

LAGUNA BEACH

Magazine

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2018 » LAGUNABEACHMAGAZINE.COM

COASTAL CUISINE

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10 QUESTIONS WITH ... JOHN GROSSMAN

The president of Classic Hotels & Resorts, which includes two Laguna properties, offers a glimpse into his life and some of his favorite places in town.

By Laguna Beach Magazine Staff

ALTHOUGH JOHN GROSSMAN DOESN'T LIVE IN LAGUNA BEACH FULL TIME, HE'S HERE OFTEN ENOUGH THAT IT FEELS LIKE A SECOND home. He's president of Classic Hotels & Resorts, which includes The Inn at Laguna Beach and Laguna Beach House.

Grossman is on the road every week, visiting all of the company's properties. "My rotation means I usually get to Laguna monthly, which is never enough," he says.

"... Aside from the obvious—Laguna is one of the most beautiful beach towns around—I enjoy the soul of the place: Laguna has maintained its coastal heritage through protecting its celebrated past, which continues to inspire and guide its future."

Despite the fact that he doesn't live locally, Grossman fell in love with this coastal city early on—he's been coming to Laguna his entire life. "My parents were both surfers and we made an annual surf pilgrimage to Laguna Beach where we based and did day trips to Doheny, San Onofre and Trestles," he shares. Grossman still surfs in Laguna and frequents a few stores and restaurants in between work and catching waves. Here, Grossman shares his go-to places, plus some insight into what inspires him.

Laguna Beach Magazine: What's your ideal morning in Laguna?

JG: Start off with coffee at Urth Caffé, then head up to the roof terrace of The Inn to check the surf. Afterward, ... it's one of two scenarios: If [the waves at] Rockpile ... [are] breaking, I'll paddle out and snag a few insiders. It's a tight takeoff zone and a pretty established pack on good days, so I'm quite happy taking some of the leftovers. If not, I'll head to Laguna Canyon with my mountain bike and ride up to Top of the World—a challenging mixture of technical climbing and fast downhill that I really enjoy.

LBM: What's your favorite breakfast place in Laguna and what do you order there?

JG: Zinc Cafe is my personal favorite. The atmosphere is lively—it is always buzzing with visitors and locals. The Healthy Scrambled Plate can't be beat: It comes with egg whites, black beans, brown rice and salsa.

LBM: Do you have a go-to store where you like to shop in Laguna?

JG: I always like to see what's going on at Thalia [Surf Shop]: The boards they carry are pretty much all pieces of usable art.

LBM: If you could change one thing in your life, what would it be?

JG: I wish I had studied architectural history ... [in] college.

LBM: Where do you love to travel and why?

JG: Portugal is a country I've visited about five times: The beaches, surf, history, architecture and people keep me coming back.



LBM: What's the last book you read?

JG: I recently re-read Anthony Bourdain's "Kitchen Confidential," which I finished a few days before his tragic death. I really admire his storytelling and writing style—raw, punchy [and] to the point, but with so much love.

LBM: If you could recommend one thing for visitors to do while in Laguna, what would it be?

JG: Find your way to Thousand Steps Beach with a beach blanket and a picnic.

LBM: Where do you like to go for lunch in Laguna and what do you order there?

JG: I can't get enough of La Sirena—great quality, healthy and fresh. It's always packed, too, which is a pretty darn good sign.

LBM: Do you have a favorite happy hour spot? Is there a certain drink or dish you order there?

JG: Somewhere I can catch the sunset. You'll typically find me on the deck at La Casa del Camino—apart from the terrace at The Inn, it has one of the best sunset views in Laguna. I'm a simple drinker [and] typically grab an IPA or pale ale.

LBM: How do you like to end the night in Laguna?

JG: I never pass up a nightcap at The Saloon on my way back to The Inn, especially if I have friends in town. It's a true local classic and well worth the visit. Folks always get a kick out of the vibe and the "be nice or go back to Newport" sign. **LBM**