

San Mateo: California At Its Best

Text & Photos by Terry Zinn, Travel Editor

I'd heard of San Mateo California for years, and when I had a business convention in San Francisco, I jumped at the chance for a few extra days to explore this rural setting of sea, fields of crops and Highway 1.

Flying into San Francisco Airport I took a left on the interstate and stayed for a couple of nights at the Marriott (www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/sfobg-san-francisco-airport-marriott) with its expansive atrium and views of planes taking off and landing across the lagoon. This is a gracious hotel, great for gathering in yourself before venturing out, or meeting friends, like I did with an old military buddy, who lives in the area.

Of course you must have a car in California and I found Jared at the airport Enterprise (www.enterprise.com) most courteous and helpful with my Hybrid auto—which I wish I had.

I felt like I had made a new friend after my guide, Caroline, had explained the history and flora at Filoli Mansion and Gardens (www.filoli.org). Located 30 miles south of San Francisco on the eastern slope of the Coast Range, the 654-acre Filoli estate contains 16 acres of formal gardens and an historic house first occupied in 1917 and now in the National Trust for Historic Preservation. What a wonderful gift to the country. You might recognize its exterior as it has appeared in many movies and television shows. The late summer gardens I saw were immaculate and ablaze with color.

Soon, I was off to the coast and my stay near Half Moon Bay. With such a quaint name, I knew it would be enchanting. The small town is gentrified just enough without being over-developed and has a real sense of time and place. The Half Moon Bay Inn, (www.halfmoonbayinn.com) enhances my endorsement as it is right on Main Street, where my second story room overlooked the activities of the many shops. A town stroll impressed me with its landscaping of unique buildings, the crafts and art shops (I did buy a hand-made art martini glass), and of the grocery with its plethora of fresh vegetables.

Being hungry, I headed over to the Pasta Moon (www.pastamoon.com) and again was overtaken with the flavors of fresh produce, fresh made pasta, and unique combinations of meats and fruits. I arrived early, but by the time I left, it was packed, and rightly so—a true gourmet experience.

Driving out on Highway 1, I saw the high cliffs that



Pigeon Point Lighthouse.



The Gardens at Filoli.



Award-winning gourmet goat cheese at Harley Farms.

welcomed the crashing surf, and the picturesque Pigeon Point Lighthouse (www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=533) and stopped at Pescadero to sample some fresh goat cheese at the Harley Farms Goat dairy. By-appointment tours and milking can be arranged and through their website, their award-winning gourmet cheeses can be delivered to your door (<http://www.harleyfarms.com/Goat-Cheese-Shop.htm>). They recently won five awards at the 25th annual American Cheese Society awards in Chicago.

For those who need the personal pampering that a B&B can afford, the Goose and Turrets B&B up the road in Montara offers such, with a tasty multi-course breakfast served delightfully by owners Raymond and Emily (<http://goose.montara.com/v1/homepage.php>).

Located off Pillar Point Marina, just off Highway 1, you must stop for lunch or dinner at the Half Moon Bay Brewing company to sample their own brews as well as their creative turns with fresh seafood. It's also a very popular spot for music on some nights, so plan accordingly (www.hmbbrewingco.com).

For additional information on San Mateo County, please visit www.sanmateocountycvb.com.

Travel journalist Terry Zinn is a native Oklahoman and a past president of the International Food Wine and Travel Writers Association. Contact him at TravelsWithTerry@aol.com.



Half Moon Bay Inn.