

Cruisin' In and Out of San Diego

By Mira Temkin



As a port city, San Diego continues to grow in popularity with more than 200 voyages from six cruise lines now embarking to the Mexican Riviera, Panama Canal, Hawaii and the

Caribbean. The reason? The airport is so close to the San Diego Cruise Ship Terminal (just two miles), you can practically wheel your luggage to the ship! Notwithstanding, cruisers are discovering that San Diego make a great vacation before and after the cruise, too. With great restaurants, a plethora of sights and 70 degree weather, there's no reason to hurry back to Chicago anytime soon. Make sure your plans include a visit to the 1,200 acre Balboa Park, housing science and anthropology museums as well as the world-famous San Diego Zoo. My favorite venue is the Old Town Trolley Tour that takes you around San Diego and Coronado Island, letting you hop on and off. For more information, visit www.sandiego.org.

Holiday Inn at the Bay

Set on the Embarcadero, one of the best reasons to stay at the Holiday Inn is its close proximity to the pier. Just walk out the door and board your ship. Because my personal mantra is to arrive in the port city the day before my cruise departs, the Holiday Inn was ideal. With comfortable accommodations, panoramic bay views, an Elephant and Castle Pub on one side and Ruth's Chris Steak House on the other, the Holiday Inn had it all. But my favorite part of the Holiday Inn was looking out of my balcony to the waiting ships...and anticipating my wonderful adventure about to start! 800.972.2802 or www.holiday-inn.com/san-onthebay.



Croce's Restaurant and Jazz Bar

A fixture in San Diego's historic Gaslamp Quarter for more than 20 years, Croce's is really a legacy of love from Ingrid Croce to her late husband, singer and songwriter, Jim Croce of "Big, Bad Leroy Brown" and "Time in a Bottle." The place is filled with family photos, lyric sheets, guitars and memorabilia, while the music of Jim and his son A.J. Croce plays in the background. Croce's is a unique collaboration of fine dining and nightclub ambiance with live music nightly. But wait -- don't just come for the atmosphere -- the food is phenomenal! The baked brie with honey-roasted garlic and Grand Marnier-berry compote delighted us with a blend of tastes. Goat-cheese salad with poached red onion and pear tomatoes wrapped in a seedless cucumber was as beautiful to look at it as it was to eat. For the main course, I opted for the maple glazed



pistachio dusted spiral rack of lamb with sweet potato twist and French green beans. Our server recommended the Seghesio Zinfandel as the perfect complement. Fondant Au Chocolat, melted warm chocolate cake with fresh raspberries was the grand finale; a triumphant end to an exquisite meal.

Now happily remarried to business partner Jim Rock, Ingrid has been named one of the 10 top female businesswomen in San Diego for her efforts in pioneering the rejuvenated Gaslamp District. I had a



Ingrid Rock

chance to chat with Ingrid who showed me her two cookbooks, "Thyme in a Bottle" and "The San Diego Restaurant Cookbook." They're both more than cookbooks, they're memoirs of courage and inspiration as well. Ingrid said, "Serving delicious cuisine and live music to visitors around the world is my way of sharing Jim's warmth and hospitality."

Then the music started...throng of people entered the restaurant and it became a whole other place with lively rockin' and rollin.' Jim would have felt right at home! Reservations, call 619.232.2891 or www.croces.com.

Mira Temkin is a freelance writer specializing in advertising, promotional marketing and public relations. As a travel journalist, she has ventured across Europe and visited most of the Caribbean Islands. She can be reached at 847-433-2109 or mtemkin967@aol.com