

# **REVIEW: The Roosevelt – A Hollywood Staple**

The Roosevelt – I have been to this hotel many times, because it's the center of Hollywood when it comes to hotels. Drop by this place any random weekend and there's an event happening, the pool is packed with fun-loving people, and the bars are flowing.

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# **REVIEW: Hotel Valley Ho in Scottsdale**



This hotel feels like it should be set in the 60's. Everything from the architecture to the hip decor makes this hotel a choice that's not normal. When you walk in you notice



the flamboyant colors, the biomorphic shapes and shag carpet and wax vinyl surfaces.



Lets jus say that laminate floors are not the standard at the Ritz, but hey, this place is coool

You choose the Valley Ho because you want something different, but at the end of the day you still want a bit of luxury and coddling.

The lobby is the focal point of this place, part of it is indoors and part of it is outdoors. The location is fantastic, just a few minutes by foot to the local art galleries and restaurants in the Scottsdale area. This is always my go to whenever I come to Scottsdale. The restaurant has great all american cuisine and I recommend it for the Sunday brunch.



You can't look around at this place and not crack a smile – because it feels like you just woke up and Nixon is about to pop on TV

There are certainly other nicer hotels in the area, the W Scottsdale or further options if you're there for the golfing, but there really is nothing else like the Hotel Valley Ho. And heck, at the least it's fun to say.





Bet you haven't been to a mid-century pool since...well, mid-century

### **PROS:**

- Fun lobby and vibe – its super hip
- The showers are wide and open and the bathrooms and floorpans feel modern and different from anything else you'd see in the luxury category
- There's really not much else quite like it in the area, especially walking distance to Scottsdale downtown shops and restaurants

### **CONS:**

- It's not a traditional luxury hotel
- The service is not quite that of a 4-5 star hotel, but somehow it just works with the laidback vibe
- The cuisine is all americana but if you want something different there's not a lot of options

### **SECRETS:**

- Check out the cool second story gym with its private yoga room which opens up to the pool
- The breakfast burrito on the menu is definitely what you want, I promise

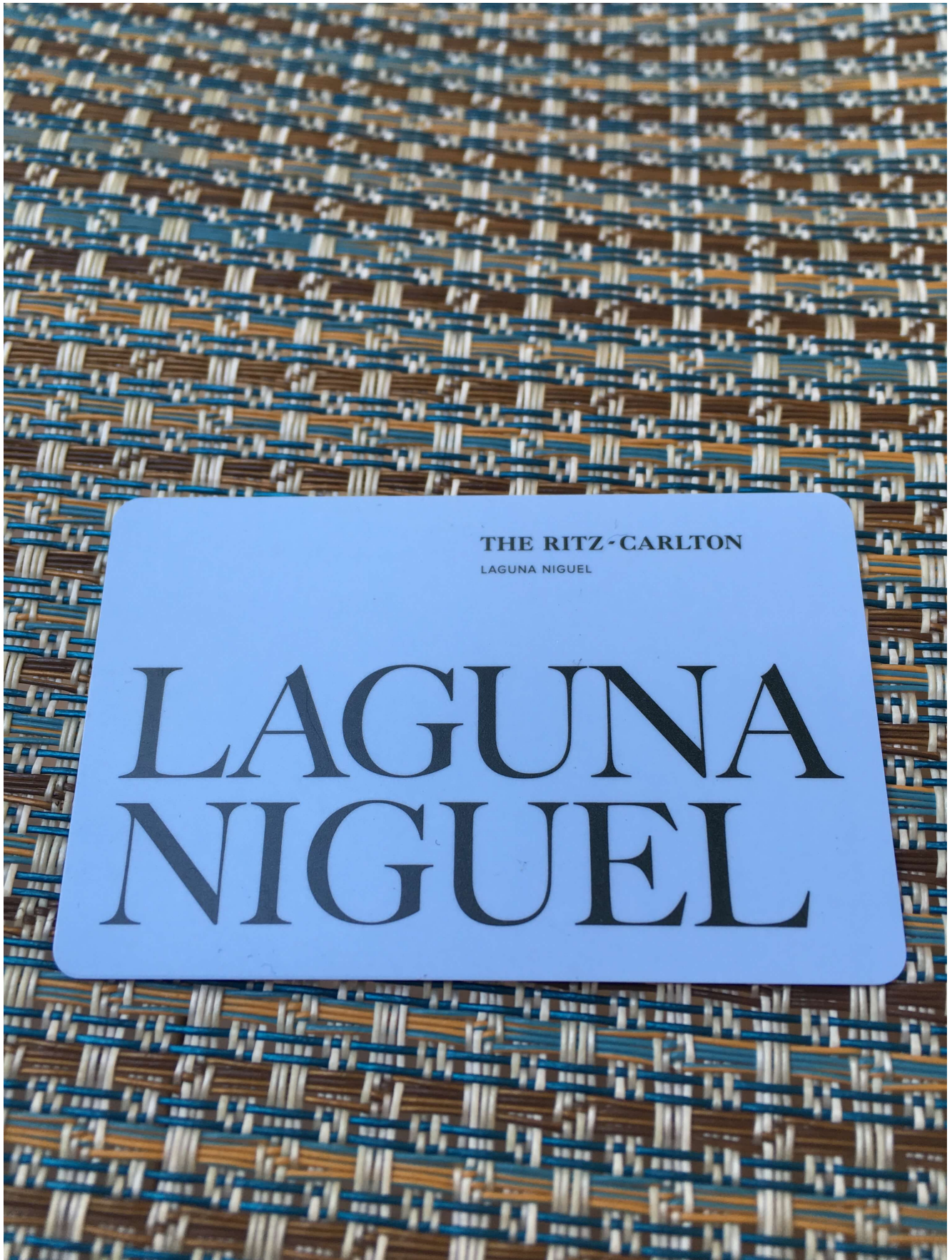
#### **OTHER THINGS TO DO:**

- If you love good pizza (and who doesn't?), definitely visit Sauce Pizza & Wine. It's one of my favorite pizza restaurants in the nation (and that includes comparison to places like Lou Malnati's in Chicago or top NY pizza joints). Yes it's that good, and they have a great selection of beers and wines!

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## **REVIEW: The Ritz-Carlton Laguna Niguel**





This one's a keeper – as they say. The Ritz-Carlton Laguna Niguel is a mixture of old-world elegance and contemporary flair. The hotel is large but the intimate spaces hidden



within it make it feel homey and comforting rather than barren and excessive.



The Spanish villa look of the Ritz in Laguna gives it some old-world charm

The minute you walk in you're wowed by the depth of the hallway. It has a very similar feel to the Monarch Beach Resort in this respect, but with slightly lower ceilings which makes this hotel the perfect accessory for a romantic getaway.

The service here is impeccable, at the top of its class for Ritz-Carlton's, and the lobby bar here is a cool place to hang out. I had a chance to check out two of the restaurants here, EnoSteak and Raya and highly recommend both of them.

Raya's floor to ceiling glass portals overlook the Pacific Coast and it's a dazzling place to have breakfast at a leisurely pace. Enosteak is the quintessential martini and ribeye spot which serves its purpose in this type of resort.

The rooms themselves are on the smaller side, and are not as new as the The Monarch Beach Resort in Dana Point but they are definitely still clean and luxurious. This is yet another hotel built with weddings in mind and as such there are



breathtaking vistas throughout.

I recommend checking out The Monarch Beach Resort in Dana Point and doing a spot compare between the two when booking to see which one is priced better during your stay as they both are comparable hotels, with the Ritz possibly edging on service, but slightly older in room quality.

#### **PROS:**

- Feels intimate yet maintains that large resort feel
- The pool area is well thought out to include private secludes so that not everyone is staring at each other when you're laying out
- The service is impeccable and the dining establishments at this hotel are above average

#### **CONS:**

- It could use some room refreshes

#### **SECRETS:**

- Check out the view at 180 Blu while enjoying a drink. It's easy to miss this part of the hotel

#### **OTHER THINGS TO DO:**

- Officially the second smallest church in the world, St Francis By the Sea is a pretty cool place to visit. Plus it's on the Guinness Book of World Records!
- This one's been written about but if you want to get around and you don't want to hire an uber. Check out the Laguna Beach Trolley. It's fun to use it as a method of hopping around town and checking out the sights.