



HISTORIC WUNDERLICH PARK BARN AND MUSEUM

Horses and History in Woodside

“Come in your Bentley or on your horse” and “Where the elite meet to eat, and cowboys too” are two slogans of the European-style Woodside Bakery and Café.

By DIANE LeBOW • PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN MONTGOMERY

Poised between Silicon Valley and San Francisco, Woodside, with its quiet tree-lined, meandering lanes, horse pastures, and luxurious estates and farms, is known for its horse-loving residents and for being one of the wealthiest small towns in the United States. On any day, bicyclists wind along Woodside’s picturesque roads while hikers and horseback riders enjoy the beauty and tranquility of its two county parks, Wunderlich and Huddart.

Visitors, along with locals, enjoy the variety of hospitable restaurants serving delicious food. But a closer look at the community reveals an interesting history as well as much to explore.

Originally home to the Ohlone people, the area with its mild climate, flourishing wildlife, and lush nature has attracted people for thousands of years. The first outside contact occurred when Gaspar de Portola, with his Spanish explorers, camped here in 1769 while searching for San Francisco Bay.

The rich stands of redwoods drew English speaking settlers who, in the early 19th century, commenced prosperous industries built around logging, sawmills, and shingle production. These industries boomed as the Gold Rush took off and San Francisco needed building materials. The name “Woodside” was selected in 1849.

Lumbermen, teamsters, wagon makers and blacksmiths required supplies and so the Woodside Store was born in 1853, in the form of a general store, post office, stage coach stop and even dental office, as one of its original owners was a 33 year old dentist, Robert Orville Tripp, from Massachusetts. Today the fully restored wooden

structure welcomes visitors to explore its historic collection of canned peas, lima beans, “sugar corn,” and “Albers Pearl Tapioca, as well as examine the Victorian dental chair and authentic blacksmith’s shop.

School groups are invited on Tuesdays and Thursdays, by reservation, and while they’re there, can learn to wash clothes in the antique washing machines and make ice cream the old-fashioned way. The first Sunday in May is Woodside Store Day and everyone is welcome to visit and enjoy some of these hands-on activities.

Two County Parks: Huddart and Wunderlich

Woodside offers two pristine county parks for hiking, riding and picnics. Originally deeded to an Irishman by the governor of Spanish California in 1840, the original rancho of 12,545 acres contained the 973 acres that are now Huddart Park. Extensive logging and sawmills bustled here during Gold Rush days. Oxen teams dragged wagons piled high with lumber over to the bay near what is now Redwood City where it was then barged to San Francisco. A later owner, Woodside resident and wealthy lumberman, James Huddart, established the park.

Woodside’s other public space, Wunderlich Park and the Folger Stables, are both magical places to visit, whether on foot or horseback. In addition to logging, the original 1,500 acres of this park were used as a working ranch with vineyards and fruit trees. Some of the buildings and walls that were built with Chinese labor in the late 1800s are still in evidence. In 1902, James A. Folger II, the coffee tycoon, bought the property and developed it as a recreational area for his family, transforming the wagon trails and old skid roads into riding and carriage trails and building a showplace of a stable.



STANFORD RED BARN

The next owner, Martin Wunderlich, one of the contractors of the Panama Canal, deeded the land to San Mateo County for use as park and open space. The author of this article kept her champion Morgans in this historic barn which has now been beautifully restored. Visitors can view the original Carriage Room, now a museum, and enjoy hiking or riding throughout the bucolic trails of Wunderlich Park.

Horses Galore

Horse and riding facilities abound all around the Woodside area from the large complexes of The Horse Park and Portola Valley Training Center, to the moderate sized Spring Down Farm, to the historic Folger Stable (see above), and the personal attention of Heather Hill Riding Academy where owner Laura Stevens teams with her imported Welsh cobs and ponies to teach riders young and old all aspects of horsemanship and horse care from beginning riders to jumping, dressage and carriage driving. Cyffylliog Pendefig, the founding sire of Laura's horses was imported as a yearling from Wales in 1981. Try and pronounce his name.

The nearby Stanford Red Barn is a beautifully restored Victorian stable, dating from 1878, built as part of Gov. Leland Stanford's trotting horse breeding farm. Just in front is the statue of the governor's prize stallion, Electioneer. Stanford hired well-known landscape photographer, Eadweard Muybridge, to prove his theory that horses at full trot or gallop have all four legs off the ground. In so doing, Muybridge and Stanford played a significant role in the early history of moving pictures.

Time to Eat

In Woodside's business center, favorite restaurants include Buck's, which offers "Flapjacks and Tomfoolery," great food along with odd and eccentric furnishings. Folks from local blacksmiths to celebrities meet and eat here. Just down the road, is the historic Little Store Restaurant now owned and run by Frenchman Dominique Debillac.

It was originally a general store and gas station when it was built in 1902. Michelin-rated Village Pub, just a block away, is a longtime favorite. Perched up the hill on Skyline Boulevard are The Mountain House Restaurant and Alice's Restaurant.

Some Woodside celebrity residents include Joan Baez, Joe Montana, Larry Ellison, Charles R. Schwab, Shirley Temple Black and Michelle Pfeiffer.

Additional Gems

Formerly the home and horse farm of Lurline Matson Roth, Filoli National Trust for Historic Preservation welcomes the public to this remarkable 654 acre property, including the 36,000 square foot Georgian country house and spectacular 16 acre English Renaissance garden.

So whether on foot, bike, horseback—or in your Bentley, Woodside is worth a visit.

If you go...

- The Woodside General Store Museum, 3300 Tripp Road, Woodside, (650) 851-7615. Open T,Th, 10-4 Sat/Sun 12-4
- Wunderlich Ranch, www.co.sanmateo.ca.us, 4040 Woodside Road (650) 851-1210
- Huddart Park 1100 Kings Mountain Road (650)851-1210
- Heather Hill Riding Center, <http://horseridingbayarea.com/> (650) 465-4083
- Filoli Estate <http://www.filoli.org/>
- Buck's, <http://www.buckswoodside.com>
- The Little Store Restaurant, 3340 Woodside Rd. 650-851-8110
- Woodside Café/Bakery www.woodsidebakery.com
- Village Pub <http://www.thevillagepub.net>
- Mountain House Restaurant www.themountainhouse.com
- Alice' Restaurant <http://www.alicesrestaurant.com/>
- Thomas Fogarty Winery <http://www.fogartywinery.com>