

The Great Tidepool

TALES OF PACIFIC GROVE, CALIFORNIA
by local award-winning author, [Brad Herzog](#)

A SPECTRUM OF POSSIBILITIES

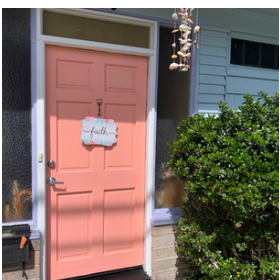
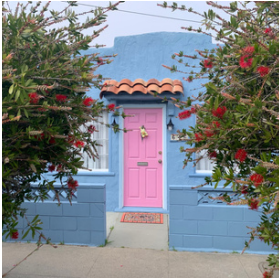
October 22 is National Color Day. Betcha didn't know that. But the so-called national holiday has me thinking locally.

Pacific Grove is a colorful place. It has a colorful history featuring fishermen and flagpole skaters, hippies and hungry artists, entrepreneurs and inventors and innkeepers, Methodists and novelists and tourists and early feminists. That history is populated by colorful figures like socialite lighthouse keeper Emily Fish, scientist-mayor Julia Platt, and a fellow named John Steinbeck. Even the business establishments have colorful names: Red House Café, The Yellow Mustard Seed, the Green Gables Inn.

One of my favorite moments in my hometown happened not long after my wife and I moved here more than a quarter-century ago. We were strolling up the hill from Lovers Point when we came upon a five-year-old girl making sidewalk chalk art. She looked up at us, smiled broadly and announced, "I live in a purple house in Pacific Grove." I mean, come on, that's adorable.

Indeed, the buildings in PG are anything but bland. Ambling around town can feel like walking through a book of paint samples. The bright yellow of the Seven Gables Inn. The red clay edifice that we call City Hall. A lemon-colored house with a lavender fence on Cedar Street. A powder blue home at the corner of Central Avenue and 19th Street. And yes, a purplest-of-purple abode just a few steps from the public library.

Many of us Pagrovians tend to paint our front doors in wonderfully welcoming hues—cerulean, tangerine, chartreuse, mahogany. Some of us even opt for car colors that stretch the boundaries of the spectrum. I've walked past a hot pink Buick parked near the corner of Congress and Laurel countless times, and I've spotted a neon yellow Smart Car a few blocks away. Even my little Nissan Kicks is topped with a copper roof. Okay, it looks like a bit like a Duracell battery, but I can always spot it in a parking lot.





My favorite PG colors, though, are the ones that come naturally. I once drove past a town in western Michigan that describes itself as “where nature smiles for seven miles.” Nature smiling. That might describe PG’s rainbow wonders.



It’s not just the yards brimming with white calla lilies and orange poppies and pink rhododendrons. It’s the pride of Madeira shrubs that offer battalions of light purple exclamation points all over town, the red blooms that burst from bottlebrush bushes and, of course, the magic carpet that explodes along the coastline in mid-spring. I’ve seen PG’s signature picture-postcard burst of color described, at one time or another, as bright pink, pink-purple, fuchsia, and magenta. Take your pick.



PG’s spectrum of possibilities can be seen in the orange and black Monarchs, the green fairways, the blue bay waters and white breaking waves, and the peach-maroon sunsets that leave you marveling that nature offers it nightly.

So when I consider that this is my home... color me thankful.



*The Great
Tidepool*