

SOUTH BAY ACCENT

THE BEST OF THE SOUTH BAY, SILICON VALLEY & SAN JOSE SINCE 1978

HIGH TECH MAVERICK
URNS TO WINE

LOCAL TEACHERS
BOOST STEM

EASE INTO FALL
FASHION

REDISCOVER
CARMEL

INSIDER GUIDE TO
PRIVATE SCHOOLS

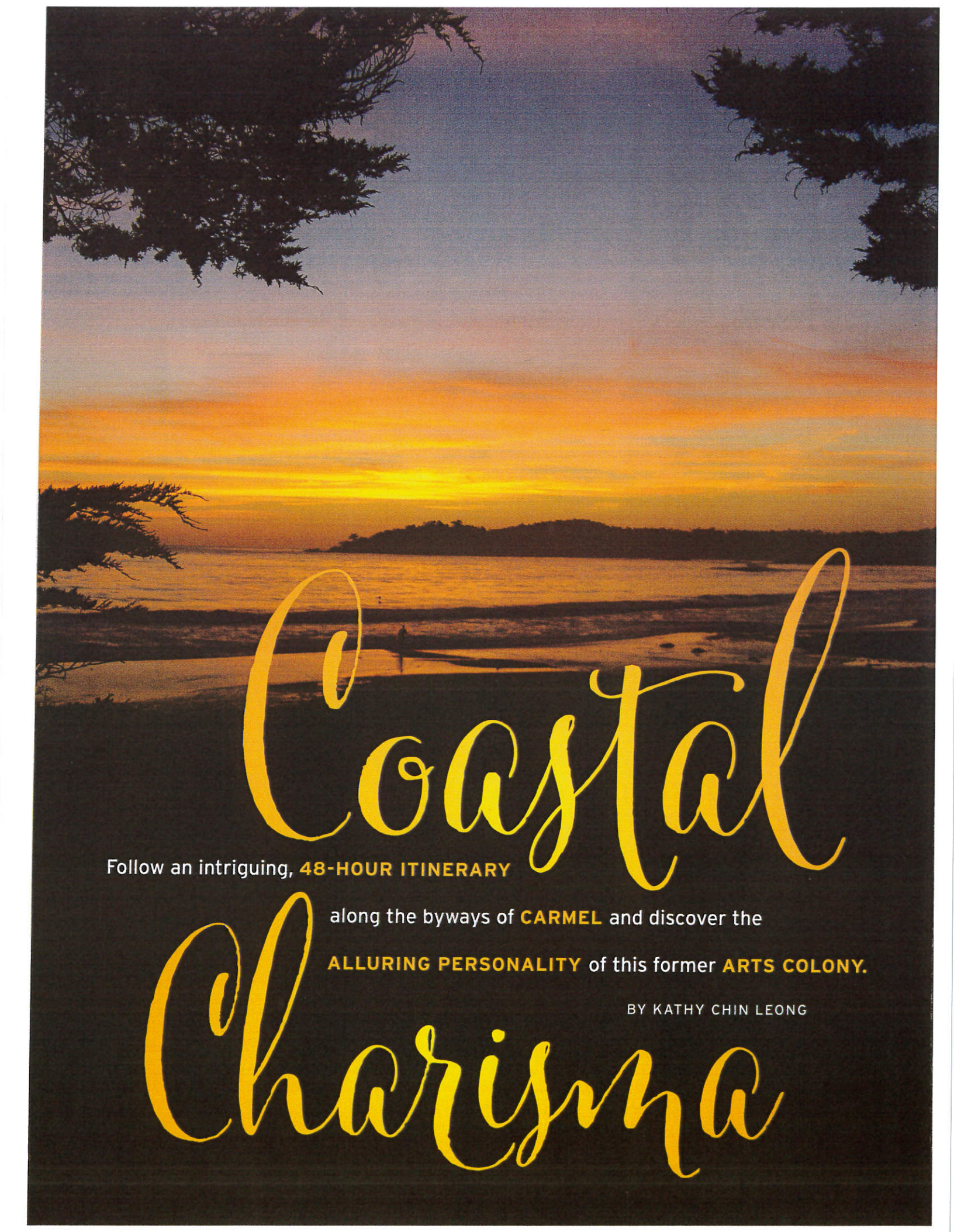
200 DINING
HOT SPOTS

150 CALENDAR
EVENTS

LIGHT
SUMMER
DISHES
AT **10** TOP
RESTAURANTS

COOL
EATS





Coastal

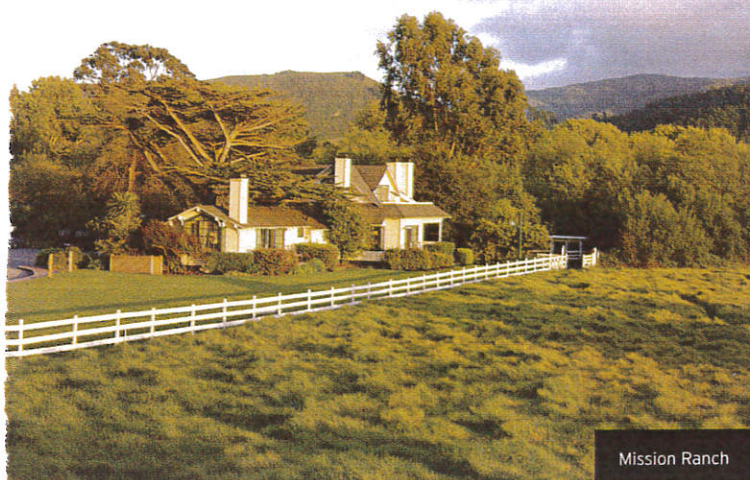
Follow an intriguing, **48-HOUR ITINERARY**

along the byways of **CARMEL** and discover the

ALLURING PERSONALITY of this former **ARTS COLONY**.

BY KATHY CHIN LEONG

Charisma



Mission Ranch



Colonial Terrace

ONCE UPON A TIME—in 1924, to be exact—Hugh Comstock built a storybook cottage for his wife Mayotta where she could display and sell her handmade rag dolls. The 244-square-foot historic Doll House, commonly known as Hansel, was tucked behind gnarled oak trees and featured an off-kilter chimney, rounded doorway and an exaggerated pitched roof. A year later, the couple fashioned a matching cottage next door named Gretel. ¶ Enamored of the whimsical architecture, Carmel-by-the-Sea residents begged Comstock to build them similar dwellings. And soon up to 20 fairytale-styled structures had sprouted amid the town's rustic summer cabins. ¶ So begins the tale of how a tiny arts

colony along the Pacific coast transformed itself into a world-renowned tourist destination drawing 2 million visitors each year. Within its mere one-square-mile environs, the downtown village is packed with half-hidden charms—from the famous Comstock cottages to secluded, picturesque courtyards, romantic European eateries and more than 100 unique shops and galleries. ¶ Lucky South Bay residents looking for a quick getaway are within an easy drive to idyllic Carmel-by-the-Sea (the official name of the downtown city). But, here we suggest you skip the Mission and the usual beach walk and experience the town in a way you've never done before. Give us 48 hours, and we'll show you how. »



Ajne Organic Scent Systems



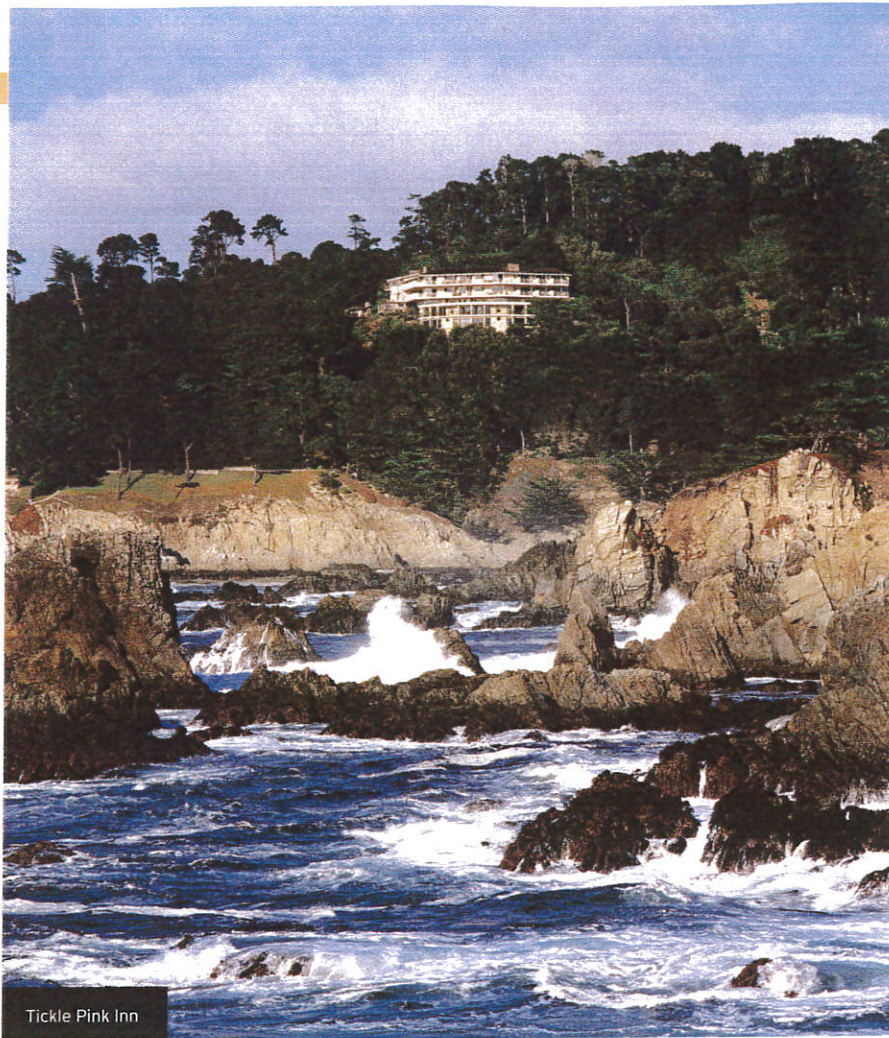
Trió Carmel



Hugh Comstock's fairy tale cottage Hansel

PREVIOUS SPREAD, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT PAGE: COURTESY OF CARMELCALIFORNIA.COM (2); COURTESY OF COLONIAL TERRACE; COURTESY OF TRIO CARMEL; TOM O'NEAL. THIS PAGE: COURTESY OF CARMELCALIFORNIA.COM

DAY ONE



Tickle Pink Inn

2 P.M. Your first stop is the Carmel Visitor Center, where you'll find all the maps, brochures and advice you need. This is the only place to purchase a Wine Walk Passport for access to nine of the village's 15 wine tasting rooms. At \$65, the passport entitles you to a flight of wines at each locale. An additional bonus is that the passport never expires. Here, you can also ask for a listing of the Comstock cottages as well as a free map featuring the town's 42 courtyards. And by the way, no numeric addresses exist in Carmel-by-the-Sea, so you have to find locations according to cross streets.

3 P.M. Check into your hotel; there are several wonderfully quaint and distinctive choices. One is Svendsgaard's Inn, a 35-room boutique property within walking distance to the beach and downtown. The inn features a cozy bed with white linens, a gas fireplace and a newspaper accompanied by continental breakfast arriving daily on your doorstep. By now, fresh baked cookies have also appeared in the lobby, as they do each afternoon.

Other appealing accommodations might include the Happy Landing Inn, an enclave of cottages recently remodeled but retaining a winsome 1920s character. Each room is named after a famous actor or actress and surrounds a grassy garden with an outdoor fireplace. For a place just steps from the ocean, try the Colonial Terrace, where you can book a romantic room with a view from the second story. Or, to see the Pacific in full, panoramic splendor, drive 10 minutes to Tickle Pink Inn and book a luxurious room with fireplace and ocean view.

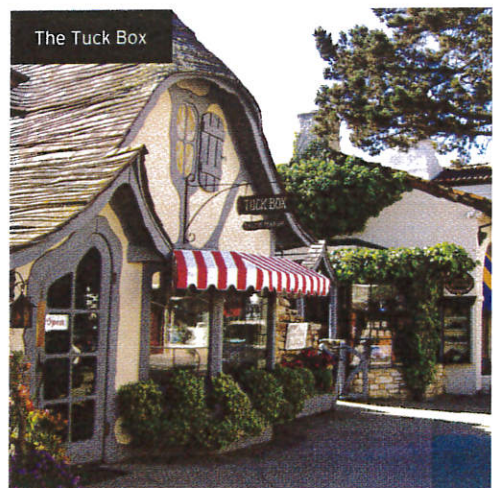
4 P.M. Make a beeline for Pilgrim's Way Bookstore and Secret Garden. Carmel's only bookshop is small but well stocked with bestsellers and works from resident authors, as well as with books covering local history that can only be found here. Known as the heartbeat of the town, the bookstore hosts readings and author receptions, and the lovely Secret Garden behind the shop offers an oasis of splashing fountains, plants and Zen-inspired statuary.

5 P.M. Time for a pre-dinner drink! Zip up the stairs of Vesuvio Restaurant and you'll discover Starlight 65, the only rooftop lounge in town. Enjoy the lively vibe of this hot spot from a seat in front of the cozy central fire pit.

6 P.M. Run down to the white sands of Carmel Beach with a blanket to catch the sunset. You'll see the sky illuminate with glorious swirls of pink, red and orange. Build your own bonfire, and if you've brought Fido along, take off his leash. It's totally legal.

7 P.M. Walk to dinner. On every street, you'll find top-shelf restaurants catering to every type of diet (dairy free, vegetarian, gluten-free and more), for various budgets and featuring a wide variety of cuisine. Tonight, hit Grasing's, and discover why it was voted by the locals as the "best restaurant in Carmel." Chef Kurt Grasing creates culinary masterpieces with local ingredients such as farm-raised Monterey Bay red abalone and fresh picked organic greens. Fan favorites include tender filet mignon and milk-fed veal.

9 P.M. Wind up the evening with some great live music and head to the Mission Ranch Hotel and Restaurant. The sing-along piano bar stays open until 11:30 p.m. The 22-acre former sheep farm is owned by "Dirty Harry" actor Clint Eastwood. In daylight, you can see sheep wandering the grassy meadow with the ocean in the background.



DAY TWO

8 A.M. Torch a few calories with a run or a hike. Point Lobos State Reserve is less than 10 minutes away and offers intoxicating emerald water views. Trek the Cypress Grove Trail, a walk that takes you through a forest of the rare Monterey cypress, one of two groves of its kind in the world. Or, if you prefer to stay within walking distance of your hotel, mosey over to Scenic Road. It's a stretch less than one mile long that runs past million-dollar homes and equally impressive scenery. You'll walk past the famous Frank Lloyd Wright house along the way.



Point Lobos State Reserve

9 A.M. La Bicyclette is one breakfast spot loved by locals who rave about the wood oven-fired eggs. Another is Carmel Belle. Here, the arugula salad with fresh lemon olive oil is topped with crispy bacon, roasted tomatoes and an egg. Salad for breakfast? "Why not?" asks Pilgrim's Way bookstore owner Cynthia Fernandez. "We don't eat enough greens anyway!"

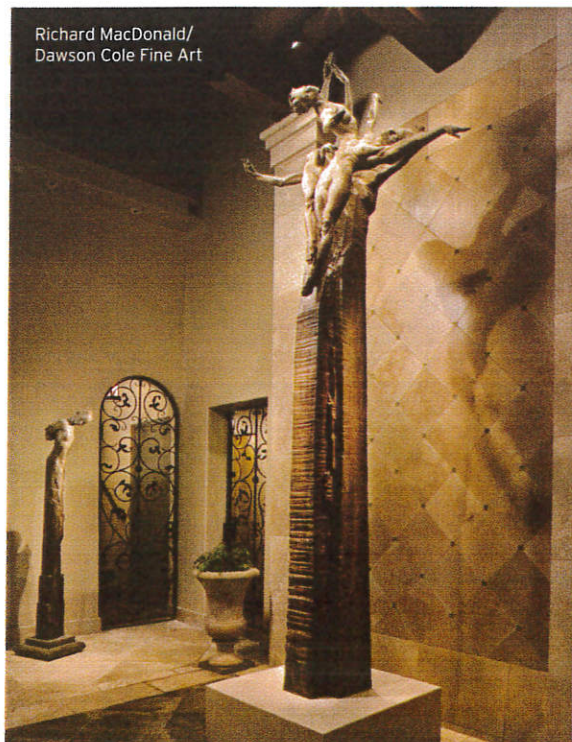
10 A.M. If it's Friday or Saturday, plan to tour historic Tor House. In 1919, poet Robinson Jeffers and his wife Una commissioned a stone house to be built for their family. Jeffers followed the workers so closely that he built an adjacent tower by himself. It took him four years, using granite boulders gathered from the shores

of Carmel Bay. Tours are given every hour starting at 10 a.m. The house, tower and gardens, perched above the ocean, are a must-see.

Or, pick up one-of-a-kind souvenirs from the village. For instance, Ajne Carmel creates personalized organic perfumes, blended to each customer's chemistry. At Burns Cowboy Shop, you can order a custom cowboy hat, measured to fit perfectly. Meanwhile, at Pat Areias Sterling, the store will create a belt buckle to your specifications or make a hand-crafted piece of silver jewelry. For something beautiful and fabulous, stop by the Twigery, where nationally renowned florist Michael Merritt will work up a fresh floral display or create an equally striking silk arrangement, according to the colors and flowers you adore.

11 A.M. Lace up your most comfy shoes and set out on a fascinating walking tour. You'll get all the lowdown on Carmel-by-the-Sea's early inhabitants and historic development from Gael Gallagher, tour guide extraordinaire and operator of Carmel Walks. This fast-paced journey leads you through clandestine alleyways and courtyards and the charming cottages of yesteryear. Gallagher is not just a guide, she's an impassioned storyteller whose engaging style makes the two-hour walk fly by.

1 P.M. Lunch at French bistro, Le St. Tropez. Lofty beamed ceilings, fresh flowers and



Richard MacDonal/
Dawson Cole Fine Art



Sunset Lounge
at Hyatt Carmel
Highlands

plush booths greet you at this cafe, where you can order up such treats as smoked mussels with grilled crusty bread. The eatery's new patio bustles with live music on weekends.

2 P.M. Art gallery hopping and wine tasting are on our itinerary for the next few hours. Feast your eyes upon larger-than-life sculptures of acrobats and dancers from Cirque du Soleil at the Richard MacDonald/Dawson Cole Fine Art Gallery. And at the Carmel Art Association Gallery, find affordable paintings and sculptures from local artists.

Pay a visit to Trio Carmel, a place where you can view fine art as well as taste Monterey County wines, olive oils and balsamic vinegars. And stop in at The Cheese Shop, where you can sample wines from all over the world while pairing them with cheeses from around the globe. This unique place sells an eye-popping array of goat, sheep and cow cheese, both hard and soft, and every combination in between.

Here is where you can pull out your wine passport to sip reds and whites from downtown tasting rooms operated by Dawn's Dream, Scheid Vineyards, Wrath Wines, Silvestri Vineyards and more.

5 P.M. You'll need some food after wine tasting, so plan an early dinner at Casanova, a feast for the eyes and the palate. The French-inspired farm cottage has been restored and festooned with fairy lights and flowers throughout. Upstairs is a private room featuring the original dining table where Vincent Van Gogh enjoyed meals in France. A bicycle leaning against the fence and old world tile mosaics add ambience for epicurean treats like homemade papadarelle pasta and oven-roasted rack of lamb.

7 P.M. Catch the sun dipping into the horizon while sipping a handcrafted cocktail in the Sunset Lounge at the iconic Hyatt Carmel Highlands hotel. The drive above the village is worth its, and takes less than 15 minutes. Floor-to-ceiling windows show spectacular views of the vast Pacific and of dense forests and rock formations off the Point Lobos State Reserve coast. You may just want to stay there all night.

A CANINE'S GUIDE TO CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA

"IN MY NEXT LIFE, I want to live in Carmel and come back as a dog!" exclaims Michael Merritt, owner of Twigery, a downtown floral design studio. Truly, man's best friend is not only warmly welcomed nearly everywhere in Carmel-by-the-Sea, he is also pampered to the nines. In this town of less than 4,000 residents, some estimate that more than half the population owns a pooch or two.

So when did Carmel go bonkers over barkers? Hard to say. However, in the 1980s when actress Doris Day opened the Cypress Inn with partner Denny LeVett, the two decided to promote the historic lodge as a pet-friendly property. Back then, the idea of welcoming animals at a posh hotel was unthinkable. And yet, Day's audacious vision set the stage for other hotels in the nation to follow suit.

Now more than 40 years later, Carmel-by-the-Sea has established itself as the dog-friendliest town in America, attracting animal lovers from around the world. Owners are thrilled to share a fine dining, shopping and upscale lodging experience with their pets. Says City Councilwoman Carrie Theis, "Big or small, we don't discriminate!"

To accommodate a dog's every need, the town offers a pet therapist who will figure out what is causing Fido to be stressed or depressed. There's also an artist who will paint his portrait. Even the local paper, the Carmel Pine Cone, features a standing feature profiling a four-legged resident each week.

Theis owns the Hofsas House Hotel, where the doggie package includes a collapsible bowl, pet shampoo, fur freshener and a Frisbee. Other inns feature dog washing stations. More than half of the town's 45 inns allow animals in the rooms, not to mention the 75 rental homes on VRBO.com.

In Carmel-by-the Sea, anything you can do, Spot can do, and that includes getting a spa treatment at Grooming by-the-Sea. And when it's time to get a bite to eat, canines are customers, too. At the Forge in the Forest, the restaurant's Dog Pound patio allows animal friends to mingle as their masters decide what to order off the pet menu. The Quarter Hounder, we're told, is a pretty popular item.

At the elegant Cypress Inn, waiters set down a water bowl and recite food options: doggie grilled chicken or beef burger.

As for activities, Carmel-by-the-Sea is one of few places where you can take Rover

off his leash to frolic on the white sands of Carmel Beach; the city offers clean-up bags in receptacles along the beach. There are also many stores that cater to owners shopping for their pets.

The haute Diggidy Dog boutique, selling bushels of different treats, also features an astounding array of clothing and accessories, including cubic zirconium collars, fluffy ballet skirts, bandanna scarves, black top hats for fancy occasions and, of course, "I



Heart Carmel" T-shirts. And then, there's the practical stuff: lavender shampoo, talking toys, ceramic biscuit jars and doggie strollers that resemble baby strollers in a multitude of fabrics and colors.

Most people boutiques, wine tasting rooms and art galleries are Fido friendly, and outdoor water bowls in front of shop doors are a common sight. At Galante Vineyards' tasting room, pourers commonly pass a handful of kibble to pet owners stopping in for a taste, as both people and animals admire the vibrant dog paintings from the well-known adjacent Rodrigue Art Gallery.

And the heart of Carmel-by-the-Sea is big enough for other species as well. At Terry's Restaurant and Lounge, food server Andrea Strano says, "My dog won't hesitate to come in and sit on one of the barstools at the bar. I've seen customers come in with birds, cats, rabbits, even ponies."



Twigery
Floral Art

COURTESY OF TWIGERY FLORAL ART. OPPOSITE PAGE: FROM TOP: COURTESY OF CARMELCALIFORNIA.COM; HEIDI MCKAY

DAY THREE

8 A.M. Wrap up your 48 hours with go-for-broke breakfast at Em Le's, where calories don't count when you order the signature French toast—a deep-fried pile of battered bread dusted with powdered sugar, sliced almonds and a pitcher of peach syrup to drizzle on top. It's a Carmel-by-the-Sea landmark known by its arched teal door and moss-covered roof.

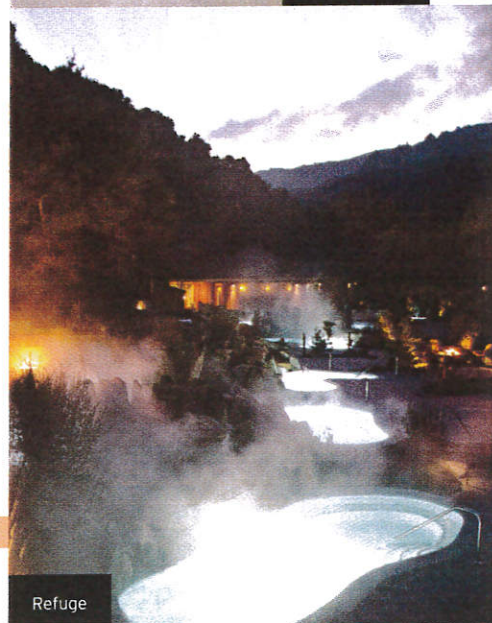
9 A.M. Walk off some of that breakfast with a brisk exploration of historic homes in the village. Every street is packed with fascinating architectural styles from adobe to Mid-Century modern, from colonial to craftsman. On your jaunt, take note of the marvelous gardens, fences and gates, pathways and clever house names, such as the Frivolous Frog, Windermere, Our Seventh Heaven, Little Lunchbox and Sea Esta.

As you meander through the downtown area, stop at The Tuck Box—the most Hobbit-esque of all the Comstock homes. The wavy, steep-pitched roof, awkward French doors, red and white awnings and bay windows are the epitome of Carmel-

by-the-Sea cute. Wind through the back alleys of the Court of Fountains, the Doud Arcade and the Pine Inn courtyard and give your camera a workout.

11 A.M. And now that you've worked up another appetite, it's time for the Carmel Food Tour. This three-hour culinary adventure includes visits to seven restaurants and specialty food shops, such as the Cottage of Sweets—built in 1922 and known for its wide variety of homemade fudge. In addition to divulging where to buy the best picnic food, entertaining tour guides also share their knowledge of Carmel lore.

2 P.M. You've checked out of your hotel, but you're not ready yet to go home. So head to the Refuge spa in Carmel Valley. Only 10 minutes away from the village, this relaxing retreat features hot and cold waterfall pools, fire pits, a eucalyptus steam room, cedar sauna and resting room, all amid a beautiful garden setting. Get ready for the drive back home with a soothing massage—it's the perfect way to end a blissful two-day getaway.



IF YOU GO

LODGING

Colonial Terrace 831/624-2741; thecolonialterrace.com
Cypress Inn 831/624-3871; cypress-inn.com
Happy Landing Inn 831/624-7917; carmelhappylanding.com
Hofsas House 831/624-2745; hofsashouse.com
Svendsgaard's Inn 800/433-4732; innsbythesea.com
Tickle Pink Inn 800/635-4774; ticklepinkinn.com

RESOURCES

Carmel Visitor Center 831/620-2000; carmelcalifornia.com

SHOPS & SITES

Burns Cowboy Shop 831/624-4014; burnssaddlery.com
Ajne Perfumery 831/624-2100; ajne.com
The Cheese Shop 831/625-2272; thecheeseshopinc.com
Cottage of Sweets 831/624-5170; cottageofsweets.com
Pat Aerias Sterling 831/626-8668; patareias.com
Point Lobos State Reserve 866/338-7227; pointlobos.org
Pilgrim's Way Bookstore and Secret Garden 831/624-4955; pilgrimsway.com
Refuge 831/620-7360; refuge.com
Twigery Floral Art 831/626-8944; twigery.com

ART GALLERIES

Carmel Art Association 831/624-6176; carmelart.org
Richard MacDonald/Dawson Cole Fine Art 800/972-5528; dawsoncofineart.com
Rodrigue Studio 831/626-4444; georgerodrigue.com
Trio Carmel 800/860-3024; triocarmel.com

RESTAURANTS

Carmel Belle 831/624-1600; carmelbelle.com
Casanova 831/625-0501; casanovarestaurant.com
Em Le's 831/625-6780; emlescarmel.com
Grasing's 831/624-6562; grasings.com
La Bicyclette 831/622-9899; labicycletterestaurant.com
Le St. Tropez 831/624-8977; lestropez.com
Forge in the Forest 831/624-2233; forgeintheforest.com

LOUNGES

Mission Ranch 800/538-8221; missionranchcarmel.com
Starlight 65 Rooftop Lounge 831/626-7373; chefpepe.com
Sunset Lounge at Hyatt Carmel Highlands 831/620-1234; highlandsinn.hyatt.com

TOURS

Carmel Walks 831/642-2700; carmelwalks.com
Carmel Food Tour 866/905-7702; carmelfoodtour.com
Tor House 831/624-1813; torhouse.org

TASTING ROOMS

Dawn's Dream 831/659-2649; dawnsdreamwinery.com
Scheid Vineyards 831/656-9463; scheidvineyards.com
Wrath Wines 831/620-1909; wrathwines.com
Silvestri Vineyards 831/625-0111; silvestrivineyards.com
Galante Vineyards 831/624-3800; galantevineyards.com ■