



BERNARDUS LODGE

Carmel Valley and its Surrounding Region: History, Attractions, Wine and Whimsy

Those who have experienced it can attest to the fact that the fog actually lifts like a curtain as one passes from Carmel into Carmel Valley. Unveiled, Carmel Valley is a perpetually sunny town that lies inland, beyond the fog belt of Carmel-by-the-Sea on the spectacular Monterey Peninsula. The lesser known of the Carmels, with its rolling hills, golf courses and ranch land is exceedingly scenic and still uncommercialized, boasting the kind of residential communities, resorts, spas, golf and tennis clubs that bespeak sophistication. But no matter what part of the Monterey Peninsula travelers find themselves in, they are sure to be delighted by its bounty of historical, natural and cultural attractions.

Pirates, Missionaries, Artists, Millionaires: A Thumbnail History of Carmel Valley and Carmel-by-the-Sea

Also known as “the sunny side” of Carmel-by-the-Sea, Carmel Valley is a sublime pastoral river valley nestled into the rolling Santa Lucia mountain range. The town was once primarily home to mission rancherias and later small truck farms but soon attracted sporting millionaires who built mansions and invited their Hollywood friends to hunt boar, play polo and golf, and attend horse shows and fiestas.

Over the last decade, Carmel Valley’s vineyard acreage has increased by about 25 percent, along with its reputation as one of the finest wine growing regions in California. Endless opportunities for recreation, including championship golf, entertainment, sumptuous food, not to mention premier wine tasting, await visitors to this picturesque area.

Carmel Valley also benefits from the area’s rich artistic and cultural legacy. San Francisco poet George Sterling settled in Carmel-by-the-Sea in 1905, and soon after, other writers and artists, also lured by inexpensive land and inspiring scenery, followed. Some of the area’s notable residents included artist Maynard Dixon, photographer Edward Weston, poet Robinson Jeffers, author John Steinbeck and author Mary Austin. Author Robert Louis Stevenson lived in Monterey but often visited the neighboring towns. Wealthy San Franciscans discovered the Carmel region in the 1920s and 30s and began building whimsical vacation cottages inspired by their Bohemian predecessors.

Winding Roads, Thundering Surf, a Little Shakespeare... a Dash of Bach

The following are just some of the area's highlights:

Attractions

- **Big Sur:** This rugged coastline, with its precipitous coastal wall that plunges 4,000 feet to the sea, is located near the village of Big Sur, it is 23 miles south of Carmel.
- **Cannery Row:** The subject of the classic Steinbeck novel and focus of Monterey, a port and cannery town built by Chinese and Italian fishermen in the 1880s has been reborn with shops, restaurants and a world-class aquarium.
- **Monterey Bay Aquarium:** Built out over the water in a revamped cannery building, this internationally known aquarium presents the rich marine life of Monterey Bay, focal point of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, North America's largest offshore natural preserve.
- **Carmel River State Beach:** This mile-long beach, featuring a bird sanctuary in a lagoon, is one of the finest in California.
- **Garland Ranch Regional Park:** Four thousand plus acres of excellent mountain trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding along the willow-lined banks of the Carmel River await visitors to this park in Carmel Valley.
- **17 Mile Drive:** Travelers are treated to spectacular coastline views as they travel this road that winds through exclusive estates and the 8,000-acre Del Monte Forest. Turnouts reveal breathtaking vistas, including Lone Cypress, a classic landmark of the Monterey Peninsula.
- **Mission Trail Park:** The park encompasses 35 acres of unspoiled native vegetation and offers five miles of trails and expansive vistas. It's open year-round.
- **National Steinbeck Center:** Visitors will find multimedia exhibits, written excerpts and film clips depicting the themes and settings of John Steinbeck's novels, stories, scripts and journalistic dispatches as well as more than 30,000 manuscripts, letters, first editions, photos, oral histories and other mementos.
- **Pebble Beach:** Boasting seven world-class golf courses, many celebrity residents and some of the world's most expensive real estate, this seaside town is situated north of Carmel.
- **Point Lobos State Reserve:** Two miles south of Carmel, travelers can discover this wildlife sanctuary with otters, sea lions, seals, brown pelicans and gulls visible from paths along cliffs. There are also great vantage points for whale watching.
- **Carmel Valley Village:** This charming village is home to a variety of local wineries, boutiques and antiques.
- **Earthbound Farms:** Visit the cornstalk maze, fresh herb garden, or dine at the restaurant, The Organic Kitchen. Kids will love their bug walks.

Events

- **Monterey Peninsula Vintage Car Week:** This annual August event features a heady mix of classic cars, celebrity (and otherwise well-heeled) connoisseurs, as well as non-stop, one-of-a-kind events paying homage to the automobile. Quail Lodge plays host to *The Quail—A Motorsports Gathering* and the *Quail Rally*, formerly The Peninsula Rally.
- **AT&T Celebrity Pro-Am Golf Tournament:** Played on the Pebble Beach Golf Links during the first week of February, the tournament brings throngs of celebrities to the Carmel area.
- **Big Sur Marathon:** Over 3,000 runners compete each spring in a marathon between Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park and Carmel.
- **Grand Prix:** This is an annual motorcycle race held each May at internationally famous Laguna Seca racetrack.
- **Carmel Art Walk:** Every summer evening from 6 to 9 p.m., the studios and galleries around Carmel open their doors for all to experience the local, eclectic art scene.
- **Carmel Bach Festival:** This annual Bach Festival attracts music lovers from around the world from mid-July to early August. Carmel residents open their homes and volunteer to make the event an annual success.
- **Forest Theater:** This 80-year-old theater features locally produced plays each summer.
- **Carmel Shakespeare Festival:** Shakespeare's works come alive for audiences at the Forest Theater in September.
- **Jeffers Festival:** Named after the noted poet Robinson Jeffers, this annual fall festival features book signings, banquets, poetry readings and poetry walks near Jeffers' Tor House.
- **Annual Halloween/Birthday Parade:** In celebration of Halloween and Carmel-by-the-Sea's birthday, the city stages a parade of costumed children through the streets of the village. The city also celebrates with a birthday barbecue on the weekend before October 31.
- **Carmel Tree Lighting Ceremony:** In early December, the villagers gather in the center of town for the lighting of the tree, caroling and holiday cheer.
- **Monterey Jazz Festival:** Held annually since 1958, the festival is one of the oldest continuous, outdoor jazz festivals in the country. It attracts the world's finest jazz musicians.
- **Great Wine Escape Weekend:** This annual November event celebrates Monterey County Wine Country. Monterey Vintners Association hosts food and wine pairings, open houses and bus tours at local wineries and winemaker dinners hosted at selected restaurants including Marinus.

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