

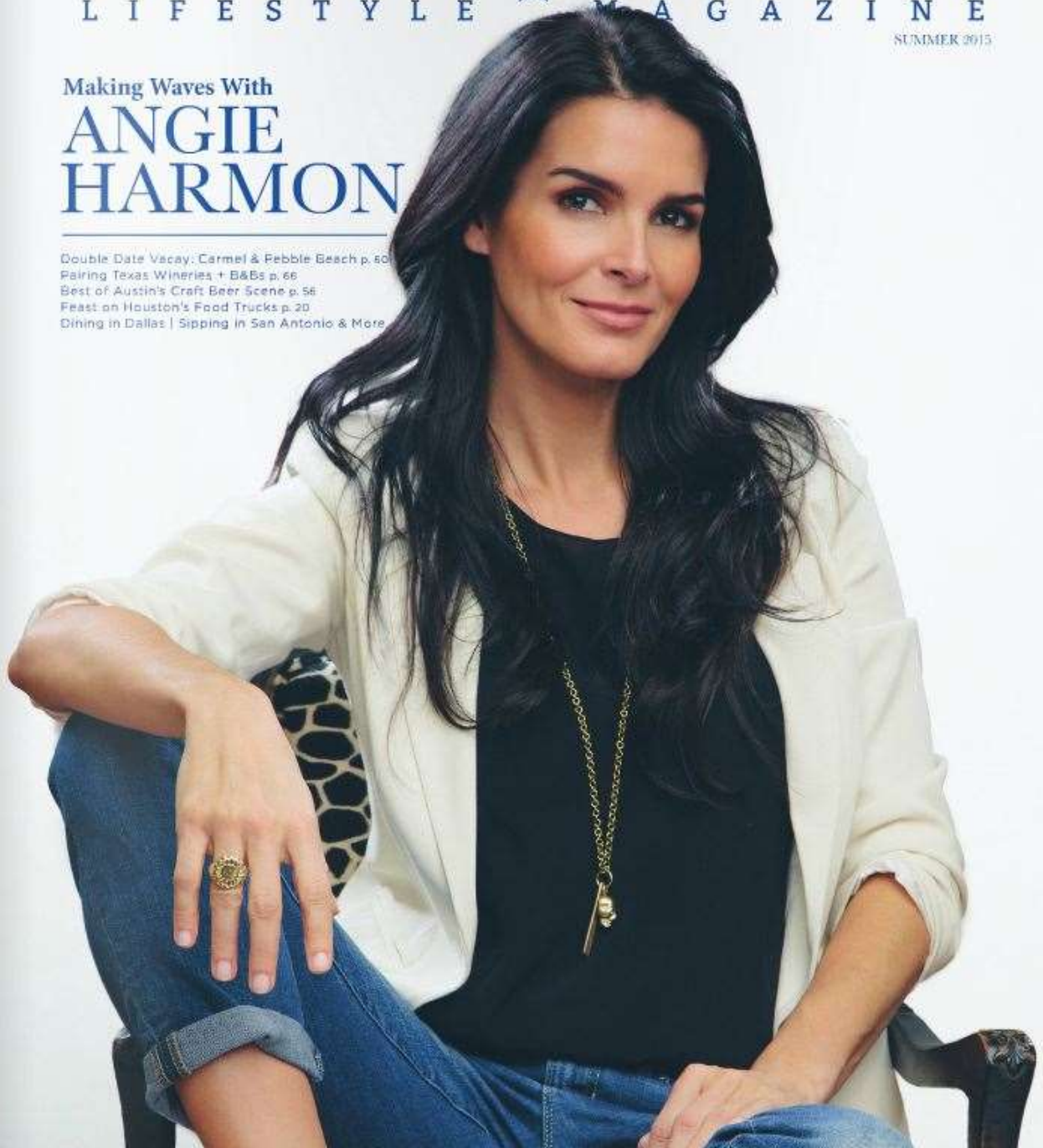
# TEXAS

LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

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Making Waves With  
**ANGIE  
HARMON**

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# Carmel:

## Your Double Date Golf Escape

By Marika Flatt



La Playa, a luxurious 1905 mansion given as a gift to the wife of an artist, is now a seaside resort known as the "Grand Dame of Carmel." Photo by La Playa Carmel

If you're a golfer, you likely have Pebble Beach Golf Club on your bucket list, which makes Carmel-by-the-Sea a golfer's paradise. *Carmel*, as I like to call it, is a popular destination for Texans because, well, who wouldn't want to experience the charm of a place by the sea?

And we've got the recipe for your ideal escape: grab your golf buddy (and spouse), sprinkle on a little beach R&R, dab on a little spot of spa, and give yourself a generous serving of time on the links.

Don't we all love to travel to discover new passions and exciting never-before-experienced bliss? Well, with its sun, surf, delectable food and spectacular views, charming Carmel really does have it all.

### Getting There in Style

**Virgin America** has a direct flight from Austin to San Francisco (the closest major airport) and easy flights from other Texas airports, too. Virgin is the hip kid on the airline block with their DJ-style music at check-in and on the plane before takeoff, pink and blue fluorescent lighting on the plane, flight attendants in back leather jackets and techno conveniences onboard. You'll love the ease of flying direct, too.

Austin-based **Silvercar** is also the new, hip kid, aiming to be the easiest, hassle-free option on the rental car block. They're not available at all airports yet but—luckily for us—are available at SFO. They are designed to be the fastest, most technologically advanced way to secure a rental car. Using their free app, you can easily pick up

your silver Audi in a flash. When you land, simply open the app to your reservation and follow the four-step directions to your Silvercar.

### A Room with a View

**La Playa Carmel** is a quaint historic inn, built in 1905 and later restored, that sits a few blocks from Ocean Drive (the main drag in Carmel-by-the-Sea) and a few blocks from Carmel Beach. Its location is only beat by its view; windows look out over its lush and colorful courtyard and pool area, and beyond that, the stunning Pacific Ocean.

Guests enjoy complimentary breakfast every morning and light snacks during the day, a pool that is heated to 80 degrees, and can rent beach cruiser bikes to explore the coastline and the quaint town—which are highly recommended.

While you're at La Playa Carmel, relax by their pool, take advantage of the wine happy hour (5:30-6:30 p.m. everyday), walk everywhere because of its prime location and finish your evening off in the bar for a nightcap.

[LAPLAYAHOTEL.COM](http://LAPLAYAHOTEL.COM)

**Quail Lodge & Golf Club** is another beautiful option for accommodations, views, dining and a round of golf. Nestled on 850 acres of lush fairways, oak-studded meadows and sparkling lakes, Quail Lodge & Golf Club is located just beyond the city of Carmel-

by-the-Sea on the spectacular Monterey Peninsula. In 2013, the lodge reopened after a \$28 million renovation. The Robert Muir Graves-designed golf course provides a unique backdrop to the expansive villas, which feature comfortable beds, a sitting area and a large modern bathroom.

Dining at **Edgar's**, set in the clubhouse, you'll taste fresh ingredients harvested from local organic farms that are hand-selected by Chef Kenneth Macdonald. Edgar's is a casual restaurant with memorable food. Start off with one of their three signature flatbreads (such as the Carmel Valley with chicken and spinach), then move on to their gnocchi with green beans, local morels, and white wine shallot cream sauce, or a quinoa pasta mac & cheese for a gluten-free option. Your server will perfectly pair a local wine with your entrees and make sure you don't leave without a tummy full of one of their delectable desserts.

[QUAILLODGE.COM](http://QUAILLODGE.COM)

### Foodie Fun

**California Market** is a lunch restaurant near the cliffs of Big Sur with some of the most amazing views in the area. Located at The Hyatt Carmel Highlands, just off of Highway 1, you will find Pacific views (a pair of binoculars is on each table), delicious food, wonderful service and an impressive selection of wine, beer and cocktails. This is a superb place to kick off your trip, put you in a relaxed state and fill yourself with the likes of their specialty red pepper bisque or crab cake sandwich with a remoulade topping and a side salad, perfectly paired with a chardonnay. Their fish tacos are also delightful and pair nicely with one of their local beers. Finish off the meal with fresh cheesecake.

**Jacks Restaurant & Lounge** in Monterey is a great reason to explore a little farther north.



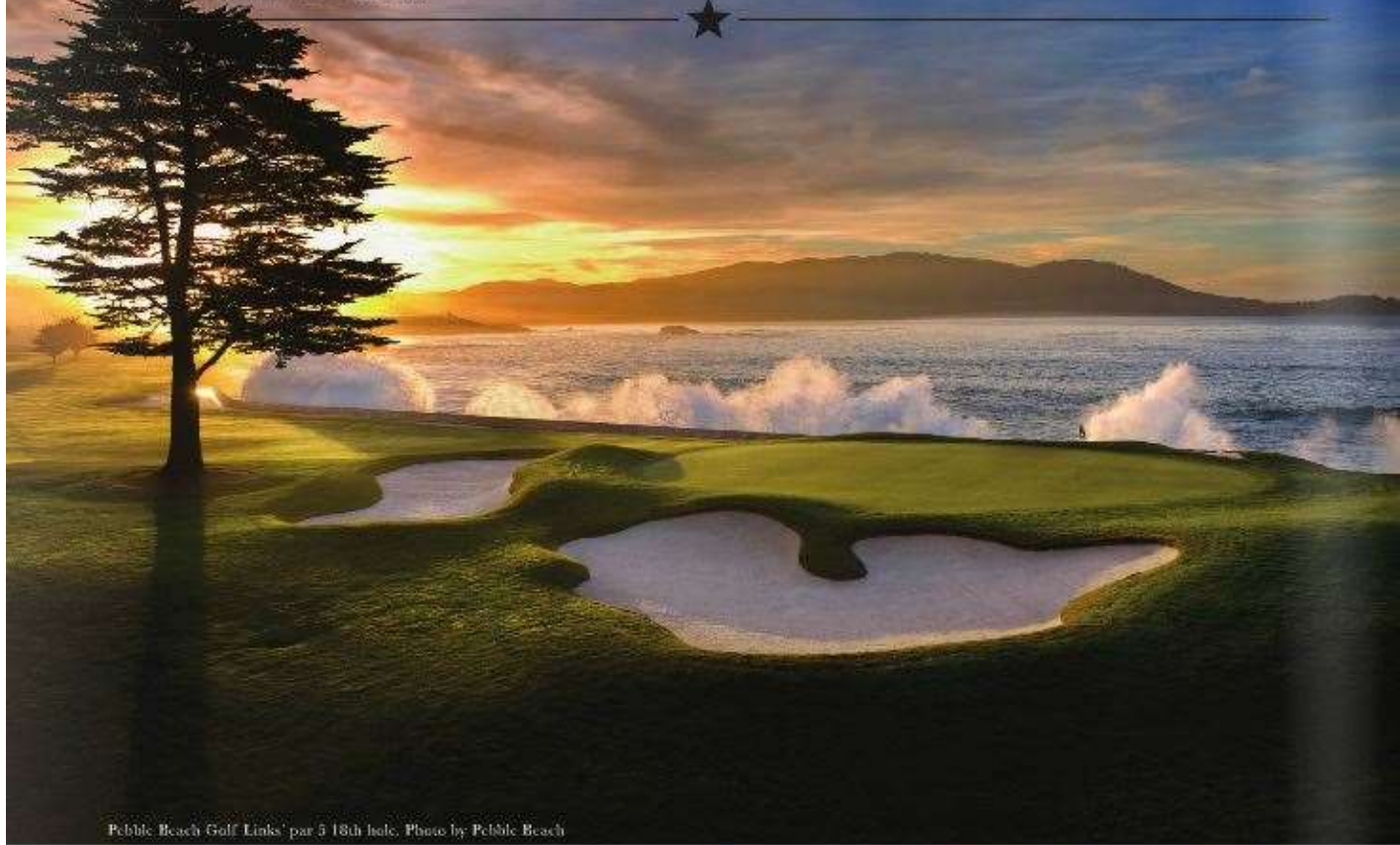
Enjoy a glass of wine with Edgar's kale salad. Photo by Quail Lodge



All Quail Lodge guest rooms have complimentary Wi-Fi and an iPad docking station. Photo by Quail Lodge



Enjoy the natural scenery at Quail Lodge & Golf Club and disconnect from the world for a while. Photo by Quail Lodge/Scott Campbell



Pebble Beach Golf Links' par 5 18th hole. Photo by Pebble Beach

The restaurant is located within the Portola Hotel and with its dark paneling and nautical theme, it's a throwback to coastal fishing. Despite the vintage feel, the restaurant impressed with an iPad on the table featuring their wine list and menu. Start with the risotto fritters or a fresh salad. The classic Monterey Bay sand dabs (a light, flaky fish) with mashed potatoes and green beans proved to be a scrumptious choice, paired with a Silvestri chardonnay from the Carmel Valley.

**Pebble Beach's The Bench** is a delightful spot for lunch, right on the water at the 18th hole. You don't have to be playing golf at Pebble Beach or staying there to dine at The Bench. If you're lucky to have sunny weather, you'll want to dine on the patio and soak up the gorgeous surroundings and the history of the golf elite that have gone before in this mecca. Pebble Beach even has its own historian who can tell the tale of the almost 100-year old golfing paradise (they will celebrate their centennial in 2019). Now owned by five American men (who purchased it from a Japanese group back in 1999), "The Bench" marks where the deal was made.

The four golf courses along the famed 17-mile drive that make up Pebble Beach see more visitors from Texas than any other state. Guests can stay at The Lodge, the Inn at Spanish Bay or the boutique 24-room Casa Palmero, which sits next to the five-star spa. There's even an equestrian center at Pebble Beach! (Read more about golfing Pebble Beach in the sidebar.)



The Bench at Pebble Beach gives guests each lunch a spectacular view overlooking the 18th hole at Pebble Beach Golf Links. Photo by Pebble Beach.

Back to The Bench. Try their larger-than-life bread balloon, which deflates when it arrives. Then, get a taste of their creamy *burrata* and enjoy the California cobb salad, topped with grilled chicken or the pork belly sandwich. Again, here you'll find great food, drinks, service and a golden view.

## Finding Refuge

**The Refuge** day spa experience is the ideal spot for the non-golfer to enjoy while the rest of their party is golfing. This unique haven, set amid trees in the Carmel Valley, is a quiet retreat which extols the health benefits of plunge pools.

The prescription is a four-step process that you're encouraged to repeat three to five times. You start with either the eucalyptus steam room or dry sauna, followed by a dip in a cool or cold plunge pool. Then you sit for 10 minutes either outside around the fire pits or inside a serenity lounge in a recliner, and finish off in a warm or hot tub. Cold, relax, hot. Repeat. This cycle both rejuvenates and relaxes the body. And, when you sign a waiver before you begin, you promise to be silent!

The final score? Our double date golf adventure was full of memories that will last a lifetime. And, our friends have already made their reservation to return next year. If that's not a testament to Carmel's gravitational pull, I don't know what is.



The Refuge is a quiet retreat and co-ed day spa. Photo by The Refuge

## Experience of a Lifetime, Pebble Beach Golf Club

By Pete Frank

Golf legends like Tiger Woods, Jack Nicklaus, Tom Watson and Arnold Palmer have made history there. It'll host yet another U.S. Open Golf Championship in 2019. Yet, the general public can play it, making Pebble Beach one of the greatest public golf courses in the world.

It takes some advance planning, but with a two-night reservation at one of the course's luxury resorts, you can reserve a tee time with a caddie. Then, get ready for the golf experience of a lifetime.

Pebble Beach has special meaning to all golfers, and it left this one wanting to play more often. I was inspired by the majestic beauty and sheer power of the massive cliffs and crashing ocean waves, the challenging bunkers, undulating terrain, and some of the toughest greens and holes in golf.

It is hard to deny the butterflies and nerves as you hit your first shot directly in front of the pro shop. After a few holes, I was able to settle in. Throughout the day, my golf buddy and I agreed we felt more in touch with the mental element of the sport than ever before. Walking the course versus driving in a cart, having our caddie guide us on every putt and shot, feeling the ocean breeze and playing on the same sacred ground as the greatest golfers in the world, filled us with true happiness and excitement.

The first three holes are all par 4s: the doglegs, many bunkers and unforgiving greens make you quickly tighten your game.

The fifth, built in 1998 and designed by Jack Nicklaus, overlooks majestic Stillwater Cove, and is named for Samuel F.B. Morse who sold the land back in 1915. (A decision—in his defense—that he immediately regretted.) At the intimidating sixth hole, the fairway goes up a steep hill, then you're on to the famous seventh. A par 3 surrounded by bunkers and crashing ocean waves, it's a jaw-dropping experience. The eighth forces you to land your ball close to a huge cliff for your second shot but to not overshoot, challenging you with a narrow margin of error to land the green.

The ninth, 10th and 11th holes are long par 4s that skirt the ocean cliffs. The 11th is famous for having the smallest green on the PGA tour while the 12th, 13th and 14th holes showcase the careful and thoughtful golf design of Jack Neville and Douglas Grant. The 17th par 3 that enabled Jack Nicklaus to win in 1972 and Tom Watson to win in 1982 provides two of the greatest golf shots in history. The 18th hole par 5 encourages golfers to drive the ball over the ocean to land in a narrow fairway with the infamous fairway tree, with another 250 yards to get to the green, which is protected with a bunker.

If you have any kind of interest in golf, go play Pebble Beach. At least once. It's an unforgettable experience.

[PEBBLEBEACH.COM](http://PEBBLEBEACH.COM)