

# The Castle on the Enchanted Hill

by Katherine Diaz



## AN AFFINITY WITH AVIATION

Airplanes were a huge part of William Randolph Hearst's life. He had an affinity with aviation, supporting quite a few aviation ventures in his lifetime, some successful and some tragic. In October 1910, he sought to further the cause of aviation and boost the circulation of his newspapers by offering \$50,000 to the first aviator to cross the United States in an airplane under 30 days, an event most historically known as The Hearst Prize. The winner of that historic race was none other than Cal Rodgers, who pushed his Wright Model EX, nicknamed the Vin Fiz, to record highs at the time.

In September 1927, Hearst sponsored a transatlantic venture made by airmail pilots James DeWitt Hill and Lloyd Bertaud – accompanied by Hearst's representative New York Daily Mirror editor Philip Payne. The flight was scheduled from New York City to Rome, Italy, a longer distance than the one covered by Charles Lindbergh just a few months earlier. The flight ended in tragedy, with the monoplane Fokker crashing about 350 miles east of Cape Race, Newfoundland. No survivors were ever found.

Hearst also gave financial backing to two Antarctic Expeditions in 1928 and 1929, both piloted by Australian aviator/explorer/naturalist Hubert Wilkins. Both trips went on the record books: The first venture resulted in the first exploratory flight into Antarctica; while the second yielded discovery of a new island, now known as King George Island.

In his own backyard, Hearst relied heavily on his pilots and owned plenty of aircraft, including a DC-3, as he flew from city to city to manage his multiple publications. So it's no surprise that he built an airport on Hearst Castle grounds. The original plans included two L-shaped runways, one running from east to west and the other from north to south. Originally located where the current Visitor's Center in San Simeon is today, the airport was said by many to be one of the first in the state to facilitate instrument landings. In 1946, the airport was moved to its current location one mile north of Hearst Castle. Today, the airport is currently used by the Hearst Corporation and family and is no longer open to the public.

Many aviation royalty took off and landed at the original Hearst Airport to partake on the many lavish parties that Hearst Castle was so famous for. Some of them included Sir Charles Kingford-Smith, Howard Hughes, Amelia Earhart and Charles Lindbergh – all of whom became part of aviation history, as well as Hearst Castle legend.

Architect Julia Morgan must have felt an affinity with the small village of San Simeon Calif., when she first arrived in the area in 1919 and set eyes on its sandy beaches and rugged seaside cliffs that characterized the dramatic landscape of California's Central Coast – a scene that remains unchanged to this day. She must have witnessed the lush forest of Monterey pines, one of only five native groves left in the world today, holding sway over the magnificent Santa Lucia Mountains as coastal black-tail deer, brush rabbits and perhaps even a rare California red-legged frog joust and jaunt in the pristine wilderness tucked along the northern border of San Luis Obispo County. Her artistic sensibilities must have been aroused as Mother Nature laid out her best wares for any stopper-by who cared to take a look at this land of enchantment.

Morgan must have felt a palpable connection as she gazed at the small town's beautiful landscape. But little did she know about the extent of that bond, for – almost a century later – her name and the sleepy town of San Simeon would be forever linked to the stellar architectural work sitting on top of La Cuesta Encantada, or The Enchanted Hill: Hearst Castle.



Media magnate William Randolph Hearst (above center) built Hearst Castle (top) on top of a hill he later called La Cuesta Encantada, or The Enchanted Hill, in San Simeon, Calif., which features the famous outdoor Neptune Pool (above left) and such reliquaries as this gold statue (above right).

### The Start of Something Big

Prior to arriving in San Simeon, Morgan was already an established architect in her own right. She graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, with a degree in civil engineering – and became the only woman to complete the program in 1894. Morgan then traveled to Paris, France, to study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, where she became the first woman to be accepted in the architecture program. After completing her architectural degree in Paris, she soon set up shop back in the States and became California’s first female

architect – an honor that Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and First Lady Maria Shriver will be recognizing later this year with Morgan’s posthumous induction to the California Hall of Fame. By 1919, Morgan had already amassed a number of well-noted commissions: the Mills College Bell Tower in Oakland, Calif.; the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco; and YWCAs in both Oakland and San Jose, Calif., to name a few. Although Morgan would be credited for working on 700 California buildings in her lifetime, she is most famously known for her

work and collaboration with one of the most powerful media magnates of the time: William Randolph Hearst.

Hearst and Morgan’s collaboration started in 1919, when Hearst hired Morgan “to build a little something” in honor of his mother, who died that same year and deeded the 250,000 acres of ranchland, which included the Mexican Ranchos of Piedras Blancas, San Simeon and Santa Rosa, to her son – who had already amassed a long list of notable newspapers, magazines and movie productions, including

the San Francisco Examiner, Cosmopolitan and the Metrotone movie news reels. For years prior to Hearst’s mother’s death, the Hearst family used “Camp Hill,” as the land was originally coined, to camp out with friends and other family members in elaborate tents with separate sleeping and dining camps.

But Hearst envisioned a more comfortable stay and enlisted Morgan’s help. “Miss Morgan,” he told her. “We are tired of camping out in the open at the ranch in San Simeon and I would like to build a little something.”

That little something turned out to be one of the most magnificent palatial structures ever built, taking almost three decades to construct and, surprisingly, was never finished. Although the project was never completed because of Hearst’s financial difficulties toward the end of his life in 1951, what was accomplished on “Camp Hill,” which was renamed during the construction of the castle as “The Enchanted Hill,” was nothing less than extraordinary. By 1947, when work stopped on the castle, Hearst and Morgan had created a 90,080-square-foot estate that housed 165 rooms and 127 acres of gardens, terraces, pools and walkways.

It featured a main house called Casa Grande, which embodied the Mediterranean Revival style and featured Spanish Cathedral-like towers jutting out of its main façade. Three guesthouses of mighty proportions were also constructed, blending the same architectural style found on Casa Grande with the land’s natural beauty.

Inside, Hearst decorated the palace with his priceless European and Mediterranean art collections, adding to the out-of-this-world elegance that only the glamour of the 1930s can bestow. Both Hearst and Morgan never failed to incorporate art into all parts of the construction. Morgan, in particular, used the many priceless objects that Hearst acquired, borrowing design elements from different art forms and replicating them in modern materials throughout the castle.

### DA FACTOID

San Simeon State Park, one of the oldest units of the California State Park System, was a *rancheria* during the mission era when it served as a coastal access point for goods shipped to and from Monterey’s Mission San Antonio.

### The Morgan Hotel & Spa

A gracious boutique hotel located on the California Central Coast in San Simeon, Calif., The Morgan Hotel & Spa – formerly known as The Orchid Inn – is the perfect place to rest your head for the night or even the entire weekend. A tribute to Hearst Castle architect Julia Morgan, the hotel features plenty of amenities in its guest rooms, including goose-down feather comforters to sink into, an in-room coffee maker to perk you up and elegant bathrobes to lounge in. Plus, each room features a Jacuzzi to help you wind down from a long day, a fireplace for those cold nights and a yummy complimentary breakfast during your stay. There’s also a spa with an extensive relaxing and therapeutic list of treatments, ranging from a short rubdown to a Hawaiian-imported Lomi Lomi massage, to help you loosen up those aching muscles after a day of Hearst Castle sightseeing. [Hotel-Morgan.com](http://Hotel-Morgan.com), 800.451.9900, Airport: Paso Robles Municipal (PRB).



## THE CASTLE ON THE ENCHANTED HILL



But the grandeur and glory of the castle didn't just encompass its grandiose size and priceless artifacts. Hearst oftentimes hosted lavish parties attended by some of the luminaries of the day, including such Silver Screen greats as Lionel and John Barrymore, Greta Garbo, David Niven and Marion Davies, purported to be Hearst's mistress; famous politicians, such as Winston Churchill and Calvin Coolidge; and the literati set, such as Hedda Hopper, Louella Parsons and George Bernard Shaw. This A-List of Who's Who most certainly added to the enchantment of Hearst Castle during the 1930s heyday.



Hearst often invited many of Hollywood's elite to the castle and hosted lavish parties that typify the Golden Age of Hollywood. Marion Davies (above left), rumored to be Hearst's mistress, often stayed at the castle, along with aviator Howard Hughes, Clark Gable and Greta Garbo.

from the top of the hill. And the 1,665-square-foot indoor Roman Pool is a work of art, decorated from ceiling to floor with colorful one-inch square mosaic tiles and a statue of "Diana and the Stag," a replica of the original classic sculpture called "Diana of Ephesus" that lives in the Louvre.

For an Italian-inspired Palazzo suite, look no further than The Doge's Suite, featured in the North Wing of Casa Grande Tour. Inspired by the Doge's Palace, the room features two bedrooms and two bathrooms that flank a central sitting room, as well as a recently restored exterior balcony ceiling created by Hearst-era craftsmen.

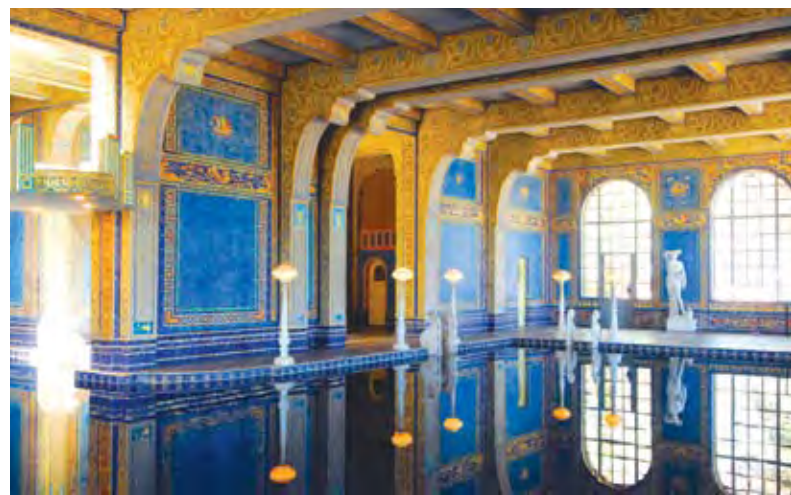
For some of the most recent additions to the castle, head to the North Wing of Casa Grande. This section of the castle contains three floors of guest suites that were completed during Hearst's final years. There, you'll find more modern and spacious interiors melding with antique Spanish ceilings.



## FACTOID

Hearst made his first trip to Europe with his mother when he was 10 years old, a year-and-a-half-long grand tour that instilled in him a lifelong passion for art, history, architecture and travel – all of which culminated with the building of Hearst Castle.

Painstaking renovations have kept much of the Hearst Castle grandeur alive. Visitors who sign up for the Casa Grande Upper Floors Tour will get to see the elegant library – which still looks the same as it did in 1919 (opposite page, left right). Also included in the same tour is the Doge's Suite (below).



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The castle's largest and most elaborate guest house, Casa del Mar offers visitors a sweeping view of the Pacific Ocean and was Hearst's residence of choice during his final years on the hilltop. Before leaving the grounds, make sure to check out the Heraldic Banner hanging over a staircase, which shows two lions, embroidered in gold metallic thread, supporting a shield that bears the arms of Spain.

As one can imagine, there is much more to see and learn about this historic California landmark. So hop in to your plane, set your heading to San Simeon and explore the grandeurs of the castle on The Enchanted Hill. HearstCastle.com, 800.444.4445, Airport: Paso Robles Municipal (PRB). 

The real beauty of Hearst Castle can be found in the intricate architectural details, from the classic marble sculptures in the Esplanade (opposite page, top right) to the multi-hued tilework in the indoor Roman Pool (opposite page, bottom right) and the majestic cathedral spires of Casa Grande (opposite page, left).

## Paso Robles Airport (PRB), Paso Robles, California

### AIRPORT DATA

Elevation: 836'  
 Runways: 1/19 6,009' 13/31 4,700'  
 Approaches: VOR, VOR DME, GPS  
 ATIS/ASOS: 805.239.3593

### FIXED BASE OPERATIONS/FUEL/SERVICES

Paso Robles Jet Center 805.239.5860

### AIRPORT RESTAURANTS

Matthew's at the Airport 805.237.2007

### ACCOMMODATIONS

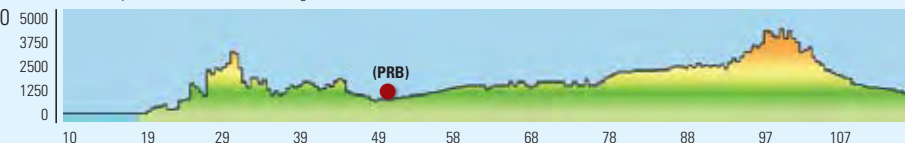
Villa Toscana 805.238.5600  
 myvillatoscana.com  
 The Morgan Hotel & Spa 800.451.9900  
 Hotel-Morgan.com

### TRANSPORTATION

Breakaway Tours (Wine Tours) 800.799.7657  
 Grapeline Shuttle (Wine Tours) 800.239.4747  
 Budget Car Rental 805.226.9470  
 Central Coast Taxi 805.438.3990



Profile map viewed from the south looking north



Maps provided by Voyager Flight Planning Software

## Hearst Castle Celebrates 50 Years

This year, Hearst Castle celebrates its 50th anniversary of public tours. Exactly 50 years ago, the Hearst Corporation donated the entire property to the California State Parks system. Since then, thousands of tourists have flocked to see one of the most majestic palaces on the U.S. shore. In honor of this remarkable milestone, the Friends of Hearst Castle, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the history of Hearst Castle, and the California State Parks are offering several 50th anniversary-themed events throughout the year.

### Fall 2008 Photography Tours

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of California State Parks' operation of Hearst Castle, a new Photography Tour will be offered to the public starting September 14 to October 19. Limited to only 12 visitors per tour, the expedition will start right at sunset and will include 10 photo stops. It's an opportunity not to be missed.

### Behind-the-Scenes Tour

On November 16, view Hearst Castle as no one has ever viewed it before. The Behind-the-Scenes Tour provides visitors an opportunity to experience portions of the castle that are not seen on the other tour offerings. It's a unique glimpse at The Enchanted Hill!

### Enchanted Evening

This 10th annual prestigious gathering on September 27 at Hearst Castle offers an evening of sophisticated elegance. The night begins with a sparkling wine reception on the Main Terrace, where you'll be dazzled by a magnificent sunset over the Pacific Ocean. Then enjoy a premier gourmet dinner inspired by fresh, local foods and wines that are expertly prepared by a renowned chef in an outdoor setting. After dinner, bid on unique Hearst Castle-inspired items and experiences, such as a swim in the Roman Pool or special Hearst Castle private tours.

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