



OJAI VALLEY INN

THE CELEBRATED HISTORY OF A SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ICON

Ojai Valley Inn Established Roots in Ojai More Than 90 Years Ago

Location

The Ojai Valley Inn is located on 220 acres in the oak-covered Ojai Valley. Ojai (pronounced “oh hi”) is a Native American name generally accepted as meaning “the nest,” although some experts also interpret it as “the moon.” The valley was home to the Chumash Native Americans who found sanctuary in its canyons and mountains.

During the late 1700s Ojai was settled by the Spanish and Mission societies, followed by Don Fernando Tico who established Rancho Ojai in 1837 with a Mexican land grant. In 1874, the valley's first settlement was named Nordhoff in honor of an east coast journalist who had publicized this special area. Not until 1917 did this little town become known as “Ojai.”

Today, Ojai is an inspiring retreat with a surprising blend of cosmopolitan style and small-town charm. Home to an eclectic mix of writers, artists and philosophers as well as agricultural growers, the town also hosts a nationally acclaimed tennis tournament (“The Ojai”), and a music festival of international renown.

The town, located in one of the last unspoiled areas in Southern California, is just 90 minutes northwest of Los Angeles, and 45 minutes southeast of Santa Barbara.

History & Character

The history of the Ojai Valley Inn began in 1923, when wealthy Ohio glass manufacturer Edward Drummond Libbey commissioned architect Wallace Neff to build a clubhouse for his private golf course. This became his personal winter retreat in Ojai. Today, the original clubhouse, known as the Wallace Neff Heritage Bar, is still a welcoming point of the Inn. Libbey was also responsible for building downtown Ojai’s post office, arcade business district and the park that bears his name.

Since its beginning in 1923, the Inn has welcomed generations of discriminating travelers to relax in an atmosphere of casual elegance. Many notable guests, from heads of state to movie stars, have sought the peace and quiet of the Ojai Valley Inn. Notable frequenters of years past include Clark Gable, Judy Garland, former co-owner Loretta Young, Walt Disney and many more.

The lure of Ojai Valley’s beauty was so compelling that Frank Capra used the valley to depict Shangri-La in his classic film, *Lost Horizon*. Untold stories steeped in Hollywood’s illustrious past lie just beneath the surface. Films such as Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn’s *Pat and Mike* and the sequel to *Chinatown*, *The Two Jakes*, all found the perfect setting on the property.

A different kind of glory distinguished the Inn in 1942, when it was transformed into Camp Oak and used as a military training center for a battalion of 1,000 army troops. In 1944, the Army turned the base over to the Navy for a rest and recuperation facility.

In 1946, after World War II, the Inn was purchased by Don Burger along with notable Hollywood investors, and the property was returned to private ownership and reopened as the Ojai Valley Inn & Country Club. This marked a return to the golden era of the Inn’s reputation as a Hollywood escape.

After several changes of ownership, the Inn was purchased by the Crown family of Chicago in 1985. They undertook a major renovation and expansion of the property in 1986. New rooms were added, the golf course was completely redesigned, a second swimming pool and fitness center were added and eight new tennis courts opened. At the same time, a 4,800 square foot conference center was built and the dining rooms were modernized. A 31,000-square foot luxury spa in the classic Spanish Colonial style opened in December 1997. Bill Mahan, an architect in Santa Barbara, designed the “spa village.”

2006

Now a AAA Five-Diamond property, the Ojai Valley Inn completed a \$90 million renovation. All areas of the property were upgraded and the infrastructure was improved, while preserving the resort's original Spanish Colonial architecture and design by noted California architect Wallace Neff. The Inn debuted 308 rooms and suites, new restaurants and lounges, a new ballroom and conference center, renovated golf clubhouse, redesigned pool and an improved entrance and lobby. Meeting and function space tripled, high-speed internet access became available in all rooms and wireless internet access became available throughout the property. **Casa Elar**, an exquisite private estate overlooking the golf course, was built. The Tuscan Villa-style property with more than 10,000 sq. ft. of indoor and 44,000 sq. ft. of outdoor space has become a favorite spot for luxurious celebrity escapes, destination weddings and family reunions.

2013

In 2013, the Ojai Valley Inn celebrated its 90th anniversary and completion of a \$5.5 million refreshment of all guest rooms. The new look pays homage to the resort's location in the heart of Ojai Valley, the unofficial "Zen capital" of Southern California.

2015

In summer 2015, the property introduced a refined lobby design, chic new adult pool, a new signature restaurant and a refreshed parlor concept at the Wallace Neff Heritage Bar.

2016

In May 2016, the Inn opened Libbey's, a fresh artisan market, café and boutique concept, perfectly aligned with the launch of an elegant fleet of custom Linus bicycles. October 2016 marked the opening of Discover Ojai Center, to further enrich guest experiences.

2019

In February 2019, The Inn debuted The Farmhouse at Ojai Valley Inn, the show-stopping, multi-use epicurean and event center designed by nationally acclaimed architect Howard Backen with Backen Gillam Kroeger.

About Ojai Valley Inn

Tucked within the Topa Topa Mountains in the mystical Ojai Valley, the iconic AAA Five-Diamond Ojai Valley Inn continues to redefine luxury, beckoning travelers since its opening in 1923 to the tranquil setting known as "Shangri La." Located 90 minutes north of Los Angeles in the chic bohemian enclave of Ojai, the resort balances the relaxed glamour of Southern California with reverence for the unspoiled natural beauty of the region for an unrivaled experience that embodies the authentic spirit of Ojai. Sprawled across 220 lush, oak and olive tree-studded acres scented with wild sage and lavender, Ojai Valley Inn offers an abundance of freshly renewed settings, activities and amenities for inspired escapes including: the 31,000 square foot Spa Ojai and its surrounding Spa Village, The Artist Cottage, a working artist studio and apothecary for instruction in aromatherapy oil blending; a historic, George C. Thomas designed golf course; apiary and immersive beekeeping program; multiple pools and more than five dining concepts including signature restaurant Olivella, the sole restaurant between Los Angeles and Northern California to hold both the Forbes Four Star and AAA Four-Diamond designations. New for 2019, the resort introduced The Farmhouse at Ojai Valley Inn, a 20,000 square-foot epicurean event center, connecting world-class food culture, sublime indoor/outdoor settings and bucket list events.

For additional information and guest bookings, please visit www.ojavalleyinn.com or call 1-800-422-6524.

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