

SAN CLEMENTE

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CELEBRATING LIFE IN SAN CLEMENTE FOR 30 YEARS

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SAN CLEMENTEAN



Allison Regen Schumacher

This classically trained actress, has embraced the emerging trend of vertical films, recently filming "My Flash Hubby Billionaire" in China. Read her unique story on page 28.

RESTAURANTS



Time Tested Eats

Mary Colarik highlights six local restaurants owned by local families offering their traditional homemade recipes that have stood the test of time. Page 36.

LOCAL TRAVEL



Exploring Crystal Cove

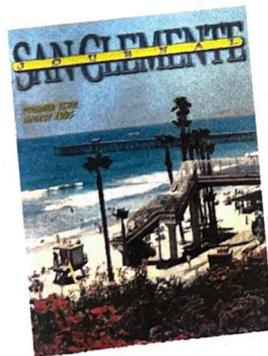
The Crystal Cove Conservancy is a hidden coastal gem only a few miles away. Its history reveals its transition from a farming community to a cherished historic district as well as its ongoing preservation efforts. Explore it on page 54.

30 Reasons to Love San Clemente



Local Reasons to Smile

What to give readers for our 30th Anniversary? We live in paradise so we don't need much. The perfect gift is too big to wrap - it's all around us. The best present could be just that ... being present and so very grateful. Here are 30 reasons to do just that! Page 16.



Memory Lane

The staff takes a short stroll through a few of the last three decades. See page 6.



30 San Clementeans

We're also shining light on 30 people who've helped shape San Clemente. From wave-chasing legends to civic game-changers, hometown heroes and history-makers, these locals helped put San Clemente on the map. Page 12.

Historical Building Tour

The San Clemente Historical Society is hosting a Historical Tour to Celebrate San Clemente's original founding in 1925. More info on page 34.



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Crystal Cove Conservancy An Amazing Coastal Treasure



by Mary Colarik

The 650-foot boardwalk was one the first things that was done as part of restoration.

The captivating California coastline is 840 miles long. Bays, inlets, coves, craggy cliffs and smooth sandy beaches enchant visitors year-round. Nestled between Laguna Beach and Newport Beach an exceptional cove, slightly hidden from the road, boasts a storied history beginning with Acjachemen and Tongva Tribal Nations; ocean-going peoples who eventually moved to one of the nearby missions in the 1700s.

In 1864 James Irvine, a financier from San Francisco, purchased the cove from Jose Sepulveda, who had acquired the land thru a grant from the Mexican government. Due to several complications over a twenty-year period, Sepulveda fell into debt. Irvine and his partners intended to raise a huge herd of sheep and farm the land there, but the sheep soon succumbed to disease. James Irvine II, inherited the land upon his father's death who had bought out his partners before he passed. Irvine II incorporated the land holdings creating 'The Irvine Company.' He set up the ranch to produce dry crops of barley, oats, wheat and hay.

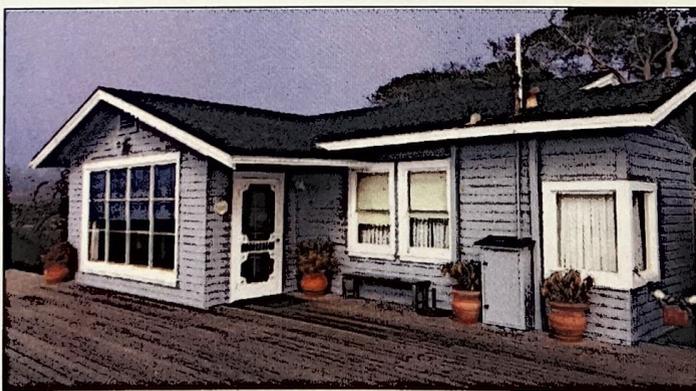
Japanese Farmers

In the 1920s the Irvine Ranch of Orange County began leasing land to tenant farmers. Some of the original tenant farmers were Japanese American families, including Keichi Yamashita, who like the Honda, Furukawa, Miyada and other Japanese farming families lived in homes and barns that they built on the rich soil at Crystal Cove near the east and west side of what is now the PCH. Their cultivated crops included celery, cucumber, squash, tomato, and green beans. The farmers sold their produce at little roadside stands to locals and tourists and the LA markets.

In 1934, the Japanese farmers built a Gukuen or Japanese school for their children

on the bluff above the cove. Although the parents wanted their children to assimilate with their Caucasian classmates at the school in Laguna Beach and learn the American way of life,

regulars were building tiny shelters and cottages. Some families ordered 'kit' houses from catalogs to put together in the cove for summer vacationing and recreational activities. Rumor



Preserved schoolhouse. Japanese tenant farmers built a Gukuen or Japanese school in 1934 to expose their children to the Japanese culture.

they still wanted to expose their children to certain aspects of the Japanese culture and language, but the children mostly enjoyed playing in the sand, building items from discarded wood and frolicking in the waves.

Today, the building is preserved in the Historic District of Crystal Cove. Tak Yamashita, Keichi's son, returned to the cove in his 90s speaking about life in the early days on the property. There are framed photos of him and his brothers as children in the 1930s hanging on the walls of the facility.

Hollywood Comes Calling

Not only were the farmers busy working on this spectacular piece of land, James Irvine, II encouraged his friends and company employees to tent camp along the ocean. Soon the

the structural dimensions. Sadly, in 1942 all the Japanese farmers were evacuated from their West Coast homes in this gorgeous location to an internment camp in Poston, Arizona, losing their homes and farms. None of them returned after the war to farm the land.

The '50s era was a true heyday for the Crystal Cove community, the families leasing cottages and beach tent campers, were creating beautiful summer memories for second and third generations. Beachgoers who made their way down the steep path to the cove could spend the day enjoying the secluded beach. The area offered basic amenities, including a small restaurant, a store, and public restrooms. El Morro Beach Trailer Park eventually evolved into a permanent mobile home facility for several families.

Crystal Cove Spared From Development

In the 1970s The Irvine Company was making plans to develop a Riviera style coastal resort. However, concerned about potential destruction of the historic community. The Crystal Cove Historic District was designated and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1979, California State Park purchased the land from The Irvine Company, permitting longstanding cottage tenants to remain for another 20 years; although most moved out by 1999, a few 'squatters' remained until forced to leave in 2001. El Morro Beach Trailer Park was dismantled and its residents evicted in 2006. Luckily, that spot is now a designated campground run by California State Parks.

The Conservancy is Formed

Laura Davick, whose parents built one of the cottages in the cove in 1937, is the founder of the Crystal Cove Conservancy, formerly Crystal Cove Alliance. There are photos of her hanging out in front of the cottage in the early '60s. She was key to spearheading a group of concerned former residents and environmental groups to save the place from becoming a fancy, luxury resort and preserving the incredible history of the property's buildings and cottages. Since 2006 The California State Parks and the Crystal Cove Conservancy have worked in tandem to restore the 45 cottages that were built from 1926-1936. In 2006 the Beachcomber restaurant was erected in the sand providing an ideal destination bar and dining place near the cottages.

Cindy Otto, Director of Donor Relations invited me and my companion to join her and her associate, Jess for the 'nickel tour' of the property in a four-seater golf cart. Otto who had a 32-year career in sales with Xerox feels she manifested this dream job at Crystal Cove. She lives one mile up the road and had walked the property for years. After retiring from Xerox she volunteered for three months, was hired part-time and for the last 10 years has been a full-time employee.

The Cove Today

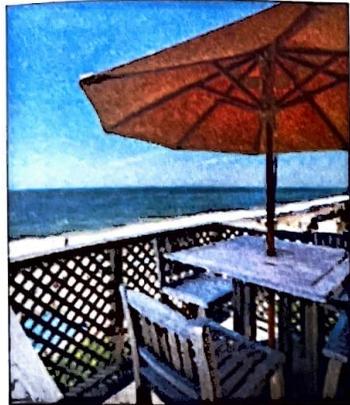
We started our tour at the top of the cliff at the check-in center and took a quick look inside the Japanese Language School admiring the glorious view from the top. Cindy maneu-



Inside of the refurbished cabins. Completely updated with new toilets, showers and bathtubs, each cottage has newly installed refrigerators. The décor is period perfect.



Hiking trails in the backcountry, filled with Mustard plants.



Cottage Patio.



School kids doing experiments.

vered the golf cart down the meandering hill, passing the Park Store and the Summer House (which becomes the Holiday House in the late fall.) The Director of Retail does an incredible job stocking the shelves with curated treasures - the window displays are charming. Across from the retail shops the Beachcomber Restaurant and Bar was hosting a lively crowd on a Friday afternoon in early June. Revenue earned from the concessions in the park, including the Crystal Cove Shake Shack at the top on the bluff and the Beachcomber helps support Crystal Cove State Park and the whole California State Parks landscape.

We glanced at the cottages that serve as

Otto's office and the notable green cottage, which is the visitor center in the summer and is decorated at Christmastime for holiday festivities. Cindy pointed out Cottage #2 where founder Davick grew up, explaining that all the cottages were built in the vernacular architectural style - "things found of the place, at the place." The 650-foot boardwalk was one the first things that was done as part of restoration requiring the approval of the California Coastal Commission and engineered very specifically to prevent sand erosion and rising sea levels until 2050.

Heading north we were treated to a view of the last 17 cottages under restoration. As we

toured a couple of these recently restored cottages, we learned that all the bedding and sofas are new, plumbing is completely updated with new toilets, showers and bathtubs, and each cottage has newly installed refrigerators. The décor is period perfect - the historian has been meticulous scratching off layers of paint to get down to the original color and discovering little nuances about the original owners; thus the carpenter's cottage is filled with tools and the teacher's retreat lined with books giving a nod to previous owners. In one of the cottages toured we noticed the curtains in the kitchen were 'period perfect' reminiscent of a grandmother's home; the furnishings have been generously donated.

Additionally, Cottage #20 on the North beach has been designated as the future Coastal Engineering Dorm, a significant addition to Crystal Cove's educational initiatives. Once restoration is complete, this cottage will serve as overnight housing for students and researchers participating in hands-on coastal engineering and environmental science programs. As a key component of Crystal Cove's growing STEM education efforts, the Coastal Engineering Dorm will provide immersive learning opportunities focused on coastal resilience, climate adaptation, and environmental sustainability. This space will enable participants to explore real-world challenges facing California's coastline while staying within the historic district,

fostering a deeper connection to the natural and built environment they aim to protect.

After checking out the beautifully restored cottages in North beach - only four more left to complete, we finished up our tour at the 'Beaches' Cottage (where scenes from the film starring Bette Midler and Barbara Hershey were shot in 1988). This cottage is designated as the Film and Media Cottage and Museum. A docent is in the building to offer additional insight. Posters line one wall depicting other films that had scenes filmed in the iconic location, including, 'To Have to Have Not' starring Lauren Bacall and Humphrey Bogart, 'Herbie Rides Again' and 'Son of Tarzan.' This memorable place can also be rented for weddings, clambakes, luaus and private dinner parties that are booked through the Beachcomber restaurant.

Crystal Cove is open to the public all year. If you are seeking a truly old-fashioned get-away, experiencing the sound of crashing waves, cheerful squeals of delight and laughter, building sandcastles, playing beach games and leaping into the surf free from the distraction of modern-day electronics, this is your ideal spot! ☺

Check out the website, crystalcove.org for detailed information about the cottages available for rent, including three ADA accessible cottages, historical facts and special events. Reservations can be made on reservecalifornia.com six months in advance.

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