

# ***Dana Harbor & San Clemente Piers*** ***On a Harley-Davidson Switchback***

**T**wo favorite pier destinations for bagger riders are only 6 miles apart and offer spectacular riding. San Clemente pier and Dana Point Harbor are both nearby Ortega Highway (CA74) that leads from the ocean to popular biker hangouts, Hells Kitchen and at the very top of the twisty mountain road is the Overlook restaurant. Since we're on the two theme, what better way to visit both piers than on the new Harley-Davidson Switchback, designed to be

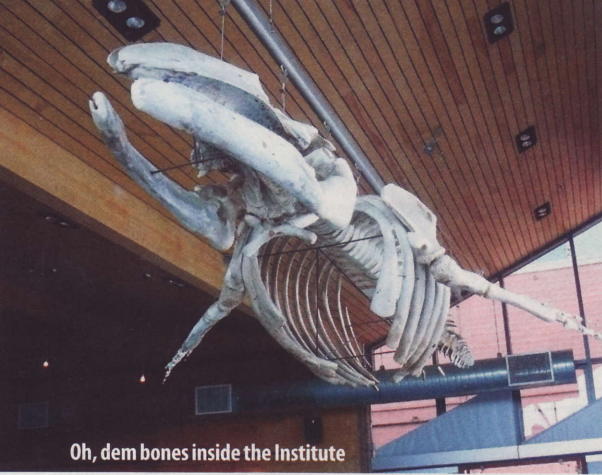
two motorcycles in one.

Dana Point Harbor is considered the best year-round whale-watching destination for migrating Gray whales from November through April and Blue whales visiting from May through November. The harbor is uniquely close to the spots where these animals are most often seen. At only 150 feet long, perhaps the pier itself is more akin to a freeway onramp but it's what is next to the pier that's important. The harbor and nearby point are

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**PHOTOS:** Ron Sinoy



**TWO PIERS AND TWO BIKES**



Oh, dem bones inside the Institute



With detachable hard bags and windshield, the Switchback is two bikes in one



Tours are available on weekends and your family will have to heave-ho the yardarms



FOR THE PRICE OF ONE!





named after the author Richard Henry Dana who visited here in 1835 while he was a sailor on the two-masted ship, the *Pilgrim*. The earliest maps (by Humboldt) of the area called the small bay, Bahía de San Juan Capistrano. A replica of Dana's 19<sup>th</sup> century ship, the *Pilgrim*, is docked right next to the pier.

In addition, just up the street from the *Pilgrim* is the Orange County Marine Institute, a don't-miss attraction for those interested in the sea. The Ocean Institute has become nationally known for its hands-on marine science, environmental education, and maritime history programs. One-hundred-ten-thousand K-12 students and 8,000 teachers annually participate in the Institute's award-winning, immersion-style programs to learn about oceanography, science, and California history. Students voyage onto the ocean, study in labs, and live aboard tall ships or in the chaparral where they can feel and taste the salty seaspray and

shiver their timbers. On weekends it's open to the public to come explore the aquatic world of the Institute.

Pacific Coast Highway ends (or starts, depending on your point of view) in Dana Point, but travelling south turns into Coast Highway that continues for 6 miles where it ends in San Clemente and changes names again to El Camino Real. You ride that to Avenida Del Mar and turn right towards the ocean. San Clemente Pier is unlike most other piers that have a direct route to get to them; here one navigates through quaint downtown, residential neighborhoods, then suddenly the blue Pacific appears. It's not full of tourists yet has two fantastic restaurants that flank the base of the pier; both with spectacular outdoor seating. The pier actually has its own Amtrak stop and several large hotels grace the area but my favorite is the Beachcomber Motel, a kitschy little place that literally overlooks the pier. The present owners

of this historic motel have revived a plan to transform the quaint ocean-view bungalows into a five-story, 73-room resort and spa. In 2001, the plan was shelved because city staff had concerns about destroying the motel's historic structure and its compatibility with the neighborhood. So it's currently still there as it was originally intended to be...we shall see.

Built in 1928, the Beachcomber was a favorite site to smuggle liquor into the county during prohibition. The hurricane of 1939 destroyed much of the pier. The storms of 1983 tore out 400 feet from the end of the pier and 80 feet from the mid-section area, just past the surf area. When rebuilt, the end section was built 3½ feet higher, and polyethylene-coated steel pilings were used to hopefully better withstand winter storms.

The Fisherman's Restaurant and Bar has been here for more than 20 years. The menu for breakfast, lunch, or dinner is as spectacular as the view—whether morn-



# P I E R S O F T H E



Do those planks look rickety or what?

## San Clemente Pier

**HOURS:** Open 4 a.m. until midnight.

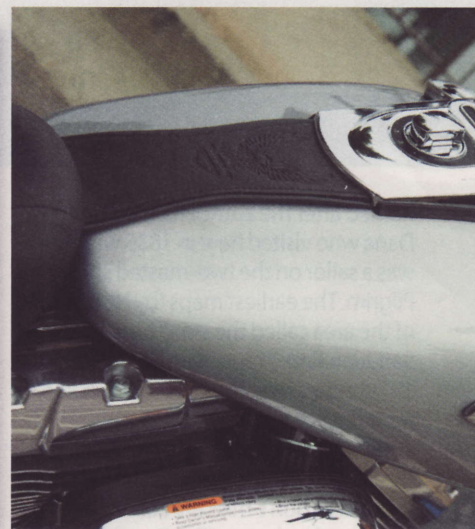
**PARKING:** Because it is an Amtrak stop, there is paid public parking and street parking is available for \$1 per hour (pay-and-display box) and there are a handful of two-hour meters.

**RESTAURANTS:** The Fisherman Restaurant and Oyster Bar

**FACILITIES:** Lights, benches, fish-cleaning tables, an excellent bait-and-tackle shop (stop and say hi to the folks), the surf is moderate-to-good with a nice sandy bottom. The concession stand rents boogie boards and snorkeling gear.

**HOW TO GET THERE:**

From I-5 take any of several exit streets west to El Camino Real, follow it to the center of town, and from there take Del Mar down to the pier.  
[thefishermansrestaurant.com/](http://thefishermansrestaurant.com/)  
[beachcombermotel.com/](http://beachcombermotel.com/)  
 San Clemente Surf cam; Live Video: [san-clemente.org/cameras/hqcamera.aspx](http://san-clemente.org/cameras/hqcamera.aspx)



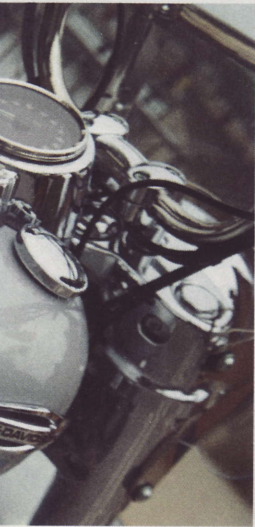
ing or evening. If you want to impress a date, this is the place to go.

The new Dyna Switchback from Harley-Davidson is a custom touring motorcycle with detachable hard saddlebags and quick-detach windshield. Remove those components in just seconds to turn the Switchback into a custom street cruiser. The Switchback is the lightest custom touring motorcycle in its displacement category. Powered by

Fantastic outdoor seating on both sides of the pier.



# W E S T C O A S T



a muscular Twin Cam 103V-twin engine, the Switchback will knock your head back with an aggressive twist of the throttle. At 718 pounds it's 94 pounds lighter than a Harley-Davidson Road King. New front-end geometry, premium suspension components, and a low-profile front tire give the Switchback a plush ride and responsive handling.

The Switchback is a quick-change artist. With its color-matched hard saddle-

bags and a fork-mounted windshield in place, the Switchback is a custom touring motorcycle. But in seconds, the detachable saddlebags and quick-detach windshield can be removed without tools. Now the Switchback is a custom street cruiser with a gleaming headlamp nacelle, five-spoke cast-aluminum wheels, and a mini-ape handlebar. When it's time to head out for a long weekend, simply re-install the saddlebags and windshield,

and the Switchback is ready for PCH.

Designed to look great with or without its saddlebags, the Switchback is styled to evoke a classic proportion and clean, straightforward lines from its 4.7-gallon fuel tank to the sweep of its full-coverage rear fenders. The bend of the mini-ape handlebar and its pull-back riser, full-length rider footboards, and a two-up touring seat offer most riders all-day comfort. ●

# PIERS OF THE WEST COAST



## Dana Point Harbor Pier

**HOURS:** Open 24 hours.

**RESTAURANTS:** The pier has a small snack bar, there are many restaurants surrounding the pier.

**FACILITIES:** Most of the facilities were rebuilt in the late '80s and are in excellent condition. Lights, benches, and a fish-cleaning table are on the pier. A small snack bar, which usually carries some bait, is located near the entrance to the pier. Restrooms are located across the street. There is free parking near the front of the pier although signs say no parking between midnight and 6 a.m.

### HANDICAPPED

**FACILITIES:** Handicapped parking and restrooms are available. The pier surface is wood and the rail height is 40 inches.

### HOW TO GET THERE:

The pier is located in the Dana Cove Park area of Dana Point Harbor. From the Pacific Coast Highway take Green Lantern Road south to the harbor, turn left on Cove Road, and follow it to the pier.

[festivalofwhales.com](http://festivalofwhales.com)

[ocean-institute.org/](http://ocean-institute.org/)

[sandiegohistory.org/bio/dana/dana.htm](http://sandiegohistory.org/bio/dana/dana.htm)



