


A FAMILY  
MAGAZINE FOR  
PARENTS

# San Joaquin **kids &** **PARENT** MAGAZINE

San Joaquin  
Award Winning  
Publication



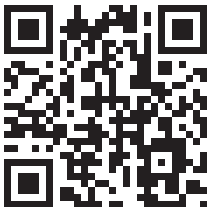
TEACHING  
KIDS TO  
GIVE

**PLUS**  
KEEPING BUSY  
OVER HOLIDAY BREAK

CARMEL VALLEY

KIDS CALENDAR

NOV/DEC 2012  
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Carmel Valley Ranch Hike by: Thomas Hart Shelby

# Carmel VALLEY

**Monterey Peninsula's Warmest Escape**

BY DON AND ANN JACKSON

Carmel Valley is an ideal destination for both couples and families. For the last twenty-five years we've enjoyed more weekend getaways to the Monterey Peninsula than any other location. And a few years back we actually entertained the thought of calling it home. We love Carmel, Monterey, Pebble Beach and Pacific Grove, all of which are located near the ocean. But Carmel Valley has less fog and tends to be quite a bit warmer. It's also less crowded, and when combined with the pleasant weather, rural setting, and Santa Lucia mountain vistas, Carmel Valley can be considered the perfect getaway for weekend wanderers.

### Where to Stay and Dine:

We have two wonderful four star lodging recommendations in the Valley and both are dramatically different in a number of respects. Our perfect pick for a family getaway with kids and dogs in tow is the spectacular Carmel Valley Ranch which may be the only upscale resort in the area that actually encourages folks to bring the kids and their beloved Fidos. Under the direction of the premier hotel group, Joie D' Vivre, this 500 acre resort playground has undergone a magnificent refurbishing and upbeat change in personality and purpose. Unlike Bernardus, this resort has an active kids program, encourages dogs-on-leashes almost everywhere in the resort including restaurants, has a championship golf course and miles of hiking trails on property. Their new Spa Aiyana provides an inviting atmosphere for rejuvenation.

([carmelvalleyranch.com](http://carmelvalleyranch.com))

A personal favorite, especially for discerning culinarian-centered families, is the highly regarded Bernardus Lodge, a worthy member of the prestigious "Leading Hotels of the World". This lavish getaway is best for families with older, more independent children who are ready for their first taste of a truly grown-up vacation. On our visits we've been totally enthralled by the vineyard setting, stunning design, exceptional amenities and the overall ambience of this boutique style luxury resort. Since opening in 1999 the lodge and its signature restaurant, Marinus, have received critical acclaim from many reputable media sources. After our recent stay we wholeheartedly concur with those accolades. All of their tastefully decorated and spacious fifty-seven suites feature cozy stone fireplaces-an immediate invitation to a



Photo by Paul Dyer, Courtesy Carmel Valley Ranch



Carmel Valley Ranch

relaxing stay. Complimentary wine on check-in plus cheese, soft drinks and a selection of fresh fruit await every guest's room arrival and are replenished every three nights. Marinus, featuring California Fresh cuisine under the direction of renowned Executive Chef Cal Stamenov, is a remarkable culinary experience you should long remember. For a more casual breakfast, lunch or dinner, don't miss Wickets Bistro, a local favorite. If pampering is on your agenda, Spa at Bernardus awaits. For those of you into exercise, Bernardus is one of the few resorts in California offering complimentary equipment and court usage for bocce ball and croquet, both on beautifully manicured grass, as well as two hard court tennis courts. ([www.bernardus.com](http://www.bernardus.com))

Room rates for both Bernardus Lodge and Carmel Valley Ranch vary according to season and are definitely on the high side, but the quality you'll experience warrants the cost. Monterey's Peninsula has numerous upscale lodging options and some are even more expensive, but for that special weekend getaway to the area, we honestly can't make a better recommendation than Bernardus Lodge or Carmel Valley Ranch. For those of you who like to venture out for some vittles, don't miss a dinner at the funky Will's Fargo Dining House and Saloon, a regional institution for nearly fifty years. This practically legendary status steak and seafood house is located in the heart of Carmel Valley Village. ([willsfargo.com](http://willsfargo.com))



Photo Courtesy Carmel Valley Ranch



Photo Courtesy Carmel Valley Ranch

Both resorts will tempt you not to leave their property but if you need to venture ([parsonagewine.com](http://parsonagewine.com), [chateaujulien.com](http://chateaujulien.com)) out there are wonderful hiking and equestrian trails throughout the valley and especially exploratory ones in Garland Ranch Park. Carmel Valley's verdant hills, relatively untouched since Spanish land grant days, secluded redwood canyons, majestic oaks, chaparral-laden slopes, ancient stands of pine and the Carmel River meandering through the valley should captivate any visitor.

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**FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION ON OTHER LODGING,  
DINING AND WINERY CHOICES AND MORE INFO:**  
[carmelvalleycalifornia.com](http://carmelvalleycalifornia.com)

**ADDITIONAL INFO ON ALL MONTEREY PENINSULA:**  
[montereyinfo.org](http://montereyinfo.org)

*Don and Ann have been freelance travel journalists for over 25 years. Don is President Emeritus of the International Food, Wine and Travel Writers Association and serves as Advisor to their Board of Directors.*