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Monterey is Magical

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Golf and More Makes Carmel a Top Destination

CHRIS DUTHIE



It's so easy to be swept up in Monterey's goosebump-inducing golf courses. With famed properties like Cypress Point, Pebble Beach, Spyglass Hill, Spanish Bay, Poppy Hills and 22 other extraordinary public and private clubs, one might believe that playing world-class golf is about all there is to do.

That would be an egregious mistake. Anchored by captivating Carmel-by-the-Sea, this historic region doubles vacation pleasures with phenomenal lodging, wine-and-dine restaurants, recreation, attractions, shopping and celebrations. Here are six reasons to bring your A-game, as well as your love for premium living:

1. Whether it's for guys-weekend golf or a romantic holiday, look to Monterey's resplendent resorts, hotels and B&Bs. For outright luxury, reserve your overnights at [L'Auberge Carmel](#), a historic property that includes among its award-winning delights 20 individually styled guestrooms, peerless guest services and Forbes Five Star dining with a 2,500-bottle wine cellar.



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- 2. While Cannery Row is a worthwhile stop**, get off the well-beaten track by touring 17 Mile Drive, the Big Sur coast and surfs-up Marina State Beach. Take in the great outdoors by exploring [Garland Ranch Regional Park](#), 4,460 acres of hiking trails, redwood canyons, 19th-century clapboard settlements and 180-degree highpoint views of wooded, unspoiled California landscape.
- 3. Regarded among the top sea life collections** in the world, the 200-exhibit [Monterey Bay Aquarium](#) showcases 35,000 creatures representing more than 550 species. Check out the new Tentacles attraction, an octopus, squid and cuttlefish world of undersea magicians, masters of disguise and quick-change artists.
- 4. Charming bistros orchestrated by** James Beard-worthy chefs are part-and-parcel to Carmel's indisputable allure. One big-buzz eatery is newly launched [Lucia Restaurant & Bar](#) at the Bernardus Lodge & Spa in Carmel Valley, which offers inspired French fare prepared with on-site sourced herbs, vegetables and fruits by Chef Cal Stamenov.
- 5. Staged on Pebble Beach Golf Links'** 18th hole, the famed [Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance](#) is the celebrity spotting finale to Monterey Car Week (Aug. 10-16). It's an iconic, seaside-staged setting for a dazzling collection of luxury ride nameplates like Ferrari, DuPont, Pope, Cunningham, Carrozzeria, Mercury Custom and more.
- 6. The Monterey Peninsula is renowned** for its first-rate wineries, however many of the dozen or so estates are difficult to access. Make the experience simple by purchasing a non-expiring [Carmel Wine Walk Passport](#), which gives connoisseurs a paced savoring of the region's better labels. Passport for nine tasting rooms is \$65.

Located a two-hour drive from San Francisco, [Monterey](#) feels worlds away with a sleepy, seaside charm that comes alive during special events and celebrations. Direct flights from Denver to San Francisco are available via Alaska, American, Delta, Southwest, US and United airways.

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Chris Duthie is a contributor to Colorado AvidGolfer, the state's leading resource for golf and the lifestyle that surrounds it. It [publishes eight issues](#) annually and proudly delivers daily content via [coloradoavidgolfer.com](#).

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