

DESTINATION GUIDE | LAX/BEACH CITIES

## THE LOCAL SIDE OF L.A.

by Macie Schreiber

Most famous for its uber-trendy celebrities, palm-lined streets and the Hollywood hills, Los Angeles is often the perceived image of California's west coast.

What most people don't realize, however, is that L.A. is actually much more than slick convertibles and sunny skies (although we doubt your attendees will be complaining about the nearly year-round sunshine). As with most cities, there are hidden treasures in L.A. that are surprisingly not crowded with visitors or bustling with paparazzi. And as it turns out, a lot of these local spots can be found in L.A.'s South Bay and beach cities (Santa Monica, Marina del Rey, and Manhattan, Hermosa and Redondo Beaches). These locales also happen to come complete with major meeting spaces and an easily accessible location for both your drive market and national, or even international, attendees via the Los Angeles International Airport.

A huge benefit for L.A. as a whole, and an even larger draw for meetings in the South Bay, is LAX, which averages a total of more than 5 million passengers either arriving or departing the city each month. But aside from its busy flight schedule (and rather in tune with the L.A. image), LAX just so happens to be less than a mile from the nearest surfable wave. "The beach is on either side of the airport," says Michael Krouse, senior vice president of sales and client services for L.A. Inc., The Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau. "If you were facing the airport on Century Boulevard, you would be five minutes to Manhattan Beach, 10 minutes



maximum to Marina del Rey, 10 minutes to Redondo Beach and 20 minutes to Santa Monica. It's the best-selling feature," he says.

"People don't think of L.A. as having beach cities and communities. Plus, a lot of the South Bay beaches are kind of a secret," Krouse says. "It's the kind of things that the locals know about, and the places the locals go."

In addition, all of these beach cities are linked via The Strand, a concrete path that runs the length of the coastline between them (22 miles) and offers a place for recreational activities, including bike rides or walks—plus impressive views of the Pacific Ocean.

So, for the time being, put away your movie-screen ideas of what L.A. is made up of, and take a closer look at the lesser-known sandy beaches of the South Bay, with a beach boardwalk that screams California, meeting venues showcasing the nearby waves, sunny skies and the unparalleled level of convenience of having your flight just minutes away. All of which make up the region's "it" factor, according to Krouse. With the airport and airline service, "It's very easy to

get to L.A., no matter where you are coming from. I challenge you to find a city that can offer you what L.A. can," he says.

### HERMOSA BEACH

Hermosa Beach is located between Manhattan and Redondo Beach, and is often described as the center of L.A.'s South Bay coastline (as the South Bay is usually defined as the three main beaches south of the airport). At 1.5 square miles, Hermosa Beach offers shopping, dining and nightlife in its very walkable and pedestrian-friendly city. Popular for recreation is The Strand, which connects Hermosa to its beachy neighbors, and is always open for skating, biking, walking, jogging or sightseeing.

Situated on The Strand and showcasing stunning views of the Pacific Ocean from 80% of its loft suites, the **Beach House Hotel Hermosa Beach** is a 96-suite property with more than 2,600 sq. ft. of meeting space. Great for groups, the property is close to all Hermosa Beach has to offer, including Pier Avenue, which is always hopping with activity and entertainment pre- or post-meeting.

### HERMOSA BEACH

**Beach House Hotel, Hermosa Beach** 96 rooms/25,000 sq.ft.  
beach-house.com

Voted "one of the sexiest people, places or things to do in L.A." by *LA Magazine*; located on The Strand, and near Pier Avenue for shopping and restaurants.