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NEWS (Cities & Towns Follow the News)

[*Carmel-by-the-Sea Living Large With World-Class Chefs -- Summer Rocks at California's Central Coast Culinary Capital*](#)

[*San Diego Natural History Museum \(theNAT\)--Tickets Now on Sale for West Coast Premiere of Maya: Hidden Worlds Revealed*](#)

[*Big Bear's High Altitude Breeds Champions & Provides Ideal Training Grounds for Competitive Edge*](#)

[*Cayucos offers accommodations for the whole family, even the dogs*](#)

[*Big Bear Lake to Become the Cycling Capital of Southern California*](#)

[*The Echo Park Craft Fair Expands This Year in Los Angeles*](#)

[*San Diego Sights & Sips Cocktail Cruise on the Hornblower*](#)

[*Plan A Retreat at Tassajara Zen Mountain Center near the Big Sur Coast*](#)

NOTE: Vendor Applications Now Available for the 22nd Annual Oxnard Salsa Festival

The Oxnard Salsa Festival is seeking applications for qualified vendors for the **22nd Oxnard, CA Annual Oxnard Salsa Festival July 25-26, 2015** at Plaza Park, Fifth and 'B' Streets in downtown Oxnard from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. The Festival celebrates everything salsa...the food, the music and the dance! Festival organizers are seeking one-of-a-kind fashions, pottery, garden art, home décor, and boutique items. Local restaurants are also encouraged to participate by providing specialty salsas in the Festival's Salsa Tasting Tent. Presented by the Oxnard Downtowners, the award-winning Oxnard Salsa Festival features the region's top Salsa and Latin Jazz bands, non-stop salsa dancing, vendor marketplace, Kids Korner attractions, international foods, and salsa recipe contests.

*Interested parties may apply online to be a vendor by visiting the Info Center tab at www.oxnardsalsafestival.com. **The deadline for Vendor registration is May 15.** For more information, email info@oxnardsalsafestival.com.*

[**Shore Hotel in Santa Monica Announces Two Elopement Packages for 2015 Starting at \\$849.00**](#)

[**Portola Hotel & Spa Partners with the Monterey Regional Airport for Earth Day \(April 22\) With FREE Gifts**](#)

[**SENZA, a newly re-branded luxury hotel in the heart of Napa Valley Offers a Special 'Save on Taxes' package**](#)

CARMEL-by-the-SEA

Carmel-by-the-Sea Living Large With World-Class Chefs -- Summer Rocks at California's Central Coast Culinary Capital

Carmel-by-the-Sea has quietly but consistently emerged as one of the West Coast's top destinations for food and luxury culinary events, with the village now home to some of the country's finest chefs. Albeit with a population of fewer than 4,000 people – not counting the summer visitors – Carmel boasts enough top chefs to have turned many heads.

“There just may be more world-class chefs per square mile in Carmel-by-the-Sea than anywhere else in the nation, perhaps in the world,” said Rich Pepe, owner of two popular village dining destinations, Vesuvio and Little Napoli. “It's impressive to look around the restaurants in our village and see the incredible talent that continues to settle here.”

Readers of Travel + Leisure magazine think so highly of Carmel that the California Central Coast town was named No. 3 for “World's Best Cities for Romance” behind only Paris and Venice. In its write-up of Carmel, the magazine singled out Aubergine's acclaimed executive chef, Justin Cogley, who joined the restaurant in 2011 by way of Chicago. Under Cogley's direction, Aubergine has been nominated for three James Beard Foundation awards including Best Chef, West. Cogley also has been awarded the title of Grand Chef Relais & Châteaux, joining an esteemed list of internationally celebrated chefs, as well as “Best New Chef” by Food & Wine magazine.

“If I had to describe my food, I would say each plate has a purpose,” says Cogley, who has created a culinary event in Carmel – Rediscovering Coastal Cuisine – where talented chefs are invited to collaborate on a 12-course tasting menu that celebrates California's Central Coast.

Another major culinary event just finished its second year in Carmel, the Relais & Châteaux GourmetFest, a prestigious food and festival featuring a “Who's Who” list of top national and international chefs.

This summer in Carmel, Cogley has plenty of company among his peers when it comes to notable achievements and stellar resumes.

Kurt Grasing worked in some of the worlds' finest restaurants – Clift Hotel in San Francisco; Narsai's in Berkeley, Calif.; 231 Ellsworth in San Mateo, Calif.; Four Seasons in Boston; Pierre Hotel in New York; and La Gavroche in London – before opening Grasings in 1998 where he today remains owner and executive chef.

When the late and legendary chef Julia Child was quoted as saying, “You don't have to cook fancy or complicated masterpieces – just good food from fresh ingredients,” she could have easily been talking about today's chefs in Carmel.

Whether that's Cogley or Grasing, or several others – La Balena's Brad Briske, Basil's Soerke Peters, Affina's James Anderson, Dametra Café's Faisal Nimri and countless others – Carmel boasts a lineup of acclaimed chefs who have perfected the art of using Monterey County's bounty of farm-fresh ingredients, while pairing them with the region's top wines.

“We are blessed to have a wide range of restaurants and options here in Carmel,” Pepe said. “You don't need a discriminating palate or a fat wallet to have a great dining experience; there's something for everyone.”

Pepe's Little Napoli, in fact, was featured in a recent "Diners, Drive-ins and Dives" segment as host the Food Network's Guy Fieri paid a visit to Carmel-by-the-Sea.

Here is how to find the popular Carmel culinary attractions:

Aubergine, Monte Verde at Seventh, auberginecarmel.com

Grasings, Sixth and Mission, 831.624.6562, grasings.com

Basil, San Carlos between Ocean and Seventh. 831.626.8226. basilcarmel.com

La Balena, Junipero between Fifth and Sixth, 831.250.6295, labalenacarmel.com

Affina, San Carlos and Sixth, 831.250.7744, affinacarmel.com

Dametra Café, Ocean and Lincoln, 831.622.7766, dametracafe.com

Little Napoli, Dolores and Seventh, 831.626.6335, chefpepe.com

Vesuvio, Junipero and Sixth, 831.625.1766, chefpepe.com

It's never been easier to get to Carmel-by-the-Sea by air, with Monterey Regional Airport (MRY) just a 10-minute drive away. Convenient direct flights are available to and from San Francisco (SFO, United Express), Los Angeles (LAX, American Eagle/United Express), Las Vegas (LAS, Allegiant Air), and Phoenix (PHX, U.S. Airways), as well as to San Diego (SAN, Alaska Airlines). Alternatively, San Jose International Airport (SJC) is a pleasant 75-mile drive mostly along the coastline, from the north.

The Carmel Hospitality Improvement District – a collective organization of the City of Carmel and Carmel Innkeepers Association – is working to promote the village's abundant attractions, events, and stunning seaside location.

From its incomparable white-sand beach to many choices of distinctive meeting venues and lodging properties, Carmel-by-the-Sea has it all.

For more information, visit CarmelCalifornia.com.

CATALINA ISLAND

Where to Stay

Aurora Hotel on Catalina Island

The **Aurora Hotel** on Catalina Island features 16 guestrooms and three suites that feature modern furnishings, rich chocolate brown and turquoise hues, memory foam mattresses, hand-crafted bath amenities, luxurious linens, flat-screen television, DVD player, refrigerator, coffee makers and microwave oven. Public areas in the hotel include a sophisticated lobby and a roof-top deck with sweeping ocean, city and mountain views.

For more information contact the Aurora Hotel, (310) 510-0454 or (888) 510-0908, www.AuroraCatalina.com.