

Gas Lamps along the Path

Over the last several years the once gritty Gaslamp district in downtown San Diego has gone from down and out to up and up and then some! This now thriving glittering metropolis is jam crammed with a myriad of fun and delicious things to do. With never ending choices in restaurants, year round events, major league baseball games, dancing, window shopping and sight seeing this downtown oasis has something for everyone!

I chose to stay in the thick of it right next to the San Diego Padres home field in the newer (hello swank!) Hotel Solamar. As many friends will attest I have been enjoying a life long love affair with polka dots so imagine my absolute delight when I walked into my darling room and saw polka dot curtains! No, they weren't offensive and loud, they were sheer and soft adding the perfect stylish edge to an already charismatic decked out space. Out of one window vistas of tangerine tinged sunset hues glistened on San Diego Bay and other large windows framed Petco Park and the city skyline. Oh the architecture! Upbeat energy grabbed hold and reminded me of being in New York or South Beach Miami.

I unpacked my things and headed down to the mid level JSix - Bar and immediately ordered a tart vodka and cranberry cocktail and began my people watching extravaganza. **note: JSix restaurant at Hotel Solamar is dedicated to the slow food movement and buys from local organic farmers, including our very own Crows Pass Farms for fresh veggies and fruits!*

Alas, I had reservations at another famous people watching joint and journeyed a few blocks north to a special spot (there are many special spots) in all of San Diego; Café Sevilla. Dusky amber light gingerly settled upon the noisy streets of the Gaslamp Quarter where taxi's, Pedi cabs and dolled up dapper pedestrians shuttled past as I



wandered towards a certain Spanish restaurant/club. Along my path I peered into colorful art galleries, bustling sidewalk cafes, pubs and several boutiques. Finally, I landed at my destination and entered into a cozy candlelit enclave with intoxicating scents of saffron and garlic wafting to and fro. Cue the grumbling stomach. Within fifteen minutes my stomach stopped grumbling as I tasted tasty morsels of queso manchego, mouthwatering paella, spiced lamb and delectable tortilla Espanola coupled with the sweetest fruit stuffed pitcher of sangria. My companion Joy and I were in full blown tapas heaven. I learned many years ago that tapas are a wonderful way to experience a wide range of different dishes (and flavors) without stuffing oneself into complete immobility.

Ah, but the sweetest part of the evening came after 9:30 when the flamenco playing maestros known as Mala Mana busted out their guitars and started strumming hearty songs while everyone clapped, danced, and sang along to hypnotic festive melodies. If salsa dancing sounds inviting (your invited), Café Sevilla offers lively dance lessons as well. Ole!

With goblets of sangria free flowing and guitar notes celebrating the young night, we made our way back to Hotel Solamar, ordered a nightcap and raised our glasses in honor of the oh so exuberant Gaslamp experience.

