

Monterey's Movie Magic



The crashing waves, gnarled cypress and white-sand beaches that have lured visitors to the Monterey Peninsula for more than a century have also beckoned other kinds of sight-seekers. Directors and cinematographers have been drawn to the spot since 1897, when a cameraman working for Thomas Edison shot the pounding Monterey surf and filmed carriages arriving at the posh Hotel Del Monte. Filmmakers from Cecil B. DeMille to Alfred Hitchcock have flocked here ever since, seeking the perfect backdrops for their shots.

Scenes in more than 190 films are believed to have been shot in Monterey County, from the Edison Manufacturing Company's early 20-second travelogues to favorites such as *Rebecca*, *National Velvet*, *Play Misty for Me*, and *Star Trek IV*. At almost any scenic spot, whether it's The Lone Cypress™, Fisherman's Wharf, Garrapata Beach, or the farm fields of the Salinas Valley, you'll walk in the footsteps of the stars.

Stroll down Cannery Row and you'll trail Marilyn Monroe and Barbara Stanwyck in *Clash by Night*. Tour Carmel's Tor House and you'll visit Clint Eastwood's home in *The Eiger Sanction*. Motor along the 17-Mile Drive and you'll follow the same scenic road as Doris Day in *Julie*, Troy Donahue in *My Blood Runs Cold*, and Rosalind Russell in *Five Finger Exercise*. Every corner of Monterey County, from Salinas and Carmel Valley to the former Fort Ord and the wilds of Big Sur, has had its turn on the silver screen and its brush with the stars. Parts of nearly 40 movies have been filmed at Point Lobos alone.

From 1916 to the 1950s, Point Lobos and other local spots bluffed their way through films, doubling for far-off or historical locales. Monterey County's scenery stood in for Sherwood Forest in *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, the coast of Cornwall in *Rebecca*, the Island of

Elba in *Desirée*, coastal Maine in *A Summer Place*, Russia in *Anna Karenina*, the beaches of Normandy in *Breakthrough*, and a Norwegian fishing village in *Edge of Darkness*. In what was billed the "first million-dollar silent film," *Foolish Wives*, Point Lobos was a Monte Carlo look-alike. Monterey County locations also have played the part of Sicily, Scotland, New England, New Zealand, and Palestine at the movie theater.

Unlike those distant locales, Monterey County was easy to reach by rail, plane, or private railroad car from Los Angeles. And, the stars relished a few nights' stay at the old Hotel San Carlos, the Casa Munras, the Del Monte Lodge (now The Lodge at Pebble Beach), or the Hotel Del Monte (now the Naval Postgraduate School). What the actors occasionally didn't relish was the temperature and turbulence of the local waters; stars from Greer Garson to Jack Nicholson have all been tumbled by the coast's picturesque but bone-numbing seas.

As moviegoers became more sophisticated and well-traveled, directors allowed the county's scenic spots to play themselves, without disguise. But the temptation to use sleight of hand still draws filmmakers to the area. In recent years, local destinations have doubled for Marin County's Stinson Beach in *Basic Instinct*, Sausalito in *Star Trek IV*, Louisiana swampland in *The Muppet Movie*, and the 19th century Baltic coast in budget-movie-king Roger Corman's *The Terror*.

Such motion pictures are part of a century-old tradition that promises to thrive in the new millennium. Waves will continue to pound the rocks at Point Pinos and Point Lobos. Fog will continue to drift through the branches of the brooding cypress. Golden hills will continue to shelter rural valleys. And a new generation of filmmakers will make movie magic, lured by the beauty and scenic diversity that are Monterey County's hallmarks. ★