

Hearst Castle

Guest, behold, if you will, William's
Castle on the hill! Built of mountain,
bay and sky, sir prince of print shall
occupy. No battles here, no soldiers
slain. No captured palace to regain.
Those Hollywood ladies and movie
star gents arrived for parties not
punishments. They came to dance, to
dine, to laugh, with grazing zebra, tall
giraffe. Picture them there warm
evenings in June, kissed by a California
moon, in the kingdom carved with
American joy at the castle of William,
a rich newspaper boy.

The story of Hearst Castle.

Hearst Castle's history begins in 1865, when George Hearst purchased 40,000 acres of ranchland. After his mother's death in 1919, William Randolph Hearst inherited thousands of acres around San Simeon, and over time, he purchased more. The spread eventually encompassed about 250,000 acres. With architect Julia Morgan, Hearst conceived a retreat he called La Cuesta Encantada—Spanish for “Enchanted Hill.” By 1947, when Hearst had to leave the remote location because of his fragile health, the estate was still unfinished even though it comprised 165 rooms and 123 acres of gardens, terraces, pools and walkways—all built to Hearst's specifications and showcasing a legendary art collection.

Originally known as “Camp Hill,” its wilderness offered a magnificent campsite for family and friends, but Hearst envisioned more comfortable accommodations. His simple instructions to famed San Francisco architect Julia Morgan in 1919 were:

“Miss Morgan, we are tired of camping out in the open at the ranch in San Simeon and I would like to build a little something.”

Hearst renamed the hilltop that crowned his huge ranch “La Cuesta Encantada” – The Enchanted Hill. By 1947, Hearst and Morgan had created an estate of 165 rooms and 127 acres of gardens, terraces, pools and walkways – an American castle that was destined to become one of the world’s greatest showplaces for his art

HISTORIC AREAS AND LOCATIONS AT THE CASTLE

HEARST CASTLE POOLS

Two pools can be found at Hearst Castle: the Neptune Pool and the Roman Pool. Each one is truly unique. They were the settings for lively parties, social gatherings, exercise, and recreation.

WINE CELLAR

Filled with the finest wine money could buy, the Wine Cellar was constructed during the Prohibition Era, and featured vaults to protect Hearst's collection.

HEARST AIRPORT

The original airstrip—located directly behind the Hearst Castle Visitor Center—was built in the 1920s. It provided an easier, much faster way for W. R. Hearst's architect and famous guests to reach his estate at San Simeon than trains and automobiles.

[Learn more »](#)

THE ZOO

Hearst Castle was once the site of the world's largest private zoo. Although no longer in operation, the "bear pits" can be seen on the way down the hilltop when visitors depart. Descendants of Hearst's zebras, aoudads, and Sambar deer can still be seen on Hearst ranchland.

[Learn more »](#)

THE GARDENS OF HEARST CASTLE

Discover the lush, serene gardens that were planned and developed as carefully as other parts of the Castle were by Hearst and Morgan.

GUEST HOUSES

There are a total of 46 rooms in the Guest Houses including lobbies.

CASA GRANDE

There are several additional rooms in Casa Grande including the Refectory, the Billiard Room, the Theater, Library, Gothic Study, Beauty Salon, Butler's Pantry, Kitchen, Staff Dining Room for a total of 115 rooms in Casa Grande.

Holds 345,000 gallons of water

Depth from 3.5 feet to 10 feet deep; 6 feet in alcove

INDOOR ROMAN POOL

Holds 205,000 gallons of water

Depth is 10 feet deep; 4 feet in alcove