

Santa Paula

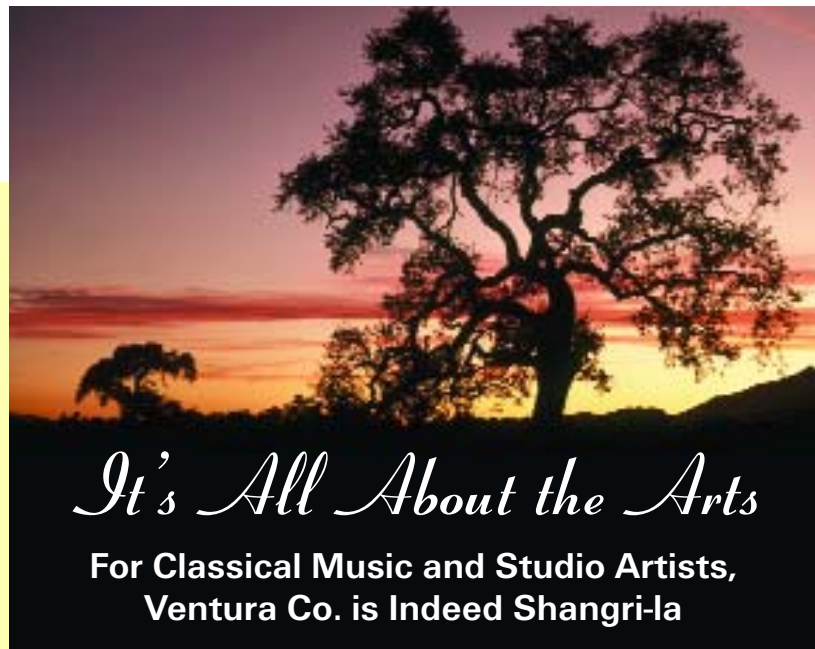
SHOW-STOPPER

*You love a lot of things if you live around them,
but there isn't any woman and there isn't any horse,
nor any before nor any after,
that is as lovely as a great airplane.*

— Ernest Hemingway, *Collier's*, 1944

In the sunny Santa Clara River Valley, a land made lush by groves of lemons, oranges, avocado – and in 1888 Adams Canyon Well 16, California's first sky-high oil gusher – there is a chain of drab, gray hangars where if you tore off the roofs you would be blinded by the brilliance disguised within. Absolutely dazzling, it is, this rare aviation treasure. If it could speak it would talk of famous aviators – Lindbergh to Yeager; it would entertain with tales of treasure hunts and golden finds, of history, hope, and enterprise. Then again, maybe the Aviation Museum of Santa Paula, the nine gray hangars of SZP that contain a collection of craft from antique to classic to experimental, does speak. Certainly anyone winging-in to this Southern California wonder can hear loud and clear its message: Want to have a whole lotta fun? Come here.

Aviator Dave Watson in the cockpit of his prize Tiger Moth



It's All About the Arts
**For Classical Music and Studio Artists,
 Ventura Co. is Indeed Shangri-la**

It is a legendary "pink moment" in Ojai, when the setting sun casts the Topa Topa mountaintops in a brilliant rose glow. No wonder the pretty city in the valley adjacent to Ventura served as mythical Shangri-la in the 1937 film, *Lost Horizon*. Here, legions of artists have sought inspiration within sight of the Spanish-style arcade and bell tower, both symbols of a place that to many means perfect peace, spiritual renewal, and – ah, heaven indeed – creative freedom.

Here come the classical musicians.

On June 8-11, Ojai becomes Southern California's hub of classical music action when the lively, provocative, and ever-surprising Ojai Music Festival comes to town. Fly-in to Camarillo (CMA) or Santa Paula (SZP) and within 14 miles of the ocean you can enter a weekend valhalla of grand, sense-stirring, spirit-soaring classical music that might be soul-transporting, too. This year the festival thriving since 1947 features the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and its Chamber Chorus thrillingly interpreting works of Bach, Berios and others. Classic music fans, this is your happening. ojaifestival.org (805) 646-2094.

Meanwhile, earlier in Ventura. . .

The weekend of May 19-21 parts the beaded curtains and slides open the warehouse doors of this exciting city's art scene with a Studio Artists Tour of the workspaces of its resident painters, potters, sculptors and others – glass artisans to weavers of spectacular tapestry. From industrial warehouses to intimate backyard sanctuaries, the studios – and the works – of artists who find historic Ventura a



Mecca for encouraging their expression are a glimpse into the vision and vitality that create such excitement in this part of California, otherwise known as artist heaven. Whether you fly in for furniture, mosaics or ceramics, *Focus on the Masters, the Ventura Studio Artists Tour Weekend*, will delight your appreciative eye. focusonthe-masters.com (805) 653-2501.

After all, since 1930, an awful lot of others have. Back then, pretty Santa Paula, only 10 minutes from the Pacific and the heart of California's prospering citrus and oil boom (the Union Oil Co. was founded here in the 1880s) was ranchland rich in blessings. It had bounty of year-round sun; the abundance of rolling hills; and, with Santa Paula Peak, the Nordoff Range, and the Topa Topas, the beauty of rugged mountains. A pleasant river valley of parks and tree-lined streets, Santa Paula was perfect for the Golden Age of Aviation – especially after two local ranchers decided an area devastated by a 1928 dam disaster was the site ideal for an airfield. They asked 19 of their rancher and businessman friends for \$1,000 each, rounded-up the mules, and began hand-building. Today, SZP, the airport they created, celebrates the history of Santa Paula – its allure for the famous (everyone from Charles Lindbergh to Pancho Barnes to Roscoe Turner to Harlan "Bud" Gurney has buzzed in), and its joys for everyday flyers. That's us.

Fly! Fly! Fly! Airport Dedication Program Tomorrow Fly! Fly! Fly!

So shouted the headlines of the *Santa Paula Chronicle* on August 9, 1930. Perhaps nothing salutes Santa Paula and its enthusiasm for aviation better than the airport whose charms have been cried about, loudly, ever since. On Dedication Day, as the paper projected, the "Greatest Throng in the History of City Expected" actually did turn out – for a barbecue, parachute jump, glide contest, cadet race, and, not least, to see, "Miss Edith Bond Thrill with Her Stunts." Today, the museum houses the rare and the remarkable: Open cockpit aircraft. Staggerwing biplanes. Gullwing Stinsons. Add a vintage Lockheed 12 and enough experimental, aerobatic, and high performance planes to keep your jaw dropped for hours, if not days, and this is one visit where you won't even miss Miss Edith and her stunts.

Stroll through Hangar Number 1, for instance. Here, a diorama of the airport in 1930, a video of its opening ceremonies, and one-of-a-kind aviation artifacts honor the airport's rise from its birth following California's second most devastating natural disaster after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and

The Howard and Mr. Mulligan, meet Mr. Dickenson. Named for its designer, who was inspired by "The Howard" and "Mr. Dickenson," two historic craft, "Mr. Dickenson" gets its engine attached.

fire – the 1928 collapse of the St. Francis Dam and subsequent flood. In Hangar 2 stand an impeccably restored 1930 DeHavilland Gipsy Moth and a perfectly refurbished 1942 DeHavilland Tiger Moth. The "gentleman's aerial carriage" (the Gipsy) is one of only 500 ever built in England, while the Tiger, beloved trainer of the Royal Air Force, carries in its wooden lines so much of the WWII story. "It was a really great trainer," says its owner/pilot David Watson. "It amplified your mistakes. It could make you feel like a blithering idiot but you could bounce it, crunch it up in a ball and do all kinds of stu-



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**Military mights (top to bottom):
The Hellcat, Bearcat and Zero.
The yellow A Cat serenely surveys
its surroundings (opposite)**

pid things in it. What you couldn't do was kill yourself with it: you'd walk away."

The like-new German Bucker Jungman Biplane Trainer, Spanish-made, in Hangar 3 tells of Luftwaffe aviators and their WWII efforts; the 1940 Porterfield Model CP-65 on display in Hangar 7 recalls the civilian pilot programs of the 1940s; and the pristine 1936 Ryan ST-A in Hangar 4 brings alive in its unique style the sport and aerobatic flying for which aviators since the 1930s have done loop-de-loops of joy.

The Santa Paula collection is even more intriguing lore. Besides a 1996 Zlin 242L made in the Czech Republic, over and above a 1948 Pitts Special, Model S-2A – and oh, how these planes can enthrall with the ways they have been used in flying – the museum's memorabilia include collectibles from the Golden Age of Radio as well as glorious vintage automobiles. To wit: Swing my Hangar 5 to catch the 1936 Wurlitzer juke box and the 1928 Model A Ford Sport Coupe, complete with rumble seat.

Second Day Program Tomorrow Replete with Thrills Every Minute

How ironic that the *Santa Paula Chronicle* of August 9, 1930 would foresee a fact that today is no less true. Continue through the chain of hangars past the handsome Christen Eagle, around the Ryan PT-22, and beneath the suspended reproduction of the famous Blackbird SR-71 spy plane (you can call it "Habu" for short, as does NASA) and the thrills-a-minute don't cease.

And in the event you somehow miss other gems of Santa Paula's remarkable collection – like the antique aircraft owners and restorers whose tales of how they came by and remade their planes are the stuff of suspense novels – fret not, fellow flyer. The museum's "First Sunday at the Airport," the first Sunday of every month when the hangar doors slide open for docent-led tours of this dazzling show, come around every four weeks. Even Miss Edith would be pleased.

For details on the Aviation Museum of Santa Paula, call (805) 525-1109 or visit amszp.org



Flock of the Warbirds

While it might be Santa Paula that is your first touch-down when winging-in to Ventura County, CA, it also might not. Not when the WWII Aviation Heritage Museum at Camarillo Airport (CMA) is oh-so-close and a confab of epic attraction. Organized by the Southern California Wing of the Commemorative Air Force (CAF-SoCAWing) out of Midland, TX (say hi to president W), this flocking of phenomenal warbirds features fighters and trainers and even a "Mitchell" bomber. In short, it demands not that you fly-by but instead tie-down and stay awhile.

Here is your "China Doll," the Curtiss C-46 transport aircraft acquired with another "damsel in distress" that after her rehab went on display elsewhere. "The old girls were tired and needed lots of TLC," says Ron Fleischman, SoCAWing historian. See how this "old girl" now shines, her China Doll charms gorgeously restored to original perfection, new nose art and all.



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The Way-Point Airport Café

At Camarillo

Wing in to The Way-Point Cafe and just you wait: you will be blissed with great breakfasts (all day) and barbecue tri-tip like nothing else. But then, this favorite aviator hang-out at the Camarillo Airport (CMA), is all about such surprising delights. Hopping at all hours (7-6 Mon-Sat, 8-6 Sun) with pilots who pull-up to the door in their airplanes, The Way-Point smokes up wonderful barbecue (in addition to breakfast, lunch and dinner daily) while filling its happy cafe with close to a hundred photos of airplanes that decorate its walls, many given to the Way-Point's owners, aviators Mike and Kathy, by their hungry guests. Sit outside on the popular patio and let the southern California sun work its wonders on your well-being while you watch the planes come and go. At The Way-Point, it is a mere 30-minute flight to the Channel Islands. So satisfy your appetite before your spectacular aerial flight of the islands. 805.388.2535

Here is the Grumman F8F-2 "Bearcat" fighter, the small Navy "hot rod" that the CAF's Col. Paul Koskela calls "an engine with a saddle." And the F6F Hellcat known around Camarillo as an "alley cat" for its F6F-3 fuselage mixed with F6F-5 parts.

There is one of only two Japanese Zeroes flying today, the A6M2 Model 21 the (second) last of 10,000 originally made. There is even what is fondly dubbed "big ole brew 'n little ole you," the PBJ-1J "Mitchell" bomber that always makes a daunting - very daunting - impression close up. From a Convair C-131D (late 1940s transport) whose life before CAF rescue was as a Mexican air cargo carrier, to "the Harvard" SNJ-5 Navy advanced trainer dating from 1938 that every Air Force and Navy pilot knew well, the warbirds flocking at this wonderful museum are birds of a feather when it comes to showing you fun.

Join the gathering by calling (805) 482-0064 or visitingorgsites.com/ca/caf-socal. ✕

A damsel in distress no longer:
The Curtiss C-46 "China Doll"



SANTA PAULA AIRPORT (SPZ) & CAMARILLO AIRPORT (CMA)

SANTA PAULA AIRPORT (SPZ)

AIRPORT DATA

Elevation: 245'
Runways: 4/22 2,650'
Approaches: None
ASOS at CMA (8 nm S) 805.384.9294

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CP Aviation (24/7 self-serve fuel) 805.525.2138

AIRPORT RESTAURANTS

Logsdon Restaurant 805.525.1101

CAMARILLO AIRPORT (CMA)

AIRPORT DATA

Elevation: 75'
Runways: 8/26 6,010'
Approaches: GPS, RNAV, VOR
ATIS / ASOS: 805.484.3351 805.384.9294

FIXED BASE OPERATIONS / FUEL / SERVICES

Channel Islands Aviation 805.987.1301
Sun Air 805.389.9300
Western Cardinal 805.482.2586

AIRPORT RESTAURANTS

The Waypoint Cafe 805.388.2535



Profile map viewed from Camarillo Airport to Santa Paula Airport looking north

Maps provided by Voyager Flight Planning Software

