

SCENIC VIEWS

THESE RESTAURANTS AND BARS OFFER UNPARALLELED OCEAN VIEWS—ALONG WITH TASTY SIPS AND DELICIOUS PLATES—THROUGHOUT ORANGE COUNTY.

BY ASHLEY RYAN

Orange County's sprawling sandy beaches, crashing surf and colorful sunsets entice locals and visitors alike, offering a spectacular setting for soaking up the summer sun. Even better are the many patios where you can capture these views while enjoying an unforgettable meal or your favorite libation. Up and down the Southern California coastline, restaurants and bars with open-air decks and ocean views reign supreme. Here are some of the best in the region.

LAGUNA BEACH



DRIFTWOOD KITCHEN

■ With a narrow deck situated just above the sand in Laguna Beach, Driftwood Kitchen is an obvious choice for a sunset meal. Exposed to the refreshing salty air, diners will enjoy fresh seafood—like the pan-seared northern halibut or the grilled Hawaiian jumbo prawns—as well as innovative small plates like the squash blossoms. (949-715-7700; driftwoodkitchen.com)

LAGUNA BEACH

THE LOBBY LOUNGE AT MONTAGE LAGUNA BEACH

■ Sit back and relax on the plush couches at The Lobby Lounge while sipping a Lavender Lady this summer. Crafted with Botanist gin, Lillet Blanc wine, Amaro Montenegro, creme de violette and violet sugar, the summery cocktail is perfect for watching the sunset beyond Montage Laguna Beach's gorgeous mosaic-tiled swimming pool. (866-271-6953; montagehotels.com)



LAGUNA NIGUEL

RAYA AT THE RITZ-CARLTON, LAGUNA NIGUEL

■ Located in Dana Point at The Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel, Raya is a luxurious choice for a seafood dinner with unobstructed views. Sitting high on a bluff, the floor-to-ceiling windows seem to disappear as you dine, offering sweeping views of the cove below as pelicans soar by. Lobster is a must-try at this restaurant. You will find it in everything from the tacos to the salads. (949-240-2000; ritzcarlton.com)



HUNTINGTON BEACH

WATERTABLE AT HYATT REGENCY HUNTINGTON BEACH RESORT AND SPA

■ With an expansive deck just across PCH from Huntington Beach's Main Beach, Watertable at Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach Resort and Spa is an inventive restaurant filled with food and drink pairings that are to die for. Try the cedar-plank roasted salmon with a chardonnay from Northern California, Italy or South Africa. (714-845-4776; huntingtonbeach.regency.hyatt.com)



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MONTAGE LAGUNA BEACH; COURTESY OF MONTAGE LAGUNA BEACH; COURTESY OF BALBOA BAY RESORT; COURTESY OF MONTAGE LAGUNA BEACH; COURTESY OF BALBOA BAY RESORT; COURTESY OF MONTAGE LAGUNA BEACH; COURTESY OF BALBOA BAY RESORT; COURTESY OF MONTAGE LAGUNA BEACH

LAGUNA BEACH



SKYLOFT

■ Skyloft's roof deck lies adjacent to Laguna's Main Beach; after the sun sinks down, guests still have a panoramic view of the dark ocean and city lights. While enjoying the sunset, sample items from the new summer menu, including the Cajun Brussels sprouts, the mahi-mahi or the lobster bake. (949-715-1550; skyloftoc.com)

LAGUNA BEACH

STUDIO AT MONTAGE LAGUNA BEACH

■ Dine atop a 50-foot bluff at Montage Laguna Beach's Studio, a restaurant that expertly blends French cuisine with California flavor. The enchanting 280-degree panoramic views of the coastline are perfectly complemented by fresh fare like the crimson beet tartare from the new vegetarian menu, while the Daydreamer cocktail will have you doing just that. (949-715-6030; montagehotels.com)



NEWPORT BEACH

A&O KITCHEN AND BAR AT BALBOA BAY RESORT

■ With communal tables and dishes, A&O Kitchen and Bar at Newport's Balboa Bay Resort is all about socializing. Chat with friends and family while you watch the sun set from the patio lounge chairs. Shared plates like the watermelon pico de gallo and the Kobe beef corn dogs served with spicy mustard are clear favorites. (949-630-4285; meritagecollection.com/balboabayresort)



LAGUNA BEACH

SPLASHES RESTAURANT AT SURF & SAND RESORT

■ With a name like Splashes, it's no wonder that Surf & Sand Resort's signature restaurant offers fresh seafood right on the sand in Laguna Beach. With an extensive wine list to consider, diners may opt for casual, yet upscale, cuisine like the crisp octopus with baby garbanzo beans, the butter-poached Maine lobster tail or the seaside ceviche. (888-281-3502; surfandsandresort.com)



LAGUNA NIGUEL

180BLU AT THE RITZ-CARLTON, LAGUNA NIGUEL

■ Just like Raya, The Ritz-Carlton Laguna Niguel's oceanfront lounge, 180blu, sits high on a bluff. This special vantage point makes it a unique place, giving guests a chance to watch as the sun sinks behind the not-so-distant Catalina Island. While Champagne is a must for many who visit the bar, the passion fruit mojito remains a favorite among visitors. (949-240-2000; ritzcarlton.com)



LAGUNA BEACH

THE ROOFTOP LOUNGE AT LA CASA DEL CAMINO

■ Situated on the rooftop of the historic hotel La Casa del Camino, The Rooftop Lounge serves as an ideal place to look down on the crashing waves and setting sun. The lounge's casual American appetizers complement its selection of classic cocktails—mojitos, mimosas, sangria and more. (949-497-2446; rooftoplagunabeach.com)



Stanfield says:

Our favorite ocean view patios are **Nobu** Newport Beach, which has great harbor views and people watching. ... **The Deck** on Laguna Beach, which always has a good vibe and good cocktails, right on the water. ... **The Rooftop** at La Casa del Camino in Laguna Beach is good for salad, has a great happy hour and mojitos and you can see beautiful sunsets. ... **180blu** at The Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel, has a good rooftop deck that has good appetizers and drinks. ... **Montage's Mosaic Bar and Grille** is good for lunch and live music, or upstairs in the Lobby Lounge on the balcony, pre-sunset cocktails with a good view are a must. ... **The Winery Restaurant & Wine Bar** in Newport Beach has great harbor views, a fantastic staff and fantastic food—they have received almost every award for the “best of the best in Orange County” for their Tustin location, and Newport Beach will achieve the same.

LAGUNA BEACH



THE DECK ON LAGUNA BEACH

■ Combine The Deck's casual atmosphere with the fact that it lies right on the beach and it's no surprise that the restaurant is a really happening spot. As you watch the sun set at eye level, snack on charcuterie, cheese boards or the Laguna Cioppino, which is made with fresh fish daily. Grab a signature cocktail like the California Cooler, which blends gin with cucumber and

jalapeno, for a fresh drink on the sand. (949-494-6700; deckonlaguna.com)

NEWPORT BEACH

THE WINERY RESTAURANT & WINE BAR

■ The covered patio at The Winery allows diners to enjoy the fresh ocean air while keeping the sun at bay, but it also makes for a unique spot to watch a Southern California sunset. The patio overlooks the harbor—a different perspective than what is offered at most ocean view restaurants. Dine on grilled vegetables, seafood chowder or beef short ribs, and don't forget to also sample the golden pear martini with fresh lychee.

(949-999-6622; thewinerynewport.com)



LAGUNA BEACH

MOZAMBIQUE

■ With a view that stretches from Three Arch Bay to the Palos Verdes Peninsula, it's hard to find a better place to watch the sun sink down than Mozambique's Veranda. The rooftop bar sits atop the popular steakhouse, providing more hearty dishes for the evening like the Mozambique burger, steak sandwiches and samosas. (949-715-7777; mozambiqueoc.com)



HUNTINGTON BEACH

BLK EARTH SEA SPIRITS

■ Not far from the Huntington Beach Pier, BLK Earth Sea Spirits sits on the second level, perched above the beach and Pacific Coast Highway. As the sun turns the pier into a silhouette, savor classic cocktails like the Old-Fashioned or the Moscow mule, or enjoy local craft beer flights.

(714-960-0996; blkearthseaspiritshb.com)

LAGUNA BEACH

MONARCH BAY CLUB AT MONARCH BEACH RESORT

■ Guests at the Monarch Bay Club will enjoy the intimate patio setting—it may not be private dining, but it will sure feel that way. Whether listening to the live music floating out the doors or the waves crashing on the sand, it's

a relaxing space that offers cuisine like ahi tuna salad, fish tacos and chili-glazed black cod from Morro Bay.

(800-722-1543; monarchbeachresort.com)



LAGUNA BEACH

THE LOFT AT MONTAGE LAGUNA BEACH

■ Take a seat outdoors at The Loft for a view from Montage Laguna Beach's fourth floor. Whether you arrive for brunch—in time to enjoy some sunshine as you dine on the Caesar salad with braised bacon and chopped egg—or stop by to take in the sunset views, the fresh Brook's St. cocktail is a go-to. Combining vodka, white wine and lime juice with fresh cucumber and strawberries, it's a refreshing drink no matter the hour. (949-715-6080; montagehotels.com) PC

