

PALOS VERDES PENINSULA TOUR

A perfect “chamber of commerce” day greeted our arrival on Wednesday, April 19, 2023 at the Point Vicente Interpretive Center. AACA and Early Bird member Joe Freitag arranged an informative day for us with past as well as current day points of interest along the Palos Verdes Peninsula. Palos Verdes Peninsula consists of four communities: Palos Verdes Estates, Rancho Palos Verdes, Rolling Hills, and Rolling Hills Estates.



Joe & Linda Freitag



The group assembles for early directions

Present day Palos Verdes is credited to Frank Vanderlip, an innovator in the world of banking who was one of the founders of the Federal Reserve System in addition to implementing the war bond savings stamp program used in World War I & II. Regarded as the “Father of Palos Verdes” Vanderlip purchased the 16,000 acres Rancho de los Palos Verdes in 1913. In 1916 he built the Vanderlip estates near the Portuguese Bend area where some of his descendants still live.



Frank Vanderlip



Vanderlip Villa Narcissa

In 1923 the first building on the entire Palos Verdes Peninsula was built: La Venta Inn. The Olmstead brothers, landscape architects who designed Grand Central Park, laid out its grounds. Hollywood celebrities used La Venta as a getaway. La Venta Inn was used for military defense purposes during World War II, a private residence for several years, a restaurant for a time in the 80's, then solidified as a premier wedding venue, and in 1990 designated as an historical landmark. Special members Joe & Linda Freitag as well as Howard & Betty Green's daughter were married here.



We drove to Malaga Cove Beach which is located at the northernmost and sandiest beach in the city of Palos Verdes Estates. Its shoreline is mostly made up of rocky coves backed by steep cliffs. This beach on Malaga Cove is also the south end of Torrance County Beach and has a unique nickname. Most locals call this beach RAT Beach which stand for “Right After Torrance”.



As we descended off Palos Verdes Drive onto the entrance of Terranea, we have recollection of its former site, that of Marineland of the Pacific. Marineland opened in 1954 as the first oceanarium in California and the largest of its time. It was a visionary campus of buildings for maritime research. Many television shows were filmed here, the most famous *Sea Hunt* starring Lloyd Bridges as local diver and underwater detective Mike Nelson. Terranea occupies a mere quarter of its 102 acre site, allowing guests and visitors alike to explore this truly unspoiled California landscape. In this ecologically nourished place, El Segundo blue butterflies flutter about native planting, dolphins dive freely in the pure waters, and coastal sage perfumes the air.



Two miles of panoramic trails hug the coastal bluffs, the beach cove and tide pools

Nestled in a grove of towering redwood trees, the Wayfarers Chapel made of Palos Verdes stone, redwood and glass designed by architect Lloyd Wright was our next stop.



Wayfarers Chapel, or Glass Church as some call it, is a Swedenborgian church that welcomes people of all faiths to celebrate important passages of life including weddings. With its breathtaking views of the Pacific Ocean and Catalina Island, the 3.5 acres of the Chapel grounds feature beautifully landscaped gardens, trees forming arbored walkways, a reflection pool, a rose garden and a visitors center.



Trump National Golf Course
Formerly known as Ocean Trails Golf Club, this 18 hole course was designed by Pete Dye, which was about to open when a landslide occurred in June 1999, and the 18th hole slid toward the Pacific Ocean. The Ocean Trails Golf Club subsequently went into bankruptcy and on November 26, 2002, Trump bought the property.

We toured the Point Vicente Interpretive Center – a regional museum featuring the natural and cultural history of Palos Verdes Peninsula located adjacent to the Point Vicente Lighthouse. The almost 10,000 square foot Center re-opened in 2006 with a special emphasis on the Pacific gray whale. Since 1984, trained whale spotters track the Pacific gray whales on their annual migration during daylight hours between December 1 and late May.





Our day stretched out much longer than scheduled or anticipated due to the enjoyment of the glorious day of sight-seeing with friends all the while basking in the sun and gentle breezes. All the cars performed trouble-free. Our thanks to Joe, along his able assistant Linda, who provided a flawless exploration of Palos Verdes Peninsula.