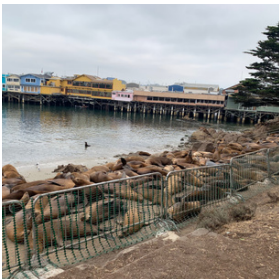


# The Great Tide Pool

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



## WONDERS CLOSE TO HOME

I've seen America's most spectacular places—many times over. While researching and writing four travel memoirs about my journeys into the nation's nooks and crannies, I have visited each of the Lower 48 states multiples times. I have been able to (as Walt Whitman put it) "inhale great draughts of space." Or, if you prefer, I'll quote Johnny Cash: "I've been everywhere, man" - from the rolling fences and perfect landscapes of Kentucky's horse country to the jaw-dropping wonderlands of southern Utah, from the towering sand dunes of northwestern Michigan to the picture-postcard places in Vermont. Ours is truly a beautiful country—well beyond purple mountain majesties and amber waves of grain.

It happens every time. Sometimes the reaction is slightly different. Maybe an earnest "I love that place!" Or an envious "I'm soooo jealous!" Or a sarcastic "Oh, poor you!"

But for me, one of the great pleasures of going places is simply this: I get to tell people where I'm coming from. And no matter where I travel, much the same conversation occurs. I'll be chatting with a newly met acquaintance, and it will go something like this:

"So where do you live?"

"California."

"Oh? Where in California?"

"A town called Pacific Grove. On the Monterey Peninsula."

Pause. Heavenward glance. Groan. "Ohhh! That's paradise!"

And here's the thing: It is. I've seen countless American wonders, and they often remind me of the wonders close to home. In other words, you can travel around Pacific Grove and feel like you're experiencing a nation's worth of natural marvels.





I've seen harbor seals lounging on ice floes in the Johns Hopkins Inlet of Alaska's Glacier Bay. But wait: We have harbor seals who lounge at Hopkins Beach and Fisherman's Wharf. I've walked along a boardwalk toward northwestern Michigan's jaw-dropping Sleeping Bear Dunes. But the boardwalk through the dunes at Asilomar Conference Center feels like a looping stroll through serenity. I've been enchanted by waves crashing on the windswept beaches of North Carolina's Outer Banks as seagulls squawk overhead. But doesn't that describe Asilomar Beach?



I've always described driving through Vermont as like cruising through a postcard, but it's no prettier than the journey along Ocean View when the ice plant is exploding into a pink-purple frenzy. I've traveled along the rocky coastline of Maine - which, by the way, measures only 228 miles as the crow flies, but if you include all the inlets and bays, is 3,478 miles long. That's longer than California's coastline. But honestly, I'll take Pacific Grove's coastal cruise any day.

So there are a whole bunch of wonders in our little world, some of them ranking as unappreciated gems within this jewel of a place. So, if you live here, go out and explore. If you're a returning visitor, do the same. If you've never been here, boy are you in for a wondrous treat.

*The Great  
Tidepool*