



## SANTA MARIA VALLEY FRESH FACTS

### CALIFORNIA'S SWEET SPOT

Located in the center of California's Central Coast in northern Santa Barbara County, Santa Maria is approximately 21 square miles in size and lies 170 miles north of Los Angeles and 270 miles south of San Francisco. The Santa Maria Valley itself lies between the Sierra Madre Mountains and the rugged coastline of the Pacific Ocean. It includes the cities of Santa Maria and Guadalupe, as well as unincorporated Orcutt.

### EASY ACCESS

Highway 101 runs through the valley, while scenic Highway 1 borders to the west. Highway 166 runs east to I-5 near Bakersfield.

### PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES

SkyWest/United Express operates out of Santa Maria Public Airport, (800) 241-6522.

Allegiant Air offers flights from Santa Maria to Las Vegas and Phoenix (800) 432-3810.

Amtrak offers daily service to Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo, (800) 872-7245.

Greyhound runs five southbound routes and five northbound routes daily, (800) 231-2222.

Santa Maria Area Transit (SMAT) provides service within the city, (805) 349-1350.

Central Coast Area Transit (CCAT) provides north intercity service, (805) 541-2228.

Central Coast Shuttle provides transportation to and from LAX, (805) 928-1977

Premiere Limousine offers private local tours and transportation, (805) 934-8426

### A PERFECT CLIMATE FOR WINE, STRAWBERRIES—AND PEOPLE!

Just 12 miles from the Pacific coastline, Santa Maria enjoys a smog-free climate with mild temperatures throughout the year. Ocean breezes cool the valley in the summer and exert a warm influence in winter. Winter rainfall transforms the valley into a stretch of "Irish green" by mid-January. Hazy morning fog is prominent in the summer months.

Period	<u>Average Temperatures</u>			<u>Rain</u> (Inches)	<u>Humidity</u>		
	Min.	Mean.	Max.		4 a.m.	10 a.m.	4 p.m.
Jan.	37.9	50.3	62.6	2.18	81	63	59
April	44.8	55.0	66.1	1.23	88	63	63
July	52.4	62.1	71.8	.01	88	64	62
Oct.	47.6	60.5	73.4	.51	85	53	59
Year	45.4	56.8	68.2	11.37	86	62	62

## **POPULATION**

City of Santa Maria -- 119,000

Santa Maria Valley – 137,190

## **ALL-AMERICA CITY**

The City of Santa Maria is a regional trading, manufacturing and service center. The area's stable economic base includes agriculture, transportation, oil, tourism, electronic manufacturing, and the government installation at nearby Vandenberg Air Force Base. With more than 6,500 people in its work force, Vandenberg is the area's largest employer.

In 1998, Santa Maria won the coveted All-America City Award from the National Civic League. The award honors community collaboration in solving problems and making the city a better place to live and work.



## FLAVORS

The Santa Maria Valley spans a unique coastal geography that boasts a spectrum of fresh and distinctive flavors. From rolling strawberry fields to magnificent vineyards, streetside barbecues to fine restaurants, the flavors of the Santa Maria Valley ultimately represent a wondrous experience for the senses.

### **SANTA MARIA VALLEY WINE COUNTRY: Extraordinary Climate, Exquisite Grapes**

The Pacific fog billows inland, engulfing golden hills and inspiring a brilliant sunset. A warm afternoon yields to a cool, refreshing evening. Miles of picturesque vineyards arc into the eastern horizon. This is the scene—and the climate—that distinguishes the Santa Maria Valley wine country.

The Santa Maria Valley occupies the northern perimeter of Santa Barbara County, which is today recognized as one of the world's most dynamic winegrowing regions. The valley boasts a rare "transverse" geography, an east-west orientation that channels cool ocean air directly into the valley. The result is one of California's longest growing seasons, which in turn ensures the development of complex, flavorful and exquisitely balanced grapes. The region's porous, well-drained soils also contribute to exceptional fruit intensity and flavor concentration. Pinot Noir, Syrah and Chardonnay are among the varietals that excel in the Santa Maria Valley.

Grapes were first planted in the area in the 1960s, but it was not until the 1970s that local wineries began to populate the valley and Santa Barbara County. Yet in just 30 years, the Santa Maria Valley and its neighboring appellations, Santa Ynez Valley and Santa Rita Hills, have grown to encompass more than 90 wineries and more than 20,000 vineyard acres. The Santa Maria Valley Wine Trail, which connects to the Foxen Canyon Wine Trail and the Santa Ynez Valley, is one of the Central Coast's star attractions.

Here, **Addamo Estate Vineyards, Kenneth Volk Vineyards, Costa de Oro Winery, Riverbench Vineyard, Byron Vineyard & Winery, Cambria Winery & Vineyard, Cottonwood Canyon Vineyard & Winery, Foxen Vineyard, and Rancho Sisquoc Winery** are among the many wineries open to visitors, while the annual **Autumn Arts Grapes and Grains Festival, Celebration of Harvest and Santa Barbara County Vintners' Festival** all represent flavorful extravaganzas of local wine and food.

### **SANTA MARIA STYLE BARBECUE: The Best BBQ in The West**

In an age of fickle tastes and culinary fads, Santa Maria Style Barbecue continues to prove that good taste never goes out of style.

The roots of Santa Maria Style Barbecue date back to the mid-1800s, when massive ranches occupied the hills of the Santa Maria Valley. Local ranchers regularly fed their crowds of ranch hands by barbecuing meat over earthen pits filled with oak wood coals. According to one source, "The Santa Maria Barbecue grew out of this tradition and achieved its 'style' when local residents began to string cuts of

beef on skewers or rods and cook the meat over the hot coals of a red oak fire." In 1931, the Santa Maria Club started a "Stag Barbecue," which was held on the second Wednesday of every month, with up to 700 patrons attending each event. Over the years, the legend of Santa Maria Style Barbecue grew, turning a local treasure into a major attraction.

The signature cuts for Santa Maria Style Barbecue are top block sirloin and the triangular-shaped bottom sirloin known as "tri tip," a cut that originated in the Santa Maria Valley. The meat is rolled in a mixture of salt, pepper and garlic salt just prior to cooking. The red oak—a species of oak native to the region—contributes to a hearty, smoky flavor. Once the meat is trimmed and sliced, the only condiment needed is fresh salsa. The traditional menu also includes French bread dipped in sweet melted butter, tossed green salad and slow-cooked pinto beans, a small pink bean that is grown exclusively in the Santa Maria Valley.

Once hailed by *Sunset Magazine* as "the best barbecue in the world," Santa Maria Style Barbecue is today enjoyed across the region at restaurants, events and celebrations, providing a perfect complement to the wines, strawberries and other locally grown flavors of the Santa Maria Valley.

To help feed this savory phenomenon, the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitor Bureau offers its Santa Maria Style Barbecue booklet, inclusive of recipes, restaurant recommendations and more. The booklet is available for free downloading at [www.santamaria.com/visit/index.html](http://www.santamaria.com/visit/index.html).

### **SANTA MARIA VALLEY STRAWBERRIES: A Sweet Sensation**

The Santa Maria Valley's vast agricultural heritage is represented by many crops, the most colorful of which are strawberries. The region's uniquely moderate coastal climate is a perfect match for this fragile berry, with warm winters and cool summers that support a year-round growing season. According to the most recent Santa Barbara County Crop Report, 6,210 acres of strawberries were harvested in 2006. More than 99 percent of these acres are located in the Santa Maria Valley, according to the county agricultural commissioner's office. Total field value for local strawberries in 2006 exceeded \$231 million. More than 10 strawberry varieties are grown in the valley.

Santa Maria Valley strawberries are renowned for their juicy, flavorful character. While they are distributed both nationally and internationally, there is nothing like enjoying them fresh out of the field at local groceries, fruit stands, restaurants and farmers' markets.

Strawberries find their ultimate showcase each April during the **Santa Maria Valley Strawberry Festival** at the Santa Maria Fairpark. This berry bash features strawberry varietal sampling, strawberry desserts, educational exhibits and old-fashioned carnival entertainment.

Most of the Santa Maria Valley's strawberry fields are replanted every year, a costly practice that produces a higher quality fruit and larger yields. Area farmers pride themselves on developing and utilizing new technology and techniques that allow them to produce larger crops and better berries. Several Santa Maria Valley growers and coolers offer a fascinating behind-the-scenes look into the strawberry business for group tour planners. Call the Santa Maria Valley Visitor & Convention Bureau at (800) 331-3779 for a closer look at this increasingly sophisticated industry.



## EXPERIENCES

The Santa Maria Valley's mild climate and complex coastal ecosystem combine to offer virtually unlimited outdoor adventures, from birdwatching to beach walking, dune hopping to farm touring, golfing to bicycling. Following are highlights from the many experiences of the Santa Maria Valley.

### **GUADALUPE-NIPOMO DUNES: Nature's Singular Masterpiece**

The extraordinary ecology of the Santa Maria Valley is perhaps most vividly embodied in the breathtaking Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Complex, which spans 22,000 acres and 18 miles. One of only two remaining coastal dunes complexes in California—and by far the largest—the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Complex unfolds with awe-inspiring mountains of shifting sands that are teeming with biological diversity.

Visitors to the dunes are encouraged to start their adventure at the Dunes Center, a beautifully restored Craftsman house that offers activities such as guided hikes and walks, and educational resources, including interactive computer kiosks, dunes-related videos, artifacts and maps.

The geological history of the dunes dates back more than 18,000 years, to the end of the last glacial period, as winds caused sand to accumulate in massive mounds along the coast. Chumash Indians later lived and hunted in the dunes, and their discarded seashells, called "shell middens," can still be found today. Spanish explorer Juan Cabrillo was the first European to discover the dunes in 1542. Four-hundred years later, Hollywood discovered the dunes, too, using the area to stage six movies, including Cecil B. DeMille's 1924 silent version of *The Ten Commandments*. The massive 700-foot set was later buried beneath the shifting sands, and efforts are currently underway to excavate and restore DeMille's awesome "City of The Pharaoh."

The Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Complex has been declared a National Wildlife Refuge, ensuring long-term protection of its vast natural resources. Guided walks, wildflower viewing, birdwatching, whale watching and nature photography are just a few of the activities that await visitors to this one-of-a-kind sanctuary.

### **FORE! Picturesque and Affordable Play for Golfers of All Levels**

The golf courses of the Santa Maria Valley and adjacent areas are nearly as diverse as the local ecology, with everything from full-size public links to stunning resorts, beachfront fairways to greens with panoramic mountain views. Green fees start at a mere \$5.75 for short courses and go up to \$60 for premium courses, a range that is considered highly affordable by today's standards. Add in the region's amenable year-round weather and you have the makings of an unparalleled golfing experience.

At the heart of this experience is Rancho Maria Golf Course, an 18-hole public course nestled in the rolling foothills along scenic Highway 1 just southwest of the city of Santa Maria. This hidden gem is popular with locals, offering exceptional views and challenging hazards for golfers of all skill levels. It also boasts a full-size driving range and comfortable clubhouse. Weekday twilight rates at Rancho Maria start at just \$18, topping out at \$35 for weekend play.

Nearby Monarch Dunes Golf Club in Nipomo was ranked third in Golf Digest's 2008 list of America's Best New Courses under \$75. Blacklake Golf Resort, also in Nipomo, is another local favorite. From pristine lakeside fairways to oak-studded doglegs, Blacklake offers a unique 27-hole championship golf experience that celebrates the rugged beauty of the Central Coast. The affiliated Avila Beach Golf Resort showcases beachfront views while meandering for 6,500 championship yards through the stunning foothills of San Luis Bay. Regular weekday green fees at each resort start at \$43, while weekend and holiday rates begin at \$58—excellent prices for courses of such caliber.

Other local courses of note include Cypress Ridge Golf Course in Arroyo Grande, a Peter Jacobson signature course with an on-site golf academy; La Purisima Golf Course in Lompoc, acclaimed by Golf Magazine as one of the top 100 public courses and another relative bargain with green fees starting at \$50; Marshallia Ranch Golf Course at Vandenberg Air Force Base, the third most challenging military course in the world; Sunset Ridge Golf Center in Santa Maria, a nine-hole short course with fees starting at \$5; and Pismo State Beach Golf Course, another short course that unfolds gently along the foredunes of Pismo Beach.

Several Santa Maria hotels, including Best Western Big America, Historic Santa Maria Inn, Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites and the Radisson Hotel Santa Maria, offer special golf packages to make a visitor's Santa Maria Valley golf experience all the more convenient and affordable. Visit [www.CaliforniaGolfVacation.com](http://www.CaliforniaGolfVacation.com) for local golf packages.

### **BIRDING IN THE VALLEY: Soaring Sights Along the Pacific Flyway**

The Santa Maria Valley is located in the heart of the Pacific Flyway, the path that migrating birds follow along the Pacific coastline of the United States and Mexico. From majestic seabirds to fleet-footed roadrunners, warblers to woodpeckers, each season unveils its own signature bird population in local skies, estuaries, hills and beaches. According to one expert, "An energetic and persistent birder can identify well over 100 species of birds in a single day around the Santa Maria Valley." Birds endemic to the region include the yellow-billed magpie and the chestnut-backed chickadee.

The Santa Maria Valley is a popular stop for birds for many of the same reasons that it is a popular destination for tourists, including amenable weather and a diverse geography that incorporates a multitude of favorable habitats. Several local public areas offer excellent vantages for birdwatching, including Pioneer Park, Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes, Waller Park, Twitchell Reservoir, Point Sal and Oso Flaco Lake Natural Area.

Several resources exist to point both experts and amateurs in the right direction for birding in the Santa Maria Valley. The Santa Maria Valley Visitor & Convention Bureau offers *A Birder's Guide to the Santa Maria Valley* for \$10. This comprehensive 54-page guide is written by seasoned local birder Gene Lynch, and includes reference drawings, location descriptions and directions, and a birder's checklist with seasonal keys.

The bureau also distributes the free *Central Coast Birding Trail* brochure and map, which features 25 birdwatching sites across Santa Barbara County. Related resources can also be found online at [www.lpas.westhost.com/CCBT](http://www.lpas.westhost.com/CCBT) as hosted by La Purisima Audubon Society. Each October, local birding reaches its zenith at the **Annual Birding Rally**, also hosted by La Purisima Audubon Society. Teams of birders compete to see who can identify the most species within a specific area and timeframe, while birdwatchers of all levels are invited to participate in a special Central Coast Birding Trail "Big Site" to see how many species can be identified by everyone in a single day.



## CULTURE

The Santa Maria Valley may be famed for its nutrient-rich soil, but its bounty doesn't stop there. The fresh and captivating spirit of this region is also reflected in its cultural offerings, yielding a visual and performing arts scene that thrives with a life all its own.

### PERFORMING ARTS: From Melodrama to Mozart, Chekhov to Rachmaninov

First-time attendees tend to be surprised and awed at the top-level talent that takes to the stage in this Central Coast city. Indeed, high-caliber actors from the world over flock to Santa Maria's **Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts (PCPA)** events each year. Nationally acclaimed, PCPA remains the only professional resident company on the Central Coast, and stages the finest classic and contemporary live theater plays. Attendees enjoy three excellent venues: The 450-seat, thrust-stage Marian Theatre and the flexible-seating, studio-style Severson Theatre, both at Santa Maria's Allan Hancock College Performing Arts Center, and the outdoor Festival Theater in nearby Solvang.

The Santa Maria Civic Theater is another delightful outlet at which to catch live theater staged by the oldest theater group in the region, while creative interpretations by talented soloists and traditional repertoire may be found at performances by the Santa Maria Philharmonic Orchestra.

Booing, hissing and audible laughter is welcome at **The Great American Melodrama** and Vaudeville Revue in Oceano. Here, sawdust-covered floors, cabaret tables and old-fashioned piano music welcome families to delightful evenings of classic comedies, melodramas and thrillers performed by seasoned actors from across the country. Stage-side dining is encouraged as the in-house pub pumps out an array of tasty victuals.

### LOCAL LANDMARKS: Memorable Discoveries from the Past and Present

Celebrating the history of aviation on the Central Coast, the **Santa Maria Museum of Flight** emphasizes the region's contribution to flight. Visitors wandering through two different hangars are treated to aircraft displays, memorabilia, models and photos that cover everything from the Wright Brothers to World War II to present day technology.

Meet "Hoot the Owl" at Santa Maria's **Natural History Museum**. Here, individuals and children of all ages interact with rock and fossil exhibits, native bird displays and a genuine bat room. Meanwhile, the **Santa Maria Valley Discovery Museum's** fun-house mirrors, puppet theater and tide pool touch tanks invite children to learn while they play. The Discovery Museum also features hands-on educational exhibits based on local themes, including agriculture, aerospace and the environment.

The **Santa Maria Valley Historical Society and Museum** is rich in photographs, artifacts and memorabilia of the Mission, Rancho and Pioneer periods as well as the Chumash Indian culture, while the **Santa Maria Valley Railway Historical Museum** pays tribute to the preservation of California's railroad heritage.

The **Historic Santa Maria Inn** was established in 1917 and still retains its classic turn-of-the-century charm. Once a legendary hub for the Hollywood elite—Marilyn Monroe and Charlie Chaplain were among its famous guests—the Historic Santa Maria Inn remains steeped in the hospitality of a bygone era while boasting 164 guest rooms and 18 luxury suites with the latest amenities.

Public tours of nearby **Vandenberg Air Force Base**, the Air Force Space Command organization responsible for all Department of Defense space and missile launch activities on the West Coast, are offered the second and fourth Wednesday of each month between 10 a.m. and noon, security conditions permitting. Advance reservations are required two weeks in advance. Contact Public Affairs at 805-606-3595.

Rolling vineyards and picturesque countryside are the setting for the **Chapel San Ramon**, a century-old church and cemetery where many of the area's earliest settlers are at rest. The nearby **Rancho Tinaquaic** is the setting for Foxen Vineyard's tasting room. English sea captain William Foxen purchased the rancho in 1837. He and his Spanish bride built an adobe on the property that remains today.

And perhaps the crown jewel of the region's historic structures is **La Purisima Mission Historic State Park**, the most fully restored of the three completely preserved missions within the California State Park system. Also boasting the most authentic looking setting of all the missions, La Purisima takes visitors back to its 1820 heyday and features livestock and plants of that period including burros, four-horn "churro" sheep, horses, longhorn cattle, goats, swine, turkeys and geese. More than 37 rooms are restored and furnished while the 900 acres showcase the property's original aqueduct, washing pools, pond and more than 12 miles of maintained hiking trails. Knowledgeable guides and "characters of the past" dressed as padres, soldiers and American Indians are frequently present on weekends.

### *ART GALLERIES: Celebrating A Valley Brushed with Color*

Not surprisingly, the lush hues of Santa Maria Valley's brilliant red strawberries, bold green crops and stunning skies inspire a range of artistic expression. From funky to traditional, a handful of eclectic art galleries dot the Santa Maria Valley landscape.

Exhibiting more than 30 artists, the **David Ryan Gallery** is one of the largest fine art spaces on the Central Coast. **The Loading Dock** offers a whimsical selection in a rustic setting; **Broadway Gallery** features local artists, varying media and special events; **Culture Corner Gallery** invites local artists to display work in many mediums; **Guadalupe Cultural Arts & Education Center** boasts four galleries in a Victorian home; **Photoworks Frame Gallery** specializes in portraits and custom framing; and **Allan Hancock Art Gallery**, features monthly exhibits and art shows by students and nationally acclaimed artists.

The Santa Maria Valley is also rich with **outdoor art**, inclusive of mosaics and murals. Visits can obtain a complimentary "Self-Led Santa Maria Arts Tour" pamphlet from the Santa Maria Valley Visitor & Convention Bureau at 614 South Broadway.



## A VALLEY RICH IN HISTORY

The beginnings of Santa Maria Valley's development date back to the adventurous era of Spanish land grants and ranchos. Before then, the sprawling terrain was solely home to the sagebrush, deer, bears, rabbits and Chumash Indians who made their homes on the slopes of the surrounding hills in the shelter of the oaks and sycamores.

### EXPLORERS BLAZE A TRAIL

After Spanish explorer Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo arrived in the Valley in 1542, and the Portola exploration party passed through in 1769 during its search for the Monterey Bay, two sites were eventually chosen to the north and southwest for missions built by the Spanish church. Mission San Luis Obispo (1772) and La Purisima Concepcion (1787) were catalysts for early settlement, and flourished until 1821 when Spain granted Mexico independence and the missions were secularized. Lands were broken up and for the first time individuals were granted land ownership.

### SETTLERS CARVE OUT A CULTURE

When Benjamin Foxen purchased Rancho Tinaquaic in 1837, he and his Chumash Indian bride, the former Eduarda Osuna, built a small adobe on the property. The Foxen family lived for many generations on the rancho where Benjamin was called "Don Julian" by Eduarda's people. One of Foxen's daughters, Ramona, married Englishman Frederick Wickenden. Their early adobe still stands. Ramona longed for a nearby church as the drive to the Santa Inez Mission proved to be quite a task with their many small children. Ultimately, the death of Benjamin Foxen inspired the construction of the San Ramon Chapel in 1875. Today, the chapel, which may still be seen along Foxen Canyon Road, has been dedicated as County Landmark No. 1 and as State Landmark No. 877. Santa Maria Valley's first town was La Graciosa, which included a store, post office and school located near present-day Orcutt. However, in 1877, H.M. Newhall was granted the land on which the town was built, and summarily ejected one and all.

### THE CITY DECIDES ON A NAME

While the nineteenth century saw California gain statehood, the Santa Maria Valley blossomed as one of the most productive agricultural regions in the state. The area's multi-ethnic population also grew as Swiss-Italian dairymen, and Filipino, Portuguese and Japanese farmers joined the already established English, Irish and Scottish and Mexican settlers. Between 1869 and 1874, four of the Valley's prominent settlers, Rudolph Cook, John Thornburg, Isaac Fesler and Isaac Miller, farmed the land at the corners of Broadway and Main Streets. In 1874, these individuals each donated a square-mile of land where their

properties met to form a four-mile city center. The township was surveyed in the fall of 1874, and the surveyor's maps were accepted and recorded at the county seat on April 12, 1875. First christened Grangerville, and later Central City, the name was ultimately changed to "Santa Maria" on February 18, 1885 because mail was often mistakenly sent to Central City, Colorado. The city remained limited to four square miles until 1954. Since then, annexations have increased its size to roughly 21 square miles.

### **"OLD MAUD" INTRODUCES NEW INDUSTRY**

Rich, gushing oil was discovered in the Santa Maria Valley in 1904 near what is now Orcutt. When exploratory crews struck a huge gusher, they lovingly nicknamed it "Old Maud," and for the next 80 years, the oil industry flourished. Development intensified in the 1930s, and, by 1957, as many as 1,775 oil wells were producing \$64 million worth of oil annually.

### **THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY: A GROWING CITY WITH A HOMETOWN OUTLOOK**

The City of Santa Maria takes pride in its "business friendly" reputation. In addition to the agriculture and retail mix, new industries such as aerospace, communications, high-tech research and development, energy production, military operations and manufacturing are on the rise. Santa Maria will celebrate its centennial on September 12, 2005, and in 2008, the City of Santa Maria is projected to be the largest city in Santa Barbara County. While the city looks to its future, it remains proud of its past.

### **Additional Resources on the Santa Maria Valley**

- City of Santa Maria, [www.ci.santamaria.ca.us/newspage/index.html](http://www.ci.santamaria.ca.us/newspage/index.html), 805-925-0951.
- Santa Maria Valley Historical Society Museum, 805-922-3130, 616 South Broadway.
- Far Western Tavern, [www.farwestern tavern.com/index.html](http://www.farwestern tavern.com/index.html)
- Hitching Post of Casmalia, [www.hitchingpost1.com/](http://www.hitchingpost1.com/)
- Chapel San Ramon, [www.angelfire.com/ca/sanramon/history.html](http://www.angelfire.com/ca/sanramon/history.html)
- Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce Visitor and Convention Bureau, [www.santamaria.com](http://www.santamaria.com)

### **Books on the Santa Maria Valley**

- An American Son*, the story of George Aratani, founder of Mikasa and Kenwood electronics. By Naomi Hirahara
  - Santa Maria Style Barbecue*, by R.H. Tesene
  - The Good Years: Snippets of Santa Maria Valley History*, by Shirley Contreras
  - This is Our Valley*, by Vada F. Carlson
  - Santa Maria Historical Photo Album*, Santa Maria Valley Historical Society
  - From Boom Town to Bedroom Community: History of Orcutt*, by Sally Simon
  - Old Town Orcutt*, by Bob Nelson
  - Fifty Fabulous Years (1945-1995)*, edited by Jim May
  - Sagas of the Central Coast*, published by Bob Nelson
  - Railroads of the Santa Maria Valley*, by Hal Madson
- The Story of the Pioneer Picnics, by R.H. Tesene, Jim May and Pauline Lownes Novo**
- G. Allan Hancock*, by DeWitt Meredith



## CURIOSITIES

**Fascinating facts that most locals don't even know about!**

- Johnny Depp and friends enjoyed Santa Maria Style Barbecue at the Far Western Tavern while filming *Pirates of the Caribbean 3* in the nearby Guadalupe Dunes.
- The Legend of Zorro was based on the life of Solomon Pico, a murderous bandit who camped in the Santa Maria hills. To this day, people climb the Solomon Hills looking for treasure that Pico allegedly buried.
- The Minerva Clubhouse in Santa Maria was designed by Julia Morgan, famed architect of Hearst Castle.
- High School Musical and Hairspray movie star Zac Efron grew up in nearby Arroyo Grande and once starred in PCPA's production of *Peter Pan* in Santa Maria.
- Former Oakland Raiders coach and NFL Hall of Famer John Madden was head coach for Santa Maria's Allan Hancock College football team in 1962 and 1963. He was also assistant coach in 1961. He is currently the commentator for NBC's Sunday Night Football.
- Legendary actress Jane Russell lives in Santa Maria and sings locally.
- The Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Complex boasts the highest beach dunes in the Western United States, with some towering as high as 500 feet. It is also the second largest stretch of dunes in California.
- The 1923 Cecil B. DeMille silent movie, *The Ten Commandments*, was filmed in the Guadalupe/Nipomo Dunes Preserve. The set was gradually buried beneath the sand due to weather and wind, however, an effort is being made to begin its excavation.
- The Santa Maria Public Airport is near the site of the Army Air Corp Base, where more than 600 pilots were trained to fly P-38 fighter aircraft during World War II from early 1944 through the middle of 1945.
- Named after G. Allan Hancock, Santa Maria's Hancock College was the site of the Hancock College of Aeronautics—a facility that graduated more than 5,800 new pilots through their primary training phase beginning in 1939.

-In 1904, Old Maud, Santa Maria's first oil well, produced one million barrels in its first 100 days of operation.

-After more than 65 years of semi-pro baseball, the Santa Maria Indians Baseball Club is California's oldest semi-pro club in continuous service.

-In 1874, Santa Maria was originally named "Grangerville," after The Grange—the first store in town. Later, the name was changed to "Central City," due to its location between Sisquoc and Guadalupe.

-In 1882, the arrival of the narrow gauge Pacific Coast Railroad coincided with the city's name change from "Central City" to "Santa Maria." Mail meant for the township kept showing up in Central City, Colorado.

-Some of Santa Barbara County's first vineyards were planted in the Tepusquet region of Santa Maria Valley in the early 1960s. Soon after, vineyards were planted in several parts of the Santa Ynez Valley.

-In 1978, the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce copyrighted the Santa Maria Style Barbecue recipe in order to protect the genuine article.

-The town of Guadalupe is home to the oldest Buddhist temple in California.

-Santa Maria boasts an ideal sunny, coastal climate for growing strawberries where mild winters and moderate summers produce a long growing season. All in all, Santa Maria produces 20 million trays of strawberries annually. These are transported to supermarkets across the United States.

-Most of Santa Maria's strawberry fields are replanted every year. This practice is more costly, but produces higher quality fruit and higher yields.

-In the early 1900s, the clams at Pismo Beach were so plentiful that farmers in the Santa Maria Valley brought truck loads home to use as crop fertilizer and feed for their hogs.

-Santa Maria High School graduate Kenny Gist, Jr. (professional name Kenny O'dell) has penned numerous Nashville hits for Loretta Lynn, Tanya Tucker, The Judds and others.

-The Historic Santa Maria Inn, which opened in 1917, was a favorite of William Randolph Hearst and his friends, who often stayed at the inn on their way to Hearst Castle in San Simeon. Marilyn Monroe, Shirley Temple and Rudolph Valentino were among the inn's notable guests. The Historic Santa Maria Inn remains a favorite of celebrities when movie productions come to town. Demi Moore, Jack Lemmon, Walter Matthau are among those who have stayed in recent years.

-In 1990, portions of the movie, "The Rocketeer," were filmed at the Santa Maria Public Airport. The "Bigelow" building from the movie currently stands at the Santa Maria Museum of Flight and houses various aircraft and display cases.

### **Famous People Who Call or Called the Santa Maria Valley "Home"**

- Santa Maria resident AJ Tablado was a Top 12 finalist on American Idol in 2007
- George Aratani, founder of Mikasa China and Kenwood Electronics, was born in Guadalupe.

- Pioneering journalist Rona Barrett owns a lavender farm in Santa Barbara County.
- Mark Brunell, veteran quarterback for the NFL's New Orleans Saints, starred at Santa Maria's St. Joseph High School.
- Paul Edwards is a Grand Prix Formula Ones racecar driver and currently drives for sponsor, Red Bull.
- Lisa Estrada is a cheer advisor for the NBA's Los Angeles Lakers.
- Blaine Johnson's drag racing career included seven championships and 53 NHRA national event victories. His racing career ended tragically in August 1996 when he crashed at the U.S. Nationals.
- Gary Leffew was inducted into the Professional Rodeo Hall of Fame in 2002.
- Billy Simas played with the Chicago White Sox and was a relief pitcher for the Los Angeles Dodgers.
- Robin Ventura starred for the Los Angeles Dodgers and other teams, and also competed at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, Korea, batting .409 for the U.S. team's gold medal. A local ballfield is named after Ventura.
- Bryn Smith has played with the Orioles, the Expos, the St. Louis Cardinals, and the Colorado Rockies.
- Actor Terry Maratos has appeared on Sex and the City and ER.
- Steve Patterson played basketball for the NBA's Portland Trailblazers.
- Phillip Young is a world-renown pianist.
- Scoop Nunes, Santa Maria's "Mr. Baseball," was inducted into the National Semi-Professional Baseball Congress in 1997 in Wichita, Kansas.
- Actress Kim Myori (Cheryl Utsunomiya) visits her family who still reside locally.

#### **Famed Alumni of Santa Maria's Allan Hancock College**

- Tim Kring, creator of the hit television show, "Heroes," got his start editing track-and-field footage for his father, a coach at Allan Hancock College. A Santa Maria native, Tim later studied at UC Santa Barbara and USC.
- Brian Asselstine is a retired major league baseball player for the Atlanta Braves.
- NBA player Mike Bratz was with the Phoenix Suns, Cleveland Cavaliers, Golden State Warriors and Sacramento Kings.
- Gunther Cunningham is a former head coach of the NFL's Kansas City Chiefs, and is now the team's defensive coordinator
- Kenneth Kring was founder of the world's leading executive search firm. He was also the 1999 national champion and U.S. record holder for the men's Master Indoor Pentathlon.
- John Marshall was the assistant coach-defensive line for the NFL's Detroit Lions and former assistant head coach/defensive coordinator for the NFL's Carolina Panthers.
- Chuck Negrón was the lead singer for Three Dog Night.
- Phillip Norwood is a Hollywood storyboard artist specializing in special effects and live-action sequences (True Lies, Terminator 2, The Abyss).
- Owen Siler was formerly the commandant for the U.S. Coast Guard and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under Presidents Nixon, Ford and Carter.
- Milford Zornes is an artist whose work can be seen in the White House, the Pentagon and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

## **Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts (PCPA) Distinguished Alumni**

- Zac Efron, star of High School Musical and Hairspray
- Kathy Bates, Academy Award-winning television, stage and screen actress (Misery; Fried Green Tomatoes; Night, Mother; Roe v. Wade; About Schmidt).
- Jeffery Combs, stage, screen and television actor and Robie Award winner (Star Trek: Deep Space Nine).
- Boyd Gaines, three-time Tony award-winning stage, screen and television actor, (The Heidi Chronicles; Cabaret; Contact; Heartbreak Ridge; Evergreen).
- Jim Grce, cinematographer and lighting director (The Patriot; Austin Powers-The Spy Who Shagged Me).
- Harry Groener, three-time Tony nominated stage actor (Oklahoma; Cats; Crazy for You).
- Harry Hamlin, stage, screen and television actor (L.A. Law; Clash of the Titans).
- Mark Harelik, stage, screen and television actor and playwright (Wings; The Hollow Lands; The Heidi Chronicles; The Immigrant).
- Winifred Hervey, Emmy and Golden Globe award-winning television producer and writer (The Steve Harvey Show; Golden Girls; The Fresh Prince of Bel Air).
- Kathleen Lloyd Jenvay, television and screen actress (Magnum, P.I.; The Missouri Breaks).
- Tim Kring, television executive producer and writer (Providence; Chicago Hope; Crossing Jordan)
- Jeff McCarthy, Broadway and movie actor (Disney's Beauty and the Beast).
- Kelly McGillis, award-winning film and stage actress (Top Gun; Witness; A Seagull; Twelfth Night)
- Leslie Parsons, Emmy-nominated production designer and art director (Murder She Wrote; Falcon Crest).
- Cynthia Lauren Tewes, television actress ("Julie" on The Love Boat).
- Robin Williams, actor and comedian (Good Will Hunting; Hook; Mrs. Doubtfire; Jumanji; Good Morning, Vietnam).