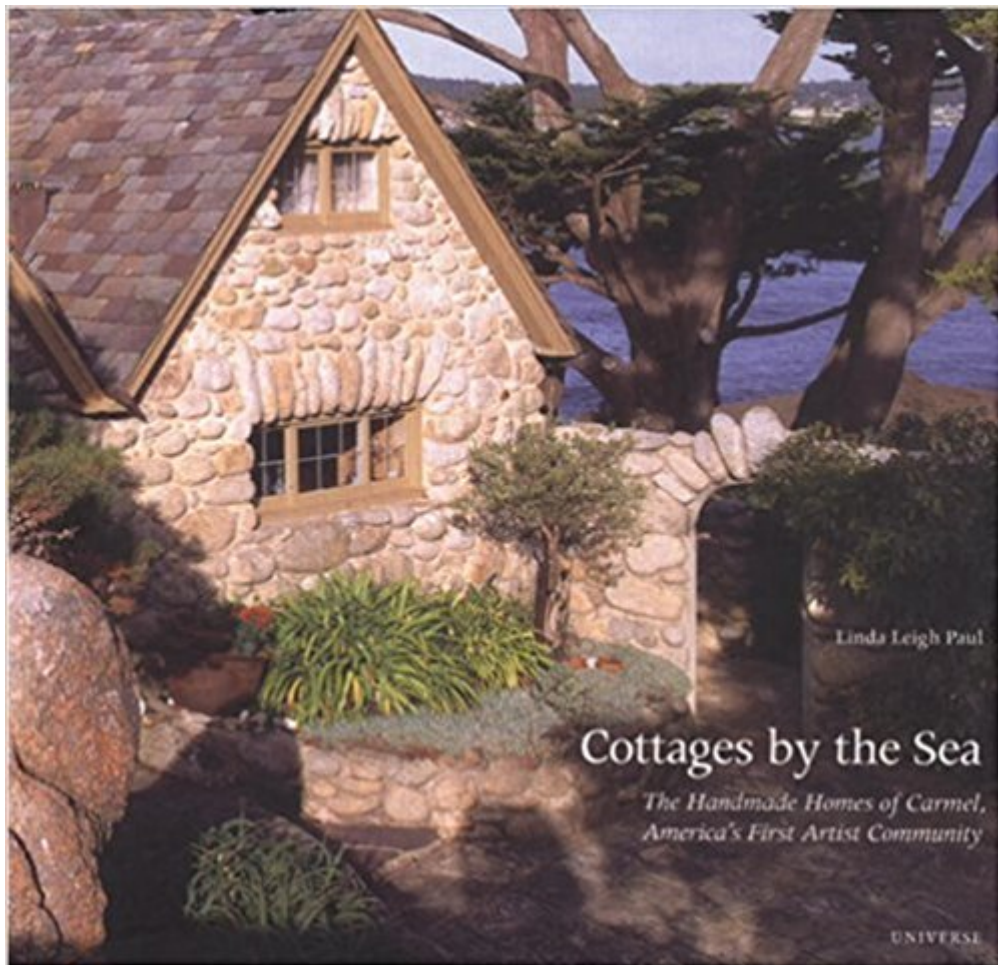


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Cottages By The Sea, The Handmade Homes Of Carmel, America's First Artist Community



Synopsis

Carmel, California has always been a community of artists, writers, and freethinkers. During the early part of its rich history, the area was home to Robinson Jeffers, Mary Austin, Ansel Adams, Charles Greene, Jack London, George Sterling, Upton Sinclair, and Henry Miller, among other great artists of the twentieth century. During the late 1980s, actor and director Clint Eastwood served as mayor. While much about Carmel has changed since the days when Robinson Jeffers could be seen strolling the beach, the area remains one of America's most beautiful. It is also home to many of America's most charming but rarely seen cottages. In Carmel's residential district--a very private, heavily wooded area surrounding the shops and tourist attractions of the town's often busy main street--there are no sidewalks or streetlights. The U.S. Postal Service does not offer mail delivery. Homes have no addresses; they are simply known by name. Here, it is not uncommon for tourists, so intrigued by the uniqueness of the local architecture, to climb the fences of private homes to get a closer look or snapshot of the house on the other side. Now, for the first time, 34 of these homes can be seen more advantageously, in more than 270 specially commissioned and archival exterior and interior photographs.

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Customer Reviews

I am an architect. I live near Carmel and have a special fascination for these houses. Applause to the author. There are lots of beautiful photographs and the history is facinating. I would always like to see more diagrams, interesting details and floor plans, especially for the house called "Hansel".

However, this is an excellent book, the best one available on the subject.

I opened this book as one would a box of expensive hand-crafted Belgian chocolates and savored each page. The photos are luscious, the text tart and logical. Interior and exterior views of cottages and Jeffer's stone tower remind one of European villages. Sarah Susanka's "Not So Big House" and "Creating the Not So Big House" are both good, yes, but nothing in them sets off the same resonate sensation as seeing "Cottages by the Sea." This is what real homes can be: shelters for the mind, body and spirit, places of rest, security and inspiration. I'd write more, but excuse me---I'm booking a trip to Carmel.

My wife and I traveled to beautiful Carmel-by-the-Sea in October. It was our first visit to that part of the US. I must say that we found all of the surrounding seashore from Big Sur to Monterey spectacular and unique. During our all-too-brief stay in Carmel, we walked the tree-shaded streets and explored the white sand beach. We could see houses and cottages half-hidden behind spectacular foliage and vine-covered walls. They looked lived in and inviting. Of course, we strolled more or less randomly, following Carmel's narrow lanes where they would lead us. At a local bookshop we purchased a copy of Cottages by the Sea. This excellent volume showed us what no uninvited guests could view on their own. We dreamed of being able to enter the gates that its author and her photographer did, and to view the warm interiors of the cottages whose exteriors we glimpsed. We were heartened by the author's quiet but firm thoughts about preserving Carmel, and villages like it from development and unplanned 'progress.' We had not known about Carmel's 'artistic' past, and this book led us not only to Tor House, but to the poems of Robinson Jeffers, a volume of which we found in another shop. The illustrations in this book are wonderful. The text provides a brief history of a place that I can assume is like no other in America-or in the world. We have one complaint. Some of the reproductions of documents and plans were too small to be legible. Perhaps they could be enlarged in a later edition? But all in all, this book added much to our experience of Carmel, and we highly recommend it to anyone who loves this type of modest domestic architecture. We have bought copies for our friends in the UK who plan to visit the US. And because of it, we hope to return to Carmel.

As an architect, I found this book to be a great little tome on the cottages of Carmel. Many people do not know of the rich arts and crafts architectural heritage of this bucolic seaside artists' colony, and I was looking to this book to expose this vast treasure trove of hidden delights. While it does

help to open the eye to these gems, it touches only briefly on many of its subjects. Most of the houses are limited to 3-4 exterior photos and give very little sense of the relationships of exterior to interior (if they bother to show interior at all). The book also fails to discuss the status of the homes in all but a few circumstances. However, there are many tremendous photographs and the author sticks to a very concise architectural theme. I am keeping this as a good reference in my library, and I am sure I will refer to it often when I need inspiration for designing something special in a weekend or retreat home. The author has definitely captured the spirit of what this community and these homes were meant to be.

I keep this book nearby, like a bouquet, to look at from time to time for the simple pleasure of it. The pages convey not only the architecture of a period and place, but the personality of an era. This is a companion book; to be cherished forever.

I'm not sure how attractive this book would be to the general public. For me, it reveals the stories behind many of the houses I grew up with. As a Carmel native, I enjoyed learning the stories and histories of many of our local homes. The photographs are nicely done, and the text tells the information in an interesting presentation. I do wish that a local map had been included, to help pinpoint the location of some of these homes.

I was hoping for something with a lot more photos of the interesting Carmel "fairytale" cottages, inside and out. I was disappointed. Many of the houses are not that interesting. This may be a book of interest to people who live in Carmel.

The book was purchased for my wife, Emalie, for Mother's Day, so she is writing the review. The book, at first glance, was exciting for the photos of the homes in the Carmel area. Since our daughter and son-in-law live on Carmel Heights with a view of Point Lobos, we have become familiar with the Carmel setting. Reading the histories of homes we had seen on our jaunts through Carmel was educational and entertaining. Some of the homes have been redone, but the building and remodeling codes in Carmel are very strict, so we were interested in seeing what could be done and how remodeling changed the setting. I will value the book for the sentiment with which it was given, the content, and our connection with the area.

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