

# Inn tours with room for a holiday getaway

By Jeanne Cooper

The charming inns of Carmel and Pacific Grove and the historic adobes of Monterey have something of an open-door policy come early December. For a night or two, many participate in self-guided walking tours that not only showcase their holiday decor but also provide patrons a great excuse for an overnight getaway, with time for shopping and dining the next day.

## Carmel

After a four-year hiatus, Carmel Heritage Society's Inns of Distinction tour returned last year as "a big success," according to Cathy Collum, the tour chair and member of the society's board of directors for more than 20 years.

"People are shy about asking if they can see a room as a future guest, so they love the idea that they can see one or two rooms, and of course, it's Christmas, so the inns go all out with the decorations," she explains.

Among the lodgings participating in this year's Dec. 7 tour are the Cypress Inn, known for its pet-friendly atmosphere created by former owner, actress Doris Day; Carmel Beach Hotel, formerly the Colonial Terrace Inn, which underwent a major renovation in 2024; and Lincoln Green Inn, five 100-year-old cottages in a garden setting. Typically featuring a half-dozen properties, the tour also includes appetizers from local restaurants and regional wines at each stop.

Among the confirmed contributors this year are Village Corner, Il Fornaio, Terry's and Flaherty's Seafood, with pours from Dawn's Dream, Galante Vineyards and Scheid Vineyards. Each adult tour-goer receives a souvenir wine glass engraved with the Carmel Heritage Society logo and its First Murphy House headquarters, built in 1902, and a bag to carry the glass from inn

to inn. "They've been a really big hit," Collum says. "People want to collect them."

**Inns of Distinction Tour, 2 to 5 p.m. Dec. 7, Carmel. \$50 advance, \$60 same-day. 831-624-4447, [www.carmelheritage.org](http://www.carmelheritage.org)**

**Where to stay and dine:** In addition to one of the inns on the tour, consider Carmel's newest boutique lodging, the 42-room Stilwell Hotel, which opened in 2024. A major metamorphosis of the former Carmel Lodge by noted designer Charles Gruwell, the two-story, block-long property includes a lushly landscaped courtyard and cafe with firepits, a water wall and wood-fired pizza oven.

Highly regarded Foray restaurant, which specializes in locally sourced and foraged West Coast cuisine, is also on site and worth a drink at the bar just to admire the reclaimed Monterey cypress beams, red abalone shells dotting the wall and large gyotaku (inked seafood) prints.

**Stilwell Hotel, Fifth Avenue at San Carlos Street, Carmel. From \$469. 831-624-1255, [www.stilwellcarmel.com](http://www.stilwellcarmel.com)**

**Foray, northeast corner San Carlos Street at Fifth Avenue, Carmel. Dinner 5 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday, reservations recommended. Happy hour 5 to 6 p.m. and 8-8:30 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday. 831-250-6100, [www.forayrestaurant.com](http://www.forayrestaurant.com)**

**Where to shop:** Among Carmel's dozens of darling shops and cozy galleries, the newest additions include Somewhere on Ocean, an eclectic home goods and clothing boutique; Sea Shack Candy Co., a Swedish-style pick-and-mix sweet shop; and Carmel Vibes Gallery, featuring gleaming metal prints of seascapes, flowers and succulents by photographer Nicholas Trofimuk.

**Somewhere on Ocean, Ocean Avenue between Lincoln and Monte Verde, Carmel. 831-238-8151, [www.somewhereincarmel.com](http://www.somewhereincarmel.com)**



CYPRESS INN

**Carmel's Cypress Inn, a longtime favorite for its old-Hollywood charm and dog-friendly vibe, will open its doors for the annual Inns of Distinction holiday tour on Dec. 7.**

**Sea Shack Candy Co., Carmel Square, San Carlos Street between Ocean and Seventh avenues, Carmel. 831-620-2408, [www.seashackcandyco.com](http://www.seashackcandyco.com)**

**Carmel Vibes Gallery, Su Vecino Court, Lincoln Street between Fifth and Sixth avenues, Carmel. 480-414-7968, [www.carmelvibesgallery.com](http://www.carmelvibesgallery.com)**

## Monterey

To stay on the path of Christmas in the Adobes, which presents its 41st edition Dec. 12-13, just follow the flickering glow of luminarias lining many of Old Monterey's historic adobes.

"It's a chance to walk through history, to step inside buildings

that are rarely open to the public, and to experience Monterey as it was in Alta California," says Nicollette Eason Trottier, president of the Monterey State Historic Park Association, which uses proceeds to support educational programs for elementary school students and the restoration of California's First Theater.

Vintage holiday decor, live music and refreshments also beckon on this tour of some 20 of the city's oldest structures, including the theater, Casa Serrano, Colton Hall, the Robert Louis Stevenson House and the Cooper-Molera Adobe. Book tickets early for this rain-or-shine event, then pick up wristbands at one of three tour stops: Stanton Center in Custom House Plaza, Casa Gutierrez at 590 Calle Principal,

or the Stevens House, 530 Hous-ton St. Christmas in the Adobes, 5 to 9 p.m. Dec. 12-13, Monterey. \$30 one-night pass, \$45 two-night pass, free for ages 17 and under. [www.mshpa.org/christmasintheadobes](http://www.mshpa.org/christmasintheadobes).

**Where to stay and dine:** To keep the historic vibe going, book one of the three courtyard adobe suites at the Merritt House Hotel, built in 1830 and a 5-minute walk from Custom House Plaza. Each comes with a parlor, a fireplace and, thanks to a 2020 renovation, contemporary Spanish-inspired decor. The 22 individually decorated rooms in the adjacent newer building, which share in the verdant gardens, also include vintage touches such as four-poster beds.

At the edge of the historic district, Stokes Adobe is also on theme. Formerly Restaurant 1833 (guess when it was built), the 4-year-old restaurant has become a hit for its garden seating with firepits, lounge with plush sofas and dining room serving classic cocktails, steak, seafood and pasta.

**Merritt House Hotel, 386 Pacific St., Monterey. Suites from \$289, rooms for \$229. 831-646-9686, <https://merritthousehotel.com>**

**Stokes Adobe, 500 Hartnell St., Monterey. Open daily 4 to 5:30 p.m. happy hour, 5 to 9 p.m. dinner. 831-264-8775, [www.stokesadobe.com](http://www.stokesadobe.com)**

**Where to shop:** Find old-fashioned toys, locally made greeting cards, books and gifts reflecting Monterey's maritime legacy and Spanish heritage at the Custom House Store. For more contemporary flair, visit Feral Market for casual women's clothing, locally made toys and jewelry, and home and gift ideas.

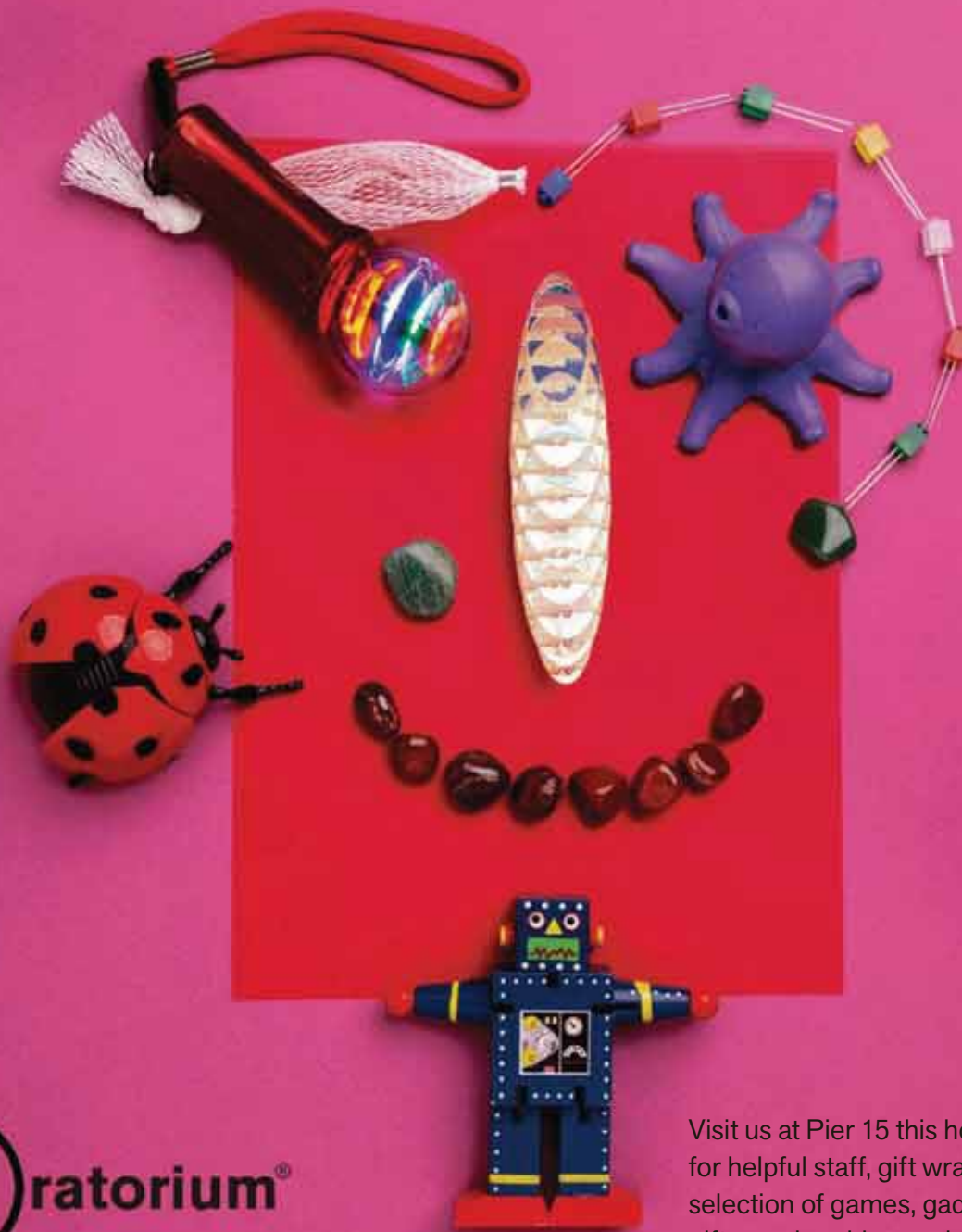
**Custom House Store, 1 Custom House Plaza, Monterey. 831-649-7111, [www.mshpa.org/shop](http://www.mshpa.org/shop)**

**Feral Market, 261 Alvarado St., Monterey. 831-646-5488, <https://theferalmarket.com>**

*Getaway continues on M7*

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