

REVIEW: The Andaz West Hollywood – Your spot on the Sunset Strip

I've stayed at nearly every hotel on Sunset strip, and most of them are pretty unique in their own way. The Andaz West Hollywood stands out for being the most modern and updated of the properties on the strip, and whenever someone asks for a recommendation for something modern this is where I send them.



The view from Sunset Strip
(Your ad on side of
building may vary)

The lobby is clean and small, with an open check-in concept that Andaz is known for. This means that there is no large check-in front-desk with employees standing at the ready.

Instead, there's a few laptops on some unassuming desks located next to refreshments and couches. The feel that this is supposed to connote is one of casualness and modernity. It does the job.



The minimalist lobby,
notice the check-in
“stands” in the distance

The hotel itself is a smaller property, but that’s because the Andaz believes that this property is all about the location around it and they don’t expect you to spend a lot of time within the hotel. There is a restaurant on the side of the lobby, which is beautiful, but rather expensive. It’s not a bad place to grab a bite, but I would recommend checking out everything else that Los Angeles has to offer – it IS the foodie capital of the US.



The lobby restaurant is
gorgeous AND expensive

The reason you come to this hotel, though is because the service is good, the rooms have beautiful floor to ceiling windows with breathtaking views, and there’s a very cool rooftop pool with expansive views of the surrounding Hollywood Hills, Downtown LA, and sometimes when there’s not so much smog – views all the way to the Pacific.



The rooftop pool where you'll want to spend a lot of time



Floor to ceiling windows unveil the beautiful view from the high-up Andaz which is already on the high-up Sunset strip area

PROS:

- One of the only modern hotels on Sunset strip
- The views from the rooms and rooftop pool are pretty fantastic
- Walking distance to everything in the area (and there's a lot)

CONS:

- There's not a lot to the hotel itself, it's a small property

SECRETS:

- This is a place you want to stay at during the summer months or when it's hot in LA, because otherwise the rooftop pool and lounge is otherwise pretty useless

THINGS TO DO IN THE AREA:

- This is Sunset strip, which means you are within walking distance to some pretty legendary bars and restaurants. Check out the lounge at Chateau Marmont, it's cheeky and hip and always "in".
- Walk over to the Rock & Reilly's bar if you want a cool place to have a drink and watch a game. This bar also has an incredible selection of whiskeys (Go figure – it's an Irish pub)

REVIEW: A little slice of heaven – Andaz Papagayo

Staying at this hotel was one of the best experiences I have had in a while. I know, it may sound like hyperbole, but the Andaz really knows how to do things right when it comes to their resort in Costa Rica. I was lucky enough to stay here during low season which turned out to be a blessing in disguise as the resort was exceptionally placid and relaxing with only a few people around.



This is the view that you'll be seeing every morning as you have an amazing breakfast

One of the first things you'll notice when you enter the Papagayo Peninsula and then the Andaz is just how secluded it all is. Costa Rica, in general is already a getaway, but at the Andaz the buildings just meld into their environment making guests feel at one with the nature around them. When I was choosing whether to stay at this hotel, or the Four Seasons down the street I decided upon the Andaz due to its newer build and more zen-like atmosphere. I did get a chance to visit the Four Seasons one night and my decision, in retrospect, was correct.

There's a lot of things to love about this property, its direct beach access and water-based activities, including jet-skiing, snorkeling, paddle-boarding, and snorkeling, to its

beautiful set of infinity edge pools that span across the entire width of the resort. What I love most about the hotel, however, was the fact that the management has spent a lot of time training the staff to make you feel as if you were an old friend, and valued guest. This is especially important when you're at a secluded resort and spend a significant amount of time on the property.



Modern, relaxing, and awesomely integrated into the mountainside – Big ups to the Andaz hotel chain for this one!

The staff went out of their way at each moment to know the names of the guests, to know my personal preferences in drinks and food, and to impart some personal tidbits about Costa Rica – once they knew it was my first time there. The concierge was extremely helpful in planning activities, and one of my favorite things about the resort was the mixology bar and the mixologists on staff. The complexity and innovation that went into some of the beverages that the staff made for me was

almost incomprehensible (yes, it's that good).



They take mixology to a whole 'nother level here. I really can't begin to describe how amazing the drinks are at the Andad Papagayo

The spirit of "Pura Vida" (Google it, because that's a whole 'nother article in itself), is especially prevalent here, and I cannot hesitate to recommend this as a must-see and must-stay at property if you're ever in Costa Rica.

PROS:

- Beautiful modern property with amazing rooms/bathrooms, it's a lot newer than the more expensive Four Seasons next door, and a lovely property
- The service is bar-none. I would put it at the same level as a Ritz-Carlton Reserve, which is saying a lot
- All the awesome activities were put together with lots

of planning and thought, the mixology classes, coffee classes, forest hikes – you won't feel at a loss when finding things to do here

- The food is incredible, lots of amazing cuisine for vegetarians to meat lovers alike

CONS:

- Some of the restaurants were closed on certain days due to it being low season, but that ended up not being an issue as there were shuttles to the Four Seasons next door when added variety was needed

SECRETS:

- Check out the adults-only pool next to the spa, it's got a nice secluded atmosphere to it
- The ceviche at Ostra is incredible and a must have

THINGS TO DO IN THE AREA:

- I highly recommend the ATV tours through the company that Andaz's concierge uses, it's a fun adventure through rivers and rainforest that shows some of the beauty of Costa Rica (hidden waterfalls, local towns, etc)