

Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas

, curious and cosmopolitan



The Sentinel-Record/Rebecca McCormick

MAGIC DUSK: Clear light and the natural beauty of jagged ocean cliffs at sunrise and crashing waves on ivory beaches at sunset make Carmel-by-the-Sea, Calif., a popular wedding destination for hundreds of couples each year. From simple vows to sensational pageants, the "greatest meeting of land and sea" offers a wedding style for everyone.

bistros, specialty and souvenir shops. A labyrinth of side streets and passageways leads to additional shops that are equally rewarding.

Hepburn believed tomorrow is another day, another opportunity for miracles.

You'll need several tomorrows to see all that's available in this tiny community that has been home to artists and intellectuals for decades.

Architectural buffs can spend days perusing Michael J. Murphy houses and the collection of Hugh Comstock's "Dollhouse Tudor"-style homes.

Foodies will need days to sample the gourmet banquet of "starred" restaurants, cafes

and bistros.

Dog lovers will need days to explore the pet-friendly "dog route," where thoughtful merchants make bowls of fresh water available for thirsty "customers," and at least one hotel has a regularly scheduled "yappy hour."

To me, the mystery of Carmel-by-the-Sea is its endurance as a quiet community in the midst of a cosmopolitan climate where legends are born and fortunes are made. No fast-food restaurants, neon signs or parking meters. No boardwalks or bikini-clad shoppers. There's not even much going on after dark.

But this is the miracle that is

Carmel-by-the-Sea. These are her postcard promises.

And I bet even Ms. Hepburn would agree that dreams really do come true here.

A travel journalist and photographer, Rebecca McCormick also served as marketing director for the convention facilities in Monroe, La. She was a veteran business columnist in 2002 when she published her first travel article and photograph about the Caribbean golf courses on which her husband played during their honeymoon. That same year, the couple moved to Hot Springs when Myron accepted a management position with Weyerhaeuser Co. Rebecca still travels and Myron still plays golf. Together, they have three married sons and four grandchildren. Email your travel questions to McCormick, rebecca.mccormicktravel@gmail.com.