

Gathering of Gardeners 2005

About Cambria Pines Lodge / Cambria Nursery & Florist Cambria, California

Rustic elegance abounds across this historic 26-acre property featuring five acres of extraordinary themed gardens, a full-service restaurant and a wealth of lodging options, from honeymoon suites to family cabins. Proprietor Dirk Winter's passion for fine horticulture is showcased across the grounds, including an organic kitchen garden, a literal "flower bed" and a California native plant pathway (only watered by natural means) that leads to the affiliated Cambria Nursery and Florist. Several conference rooms can accommodate groups of various sizes. Outdoor fire pit gazebos, or "kivas," beckon when the coastal air turns cool, while nightly entertainment in the Fireside Lounge is popular with visitors and locals alike. Constructed with artistic stone masonry, the kivas are adorned with decorative mosaic work and heater lamps for guests' comfort. During the Christmas season, the grounds are aglow with holiday lights and décor. "I've even spotted the Lodge's Christmas lights from a plane," says Director of Grounds Shana McCormick.

126 Rooms Total

Planned: 35 expanded "cabin suites"

2905 Burton Drive, Cambria, CA 93428

Reservations: (800) 966-6490

The Gardens

Double doors wrapped in passion vine and nasturtiums open into the property's **California Certified Organic Farmers kitchen garden**. Hedges of mint, chamomile and lavender line the pathway that winds through raised beds that are bordered with rock and terraced to follow the ground's natural slope. Here, artichokes are planted with arugala and cilantro, peas climb trellises and summer squash sprawl. Parsley, chives and rosemary are tucked into every nook and cranny while beneficial flowers like yarrow and cosmos perform both ornamental and bug resistant functions. Created to provide vegetables and herbs for the Cambria Pines Lodge on-site restaurant, the organic garden is also an attraction—where guests are invited to informational classes and workshops a number of times throughout the year.

The Lodge grounds also boast an **extensive succulent garden** and a **"true geranium" collection** long admired by Robin Parer, the world-class geranium expert. "We are blessed with a climate conducive to a variety of plants," says McCormick.

The **"Folklore and Medicinal Herb Garden"** features plants such as "mugwort," which is being researched as a cure for AIDS. The **"Deer Resistant Garden"** offers "fraidy cat," which repels deer as well as cats and dogs with its repugnant fragrance.

The **"White Garden"** is spectacular on a moonlit night. "It was a challenge to work in a monochromatic theme," says McCormick. "Another gardener in the county mentioned that I didn't use enough white and so I was inspired to do an entire white theme." The White Garden features a fountain, gazebo and the Australian "Multinoah" plant, which emanates an intoxicating aroma of fresh-baked cookies.

-see other side-

A gazebo, lawn area and pastel flowers representing bridesmaids' gowns are found in the "**Wedding Garden**," which is partially framed by a coastal sequoia grove. The Lodge's three full-time gardeners and extended garden crew also tend to the "**Rose Garden**," the "**Wishing Well Garden**," the "**Butterfly Garden**" and others.

As devotees of "habitat gardening," or using bugs to catch bugs, the Lodge's garden crew uses an extremely small amount of toxins in tending the property. They also use only trucked-in grey water for the grounds and are firm believers in organic gardening.

Meanwhile, just across the street from the Lodge, Cambria Nursery & Florist offers complete floral services; an array of unusual plants for sale; and display gardens such as a "sea coast tolerant garden," and stone walls and walkways built in various patterns and materials.

Lodge History

In the late 1920s, developers formed the Cambria Pines Development Company and split the city into lots to sell as vacation getaways. The 1929 stock market crash put an end to the development company, but not before it established an important Cambria institution that would later be known as the Cambria Pines Lodge. Initially used to accommodate and entertain prospective vacation home buyers, this rustic retreat was expanded to include a clubroom for dancing and gambling as well as a zoo stocked with doves, alligators, monkeys, peacocks and 200 pheasants. It became Cambria's social center for gatherings and celebrations, and during the Depression, it also became a popular escape. By 1932, it had expanded to include 31 log cabins that rented for \$1.50 a night, while cabins with electricity ran for \$2 a night. Today, as part of Moonstone Hotel Properties, Cambria Pines Lodge still delights visitors with its rustic sophistication, expanded amenities and acres of extraordinary themed gardens.

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