

# MARIN

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## summer escapes

With summertime upon us, we've asked our writers to share some of their favorite **one-tank-of-gas getaways**. And if they could dig up some deals—all the better!

### 2. A Shore Thing

**BY MIMI TOWLE** Half Moon Bay, 40 minutes south of Marin by car, has my two favorite elements for an escape: great fresh local food and water activities along wild, remote beaches. When I had the chance to get away for the night, I booked a room at the oceanfront **Beach House**. This Cape Cod-esque hotel is on Highway One just north of downtown and a five-minute walk to the Pillar Point Harbor. Oh, and it's right next to Sam's Chowder House, home of the lobster roll—voted one of the top five sandwiches in America by NBC's Today Show. Pillar Point Harbor is an active commercial fishing hub featuring restaurants and a retail center, where offerings range from kayak rentals to a new day spa called Oceana.

Perched on a bluff just above the beach, the **Beach House** has 54 suites, each designed as an open studio with sitting area, fireplace, mini-kitchen and wireless access. It also sits at the beginning of the mostly paved eight-mile coastal path that ends at the Ritz-Carlton. Fridays and Saturdays there's wine tasting in the lobby, and continental breakfast service starts every morning at 7:30. Considering the location, the \$185 to \$415 rates are pretty reasonable. A \$275 Seaside Escape Package includes a standard suite on weekdays (Sunday included) with a complimentary bottle of signature Half Moon Bay wine, a \$75 gift certificate toward dinner at Sam's Chowder House and two complimentary glasses of California chardonnay.

Our agenda for the weekend was simple: relax and be near the ocean as much as possible. This was easy to achieve. Sea Horse Ranch and sister stable Friendly Acres have been offering a beach riding experience for over 40 years. The rides last for an hour and a half and cost \$75; we opted for the 8 a.m. early bird special for \$45. The next beach adventure was an at-least two-mile barefoot stroll spent looking for that elusive great white shark fin. None spotted. Another way to explore the ocean is via Half Moon Bay Kayak Co., a quick walk or drive from the hotel. The owners, veteran kayakers, offer rentals, classes and three-hour harbor tours, full-moon paddles, kayak surfing, stand-up paddleboarding and more. Given the proximity to organic and family farms and a commercial fishing port, field- or boat-to-fork cuisine is prevalent throughout town. Half Moon Bay Brewing Company, our choice for lunch, reminds me of Tiburon's Sam's Anchor Cafe.

On sunny days a table on the deck is coveted by locals and tourists alike; inside seating offers sweeping water views and a respite from UV rays. For dinner we met up with friends who came up from Santa Cruz at It's Italia! on Main Street. We sat at an outdoor table (with its own fireplace) and enjoyed the local award-winning pizza and Italian fare made with local produce, cheese, meats and seafood, as well as a sampling of the locally produced wine.



Photo: Beach House Hotel