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By Lizbeth Scordo

BEACH HOUSE HOTEL

HERMOSA BEACH

It used to be that a stay in the South Bay meant choosing between a dated motel or one of those chain suites places (or more likely just not staying there at all), but this boutique hotel is worth spending the weekend at thanks to fireplaces in the rooms, balconies overlooking the ocean, and location that's a stone's throw from bar mecca Pier Ave.

WHAT TO DO: Rent bikes and cruise a few miles north on the 26-mile Strand to Manhattan Beach while watching superhuman beach volleyball players and stopping for a few beachfront drinks along the way.

WHERE TO EAT: Hit Hot's Kitchen, purveyor of more than 50 taco varietals, from duck confit to grilled yellowtail to smoked brisket.

WHERE TO DRINK: Sit for a bit at Hot's and try a local craft beer on tap from nearby Monkish Brewing or Smog City or head to the pier and get a jalapeño-spiked margarita on the patio of Palmilla Cocina y Tequila.