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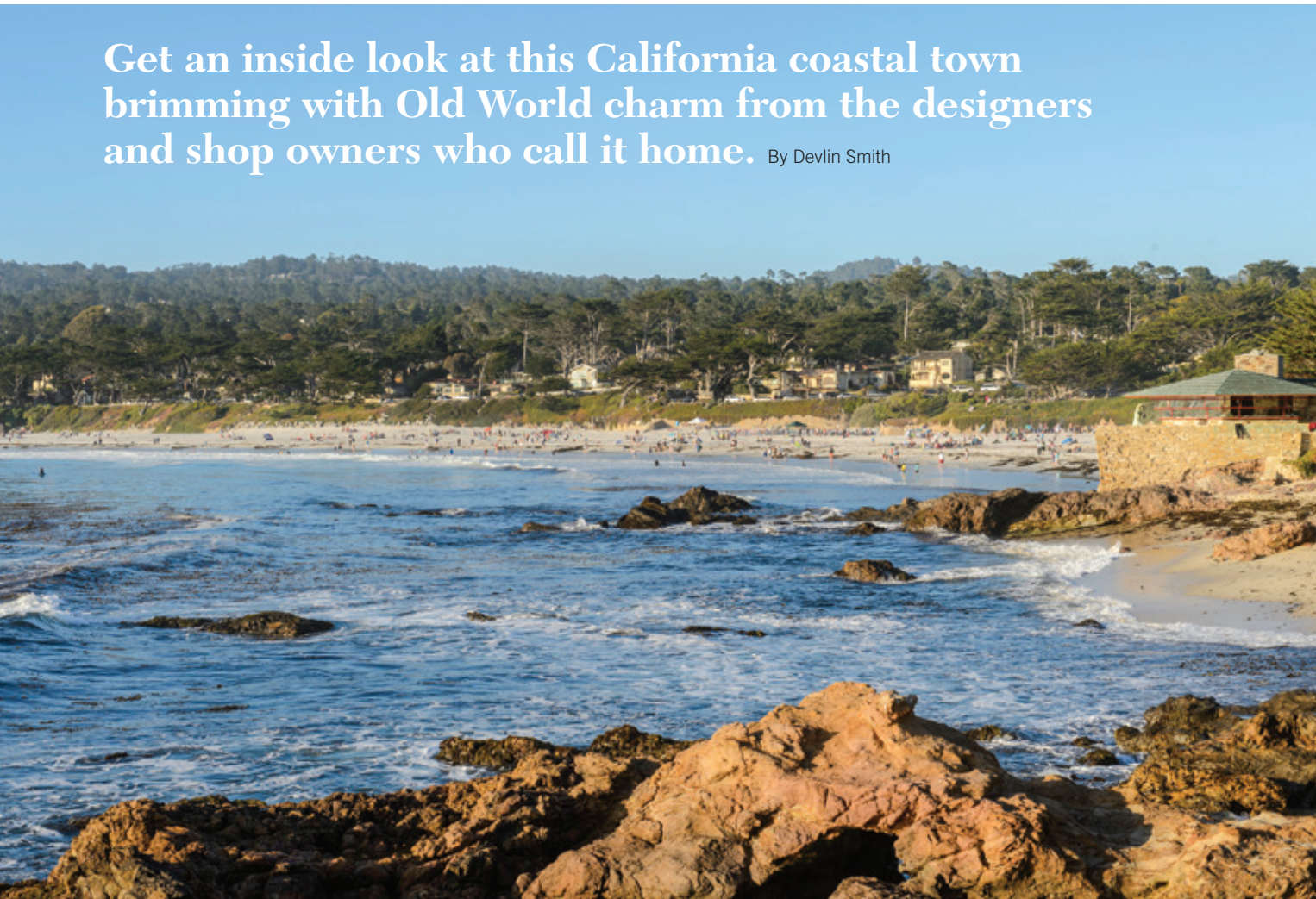
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Destination: Carmel-by-the-Sea

Get an inside look at this California coastal town brimming with Old World charm from the designers and shop owners who call it home. By Devlin Smith



Attracting artists, tourists and nature lovers for generations, Carmel-by-the-Sea is located along central California's coast, overlooking the Pacific Ocean. First settled by the Esselen and Ohlone, Carmel came under European control in the late 18th century with the establishment of Mission San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo (also known as the Carmel Mission), one of 21 outposts set up by Spanish priests in California. More than a century later, with California part of the United States and already attracting folks from across the country to travel west, developers began subdividing the area and drawing new residents to Carmel, including artists.

Carmel Beach hosts numerous events throughout the year, including the Great Sandcastle Contest, Sunshine Freestyle Surfabout and Poodle Day.

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Carmel-by-the-Sea features a 1-mile-square village with no street addresses, parking meters or streetlights, and high heels are not allowed without a special permit.



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“Carmel-by-the-Sea is a jewel, with white sand beaches that allow dogs to run off leash, and propane fire pits on the beach,” says designer Julie Gardner. “The shopping in Carmel is fantastic, full of art galleries, boutique shops and great restaurants. No street lights, no fast food restaurants, not even Starbucks.”

“Carmel is incredibly unique as it is home to movie stars, business tycoons, artists, hippies and health-conscious families that come from all over the world,” says Ashley Yeates, lead designer with AYI & Associates and founder of the +Olive (plusolive.com) retail store, both based in Carmel. “There are so many styles and personalities in this area; anything goes. An area landmark is the Mission Carmel Basilica, a spot chosen in 1771 for its agricultural possibilities, and many of the older homes have a similar Spanish influence.”

In addition to Spanish-style homes, Carmel also boasts homes influenced by classic English and Swiss styles, among other Continental influences. “The abodes of Carmel are an architectural mix of storybook English cottages, Swiss Alpine chalets and uniquely Carmel-style building design,” says Sheila Robinson, owner and interior designer with Ambiance Interiors (interiorsby-ambiance.com), a design firm and home décor store based in Carmel. “No two homes are alike, a refreshing change from the typical suburbia lifestyle. The village of Carmel-by-the-Sea resembles a miniature version of Europe; it is not improbable to see a bereted Parisian saunter out of one of the captivating Euro-themed bistros.”

In addition to taking cues from Old World styling, homes in Carmel also find inspiration in the community’s beautiful natural surroundings. “Historically speaking, there are many mission- and hacienda-style homes built in the area, some simpler than others,” says Arnie Burttschell, owner of Palomas Home Furnishings (palomascarmel.com) in Carmel. “You will also see a mixture of Craftsman, beach cottages and classic bungalows, along with newer, sleek modern homes [with] glass from floor to ceiling to take in the beautiful coastal views.”

All these influences can be found in the architecture and interior design of the community’s homes. “I think we like a traditional style based on the architecture of most of the homes here,” says Julie Gardner, owner of Gardner & Associates (gardnerinteriordesign.com), a second-generation interior design firm based in Carmel. “We love to bring the ocean colors and hues into design. Outdoor spaces are important for entertaining and sitting around fires on cool nights. Warm fabrics and cozy furnishings are important in homes with our seasonal foggy days.” ★

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CARMEL, VISIT CARMELCALIFORNIA.COM AND SEEMONTEREY.COM.

“Meander a few blocks down Ocean Avenue to Carmel’s sandy beach and the view is pure California—a rugged Pacific coastline spangled with rock outcroppings, ghostly cypress trees and the electric green slopes of the famed Pebble Beach golf course,” says designer Sheila Robinson.



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“Carmel has a European-style coastal retreat feel,” shop owner Arnie Burttschell says. “It also is intriguing to see the historical architecture and experience a small-town community with a quaint coastal vibe.”



“Considering Carmel’s natural beauty, I often design from the outside in,” designer Ashley Yeates says. “I am captivated by nature, and when you are lucky enough to live somewhere this beautiful, you don’t want to distract from the natural beauty.”



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