

REVIEW: The Monarch Beach Resort in Dana Point



The Monarch Beach Resort was formerly a SPG St Regis property, one of the top ones in the portfolio, but as of mid 2016 was purchased by KSL group after a lengthy renovation. I went to

stay at the hotel shortly after the renovation so this review reflects what the hotel currently is like (as of Q3 2016).

The common areas of this hotel are pretty amazing. The lobby is grand, and the pool area has lots of space and two different pools to lounge at. I didn't get a chance to visit the spa, but did use the gym facilities and the equipment is new and the whole area feels spacious and well kempt.



Everything about this hotel feels grand, the scale of it all is pretty impressive

As you might know from a little bit of research, there are two other major competitors in the area – the Ritz-Carlton Dana Point and the Montage Laguna Beach both of which I have stayed at and of which you can find separate reviews of via the hyperlinks. If you had to ask me to choose, I'd say each one has a different feel and it depends what you're looking for.

If you want a grand resort experience this is on par with

what you would find at the Montage. If you want something that is a bit more intimate the Ritz-Carlton at Dana Point will fit the bill. If you want the newest hotel in the area, then this is definitely it.

There wasn't much to say about the hotel, except that I felt that the updates were nice but they could've done a little more to update the rooms themselves. With the caveat that i've never stayed at the St Regis version of the Monarch Beach before the renovation, it appeared to me that the bathrooms underwent very little during the transformation. It also appeared that the hotel was heavily geared towards wedding parties, and this is something that is pretty apparent by the large open spaces which appeared odd when unused and without furniture.

Otherwise, this is a solid hotel and definitely gets my recommendation, but I suggest cross shopping with its closest competitor – the Montage to see which one is a better value at the time. They're both very similar in feel.



This place was built for wedding photographs, but it can often feel a bit too large at times

PROS:

- The stunning scale of the architecture is pretty cool to look at and definitely gives the Resort a unique feel
- Newly updated (as of Q3 2016) with most of the common areas looking polished and luxurious
- This is definitely a place built for weddings & other functions. For couples looking for a quick getaway I would recommend also checking the Montage next door

CONS:

- Some spaces feel barren as they were built for functional meeting space but when unused have an odd appearance
- The rooms are nothing spectacular, even though they are still very nice

SECRET(S):

- This is actually a great place to have brunch – especially if you live in the Orange County area
- For a slight upcharge you can get your own firepit on your patio, but ask for one of the rooms that is facing away from the pool so you can get more privacy

OTHER THINGS IN THE AREA:

- Check out the review of the The Ritz-Carlton Laguna Niguel to see what things you can do in the area!