

The Great Tidepool

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



PACIFIC GROVE IS...

The opening line of John Steinbeck's Cannery Row ranks, in my opinion, among the best openers ever written: "Cannery Row in Monterey in California is a poem, a stink, a grating noise, a quality of light, a tone, a habit, a nostalgia, a dream." The words are about Monterey... and the author was born in Salinas... but I'd argue that Pacific Grove was Steinbeck's inspiration.



When Steinbeck was six, his father built a vacation cottage in on 11th Street in P.G. He and his first wife Carol Henning moved into it years later and lived there for six years, during which Steinbeck wrote *The Pastures of Heaven*, *To a God Unknown*, *Tortilla Flat*, and *In Dubious Battle*. He also is said to have begun work on *The Red Pony*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *Grapes of Wrath*. A few years later, he bought a cottage on Eardley Avenue, where he wrote *The Forgotten Village* and *The Sea of Cortez*.



If you believe (as I do) that Steinbeck is the finest writer America has produced, and if you accept that my hometown served as his most salient creative source, then you have to concede that the wonders of Pacific Grove have inspired some of America's greatest literary creations.



It certainly has stimulated my own scribbles, so I'm inspired to emulate my literary hero. How would one describe Pacific Grove... in the manner in which Steinbeck started *Cannery Row*? I'll give it a try:

Pacific Grove is a song, a sanctuary, a steep hill, a seaside stroll, warm smiles, cool breezes, big hearts, old souls. It is a gathering, a tethering, a happening, a radical utopia, a magical mist-ery tour. It's a revelation and an aspiration, an invitation and a destination, a relaxation vacation, a winged migration.

It is morning glory, sunset serenity and evening silence... but also also gabby sea lions and garrulous seagulls, clanging buoys and crashing waves, wind chimes and waving trees, cheerful students and chatty neighbors.



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P.G. is proud “painted ladies,” beach bungalow bliss, green fairways, blue horizons, whitecaps, and magenta blooms. It’s an antique treasure, an afternoon picnic, an artist’s canvas, a sandy respite, a cypress scene, a tranquil theme, a tidepooler’s dream, a light(house) in the dark, a Last Hometown, and a lasting memory.



It is both down-to-earth and up to something, a dollop of quietude with a dash of attitude, simplicity that spawns eccentricity, a place where everything is possible and anything goes, and a new beginning at continent’s end.



*The Great
Tidepool*



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