

Lay of the Land

BY RENEE BRINCKS



For more information on **Monterey County**, go to seemonterey.com.

Located close enough to one another to explore with ease, Monterey County's communities maintain a character all their own. Here are the best activities, restaurants, and all-around fun they have to offer:

Monterey

The county's hub of activity, and California's most historic city.

Do. Rent a kayak on Cannery Row, or take a whale-watching tour, departing year-round from Old Fisherman's Wharf.

See. Downtown's Monterey Museum of Art boasts a collection of early California paintings.

Eat. Sample local produce at the Old Monterey Marketplace, Tuesday afternoons on Alvarado Street.

Panetta Institute, Monterey College of Law, and California State University Monterey Bay.

Sip. Wake up with an espresso from Acme Coffee Roasting Co.

See. Swing by The Alternative Café for live performances and anything-but-traditional art.

Do. Tackle 36 holes of doglegs and sloping greens at the renovated Bayonet and Black Horse golf courses, on the former Fort Ord military base.

Do. Each August, the West End Celebration's studio tours and live performances honor Sand City's arts district.

Eat. Savor homemade pecan pie at Sweet Elena's Bakery. (The secret ingredient? A splash of rum.)

Marina

A nature lovers' dream, with thousands of acres of protected land.

Do. Stroll four miles of beachfront at Fort Ord Dunes State Park. Steady winds at Marina State Beach make it the perfect spot for surfing, kite flying, and hang gliding.

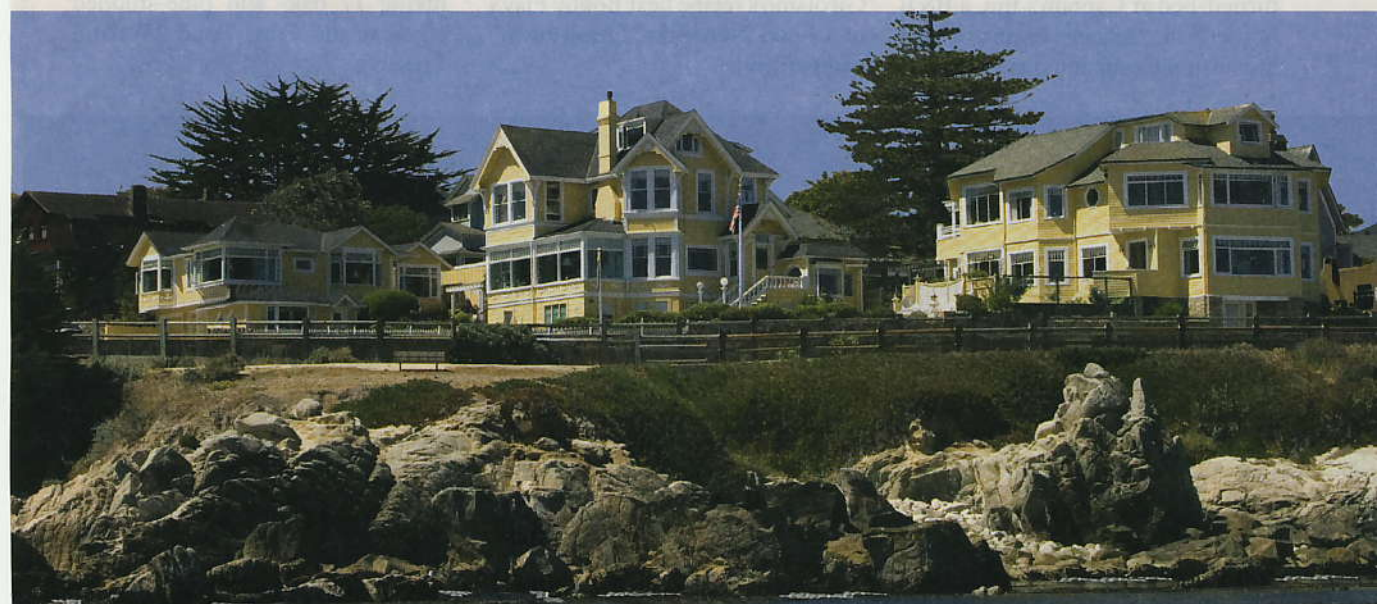
Eat. Fuel up on bangers, beans, and

Seaside

Just north of Monterey, Seaside is home to the Leon and Sylvia

Sand City

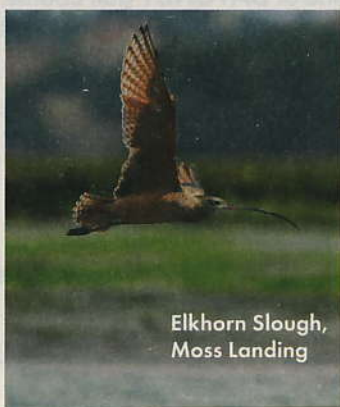
This small oceanfront town is an up-and-coming artists' community.



Seven Gables Inn, Pacific Grove



Bayonet and Black Horse, Seaside



Elkhorn Slough, Moss Landing



Nepenthe, Big Sur

KEYS TO **MONTEREY COUNTY, CA**



Moss Landing's eclectic shops

chips washed down with a pint at English Ales Brewery.

Moss Landing

This fishing village is *the* place to spot wildlife.

Stay. Snuggle up in a fishing boat-turned-bed at Captain's Inn, a B&B housed in former Pacific Coast Steamship Company quarters.

See. Browse downtown's antique shops. Then photograph harbor seals and sea otters while cruising the tidal salt marsh on an Elkhorn Slough Safari.

Eat. Try the famous cioppino at Phil's Fish Market. Owner Phil Di-Girolamo's recipe beat Bobby Flay's in a Food Network "Throwdown" competition.



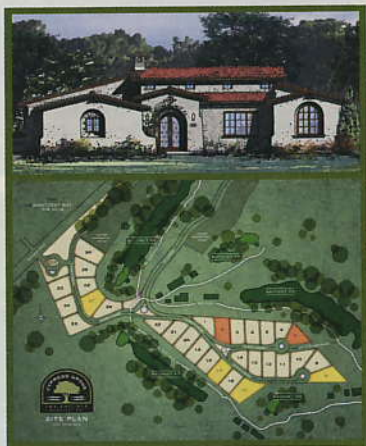
Cioppino from Phil's Fish Market

Del Rey Oaks

A small inland community of about 2,000 residents, just south of Monterey and next to the Monterey Peninsula Airport.

Eat. Snack on Monterey Bay calamari at Tarpy's, where five acres of gardens surround the restaurant and its open-air tables.

See. Spot hummingbirds while hiking 17 oak- and pine-studded acres at the Frog Pond Wetland Preserve.



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Bernardus Lodge, Carmel Valley

Salinas Valley

Farther inland, and known for its fertile farmland and vineyards.

Do. Harvest excursions and wine-tasting trips with Ag Venture Tours.

Eat. Lunch at the Steinbeck House, where John Steinbeck was born.

See. Cultural diversity shapes local art during the Artistas Unidos First Fridays Art Walk, held on the first Friday of each month.

Carmel Valley

Take Carmel Valley Road to visit award-winning wineries.

Eat. Stroll through the herb garden at Earthbound Farm Stand before grabbing a bite from the certified organic kitchen.

Relax. Go off the grid at Tassajara, a Zen center (open May–September) where day-trippers soak in natural hot springs.

Stay. After dinner and handmade truffles at Marinus Restaurant at Bernardus Lodge, retire to your suite and sip chardonnay from the resort's winery.

Carmel-by-the-Sea

This one-square-mile village is just west of Carmel Valley.

Do. Stroll Ocean Avenue, lined with boutiques, restaurants, and inns.

See. Survey the work of local artists at the Carmel Art Association gallery.

Sip. Celebrate happy hour at Cantinetta Luca, an Italian eatery with big-city energy.

Pebble Beach

Wind along 17-Mile Drive for breathtaking ocean views.

Play. Tee off at the famed Pebble Beach Golf Links. Short on time? Play the adjacent nine-hole Peter Hay course.

Do. Trot across forested meadows on guided trail rides by Pebble Beach Equestrian Center.

Relax. Schedule a soothing Red Flower Ritual treatment at The Spa at Pebble Beach.

Pacific Grove

Known as "P.G.," this friendly community is a few minutes north of Pebble Beach.

Do. Tour the West Coast's oldest continuously operating lighthouse, the 1855 Point Pinos Lighthouse.

Stay. The Seven Gables Inn is an elegant B&B in an 1886 Victorian.

See. View 25,000 butterflies in the Monarch Grove Sanctuary.

Big Sur

Just a 30-minute drive south of Carmel on Highway 1.

Eat. Enjoy a breakfast of eggs Benedict at Deetjen's Big Sur Inn, nestled in the redwoods.

Do. Pull off Hwy. 1 at Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park to see McWay Falls. Nearby, browse the Henry Miller Library before tapping your toes to live music on the lawn.

See. Order the ambrosia burger at Nepenthe, with stunning views from its perch 800 feet above the Pacific.