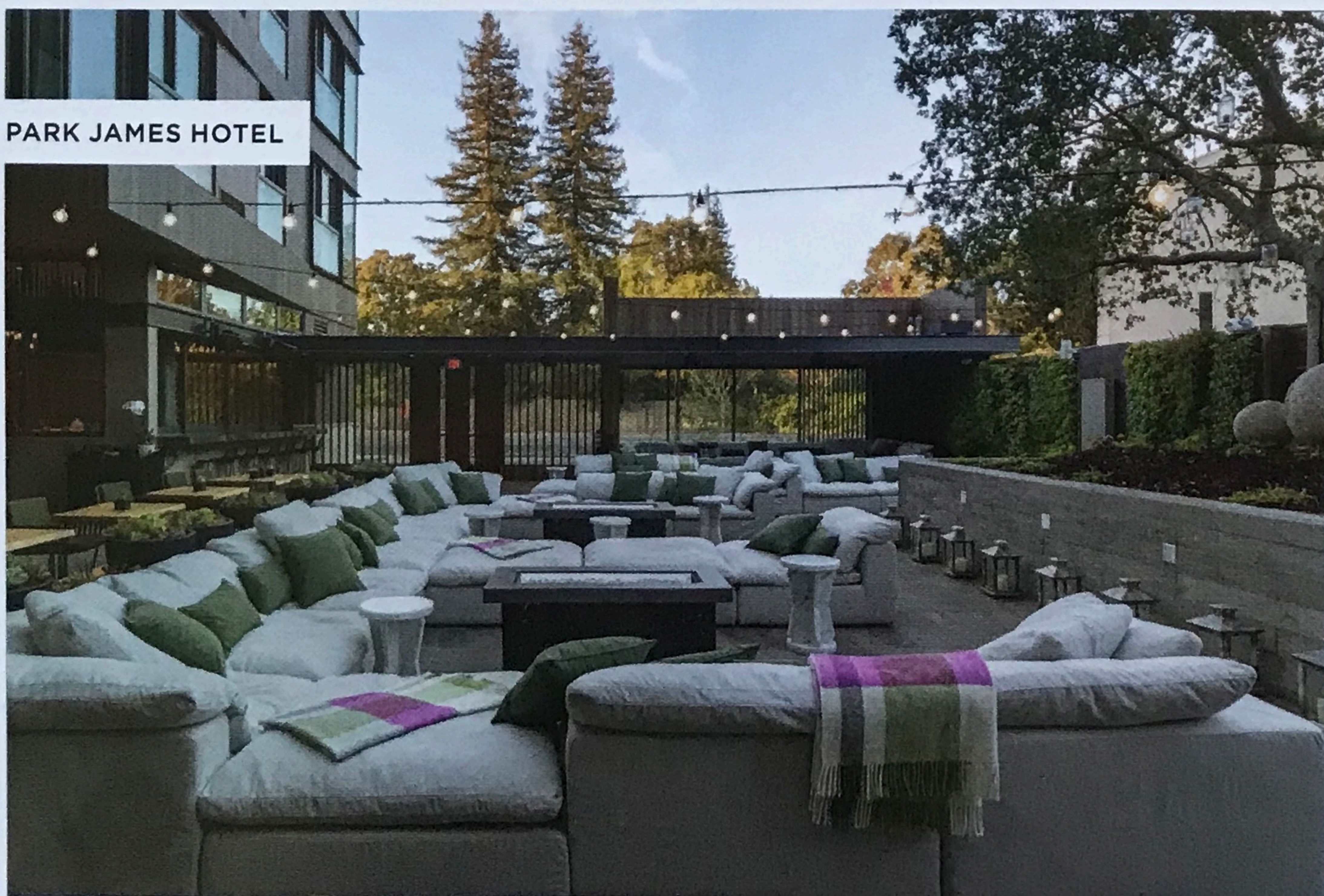


### THE SETTING INN

*(thesettinginn.com)*

Quite literally, these will be days of wine and roses when you choose to toast your milestone at this 1901 Napa Valley farmhouse, remodeled earlier this year. The inn features soaking tubs, fireplaces and hand-delivered Bouchon Bakery breakfasts; it can also see to the delivery of fresh flowers, chocolates, cheese boards and bottles of house vintages as welcome gifts. Schedule spa treatments in the privacy of your stand-alone two-bedroom cottage, which is also a great place for bridal party gatherings, thanks to the dining table and terrace. Buyouts allow use of the common areas, such as the adorable red barn set up with lounge furniture. It flows out to a yard surrounded by vineyards and includes barrel tables, a pergola and fountain. The giant branded sign and wall of succulents make great photo stations. \*

PARK JAMES HOTEL



## SIZING UP

*Want the same boutique vibe, but just can't shrink the guest list? Consider these new, slightly bigger hotel brands.*

### THE GUILD HOTEL

*(theguildhotel.com)*

You will find many ways to have a good time in this reimagined former Armed Services YMCA in downtown San Diego. It's fun to stay in the 162 minimalist rooms, which are accented in copper and caramel-colored leather and have big windows. Splurge on the penthouse for the pre-wedding preparations. Its small patio could be set up for a day-after standing brunch. Guests can enjoy a good meal in Luca's courtyard (available for receptions) and sip welcome cocktails in the lobby bar, which features a low-key patriotic palette as a nod to the century-old building's, and the city's, military heritage. The Guild's past is also front and center in its pair of ballrooms—one is tucked inside the old pool; the other is a converted basketball court connected to a garden patio. Hang garlands and signs or make a grand entrance on its elevated running track. Tiled stairwells, an ornate facade, velvet furniture and a fire escape provide great props for photo ops.

### THE MAYFAIR HOTEL

*(mayfairla.com)*

In mid-2018, this 294-room downtown LA den went from dive to designer digs after a top-to-bottom renovation returned it to its 1926 glory and added all kinds of au courant conveniences, such as a podcast studio, two lobby bars, a corner coffee shop and Keurigs in the rooms. The striking black, white and gray color scheme is carried through every space, including a long dining room that offers glimpses of the lobby and a sky-lit atrium through arched windows. The color trio is also used in the three-story ballroom, which was the scene of the first Oscars after-party. The design makes use of original exposed brick, concrete beaming, antique mirrors and a 34-foot-tall marble fireplace. The first dance will be particularly memorable under the dramatic Swarovski floating flower. A rotating art collection, curated by contemporary artist Risk, brings edgy eye candy to the 15 floors (one on which Raymond Chandler once lived and wrote) and gallery.

COURTESY OF HOTEL WINTERS; THE MAYFAIR HOTEL; DAVID DUNCAN LIVINGSTON