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# Courtyards, Corridors, and Crannies: Uncovering the Secrets of Carmel-by-the-Sea

PRWeb

Thursday, February 26th 2015



Carmel-by-the-Sea was recently voted the “No. 2 Best Small City in the U.S.” by the readers of Conde Nast Traveler magazine. Maybe it would have been No. 1 if the readers had been able to find all the secret passageways and courtyards hidden throughout this charming coastal village.

CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA, Calif. (PRWEB) February 26, 2015

Carmel-by-the-Sea was recently voted the “No. 2 Best Small City in the U.S.” by the readers of Conde Nast Traveler magazine. Maybe it would have been No. 1 if the readers had been able to find all the secret passageways and courtyards hidden throughout this charming coastal village.

According to the official travel website — <http://www.CarmelCalifornia.com> — there are more than 40 courtyards and outdoor covered walkways tucked around town, each comprehensively documented with photographs and historical accounts on the site (click on the “Explore” tab.)

But it's quite possible that visitors staying at one of Carmel's charming village inns will uncover a few “hidden” nooks and crannies that even the local residents don't know exist.

Carmel's courtyards debuted nearly 100 years ago, when noted architect Hugh Comstock built his fairy-tale houses and shops. All the passageways and courtyards boast their own distinct personality and flair, many featuring unique shops, galleries, and restaurants awaiting discovery by visitors (not to mention curious locals).

A quick tour of some of the courtyard or passageway highlights includes:

-Su Vecino. The courtyard's name reflects the neighborly community of Carmel and grew up around the terrace of Su Vecino's Mexican restaurant that opened in the 1950s. Much later, the restaurant was home to the serape worn by Clint Eastwood (Carmel mayor, 1986-88) in the famous 1966 film, “The Good, the Bad and the Ugly.” Another local favorite, Jack London's Bar & Grill relocated from San Carlos Square to this spot in 2001. Author of “The Call of the Wild,” London often visited his bohemian friends in early Carmel.

-Eastwood Building. Eastwood constructed the redwood-sided building in the mid-1980s, with the courtyard looking down upon the Hog's Breath Inn (a restaurant he opened in 1992 along with Walter Becker). Today, the passageway offers a nice view down to the Hog's Breath patio.

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-Jordon Center (The McFarland Center). The McFarland Center was built in 1977 on the site of an early service station. Inspired by English Tudor architecture (1485-1603), this collection of shops and businesses offer another angled shortcut from Mission Street to Sixth Avenue — directly across from the fire station. Grasing's Coastal Cuisine restaurant, on the corner, has an award-winning reputation as well as a cozy pet-friendly patio.

-Court of the Golden Bough. Hailed as “A Bit of Old Europe,” this courtyard is considered Carmel's first shopping center. Former Los Angeles attorney, Edward Kuster, fulfilled a dream when in 1923 he built the Theatre of the Golden Bough. In 1923, Kuster moved a unique, curlicue-roofed building from Ocean and Monte Verde (well known today as The Cottage of Sweets store) to be a fanciful ticket booth for his new Golden Bough Playhouse. Meandering through the winding passageways and stairs here may serve as a reminder of an early scene from Eastwood's 1971 film, “Play Misty for Me.”

-Doud Arcade. Completed in 1961, the arcade provides an interesting stroll from its Ocean Avenue entrance to San Carlos Street. Originally it housed local craft studios and small shops. The artisan feeling remains today, especially in the central interior courtyard with its red tile floor.

-Hampton Court. Jewelry, art, and real estate – a longtime Carmel combination – all are situated in this intriguing modern interpretation of a half-timber Tudor street with stunning handcrafted finishes. Nancy Dodds Gallery hosts contemporary and plein air artists, while Alan Bienenfeld Fine Jewelry has been at home here since 1976. Visitors mustn't miss the brick stairs leading to a small balcony where a great view of interesting Carmel rooftops awaits.

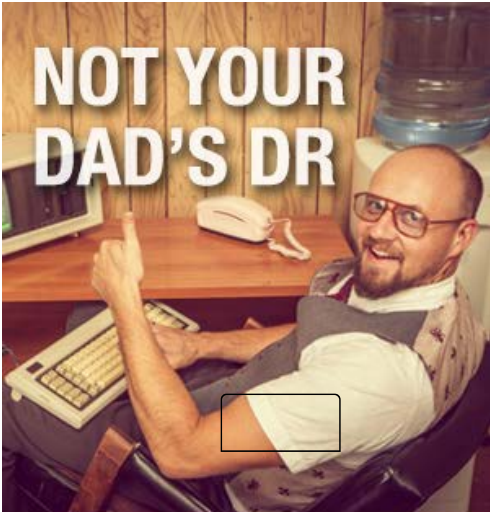
-Carmel Square. Situated next to Nielsen Brothers Market, a family-run business since 1935, the square, with its white buildings and blue trim, offers a feel of old European country cottages. Home to a local watering hole, stores and galleries – stained glass and photography – the court ends at Wells Fargo Bank's parking lot where stairs lead to the Court of Fountains.



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