

BEYOND THE COAST: STORIES OF CARLSBAD

*We partnered with Visit Carlsbad to bring you **six stories** of our living history.*

Written by **Wendy Hinman**



photo courtesy of Ryan Krouse/
Untamed Horizons Media

People visit Carlsbad for different reasons. But they discover more when they get here. They may come for the beach, but find amazing restaurants between surf sessions. They may visit Legoland, but realize the kids can also pick their own strawberries. Maybe they’ve booked a spa weekend at the Omni La Costa Resort & Spa and then found out they are lounging beside some incredible golf, tennis and skateboarding history. Visit Carlsbad and Carlsbad Magazine created a docuseries to make that discovery easier.

“At Visit Carlsbad, storytelling is such an important part of what we do to entice visitors to spend their vacations here,” says Kim Sidoriak, president and CEO of the city’s destination marketing organization. “Stories, local perspectives, experiences, history and culture do so much more for promoting a destination than a logo or campaign slogan.”

Georgia Flynn is content and brand manager at Visit Carlsbad. She noticed their Fun Fact Fridays social media posts gaining traction. “We need a documentary” to tell Carlsbad’s stories, Flynn thought. The Visit Carlsbad team brainstormed a series of

short docs showcasing Carlsbad history that can still be experienced. But where to start?

Someone said, “You need to call Wendy Hinman at Carlsbad Magazine.” That’s me, by the way, if you skipped the byline. I’ve been accused of much storytelling since my Magnolia Elementary School days. My Simon Sinek “Why” as senior writer for Carlsbad Magazine is to uncover Carlsbad’s unique geography and human topography for locals and visitors. Which translates best to, you wouldn’t want to challenge me to a Carlsbad trivia night.

So partnership with Visit Carlsbad was easy and obvious. “These stories aren’t just about tourism,” Sidoriak says. “We hope this series fosters community pride and connects people to Carlsbad even more once they know the people who shaped Carlsbad into what it is today.”

Flynn grabbed the talented filmographer Ryan Krouse at Untamed Horizon Media to round out our team. We storyboarded over a few lattes at Lofty Coffee on State Street; this is where our quest took us.

1 SURFING

There was a day when three was a crowd in a Carlsbad lineup. But surfing exploded in the 1970s and Carlsbad held a significant spot in that story. We pulled three silverbacks out of the swell to tell the story: Barbie Baron, original owner of Offshore Surf Shop; Witt Rowlett, owner of Carlsbad Pipelines and Taylor Knox, the surfer with the most pro stats from Carlsbad. And yours truly fills in some spots as a historian who’s gone over the falls way too many times.

Surf legend Taylor Knox spinning tales from the momentum generation (photo courtesy of Visit Carlsbad).



2 SKATEBOARDING

Surfing is the gateway drug to skateboarding and Carlsbad has a singular story in the rise of the sport. Here was the nexus: severe drought and a building moratorium in La Costa, Captain Cadillac (aka Frank Nasworthy) creating the polyurethane wheel, and Larry Balma and Dave Dominy founding Tracker Trucks. All the new gear and style was researched and developed on Black Hill in La Costa, with Di Dootson bringing order to that chaos. And 50 years later, she’s still the girl with the clipboard of the La Costa Racing Team.

Lance Smith began his photography career in the Black Hill days of La Costa and is still shooting rippers today (photo by Ryan Krouse/Untamed Horizons Media).



3 AGRITOURISM

Bressi Ranch, Robertson Ranch and Marja Acres are now housing developments named after the family businesses on whose land they sit. But a couple of bright spots in our agrarian past still shine. The Flower Fields at Carlsbad Ranch, a top tourist destination, celebrates a time when Carlsbad considered itself “the flower capital of the world.” At the Carlsbad Strawberry Company, you can pick your own strawberries or wander through sunflowers on this third-generation working farm. Right now, it’s pumpkin patch season. There are marigolds for Day of the Dead, a corn maze and, for the brave, a haunted corn maze that raises money for the Agua Hedionda Lagoon Foundation.



photo by Ryan Krouse/Untamed Horizons Media



photo by Ryan Krouse/Untamed Horizons Media

4 HISPANIC HERITAGE

Before Carlsbad existed, our little spot on the Pacific was old Mexico and our city still retains that culture. Carlsbad’s signature food is Mexican. During the World Cup, the Village filled with green when Mexico was playing and the stripes when the U.S. played. We looked into our Hispanic history starting from Lola’s, always the heart of our Barrio (order your Christmas tamales early!) and Leo Carrillo Ranch, which recalls California’s old hacienda days.



photo by Ryan Krouse/Untamed Horizons Media

6 THE VILLAGE

The Village is where what we now call Carlsbad all began. It is where John Frazier discovered one of our artisan springs that gave us our name and designation as a spa town. It’s where the railroad stopped to take flowers and produce outside our realm. It’s where we have gathered as a community since the late 19th century. And it’s still our cultural hub, a living connection to our past and present.

The premiere party for these short films took place at the Omni La Costa and felt like a Carlsbad family reunion. Sidoriak said it best: “The premiere was a meaningful opportunity to bring together the people featured in the series, our community partners and those who helped bring the project to life. Seeing the stories on screen reinforced the impact of the series: it celebrates the people who make Carlsbad distinctive, builds pride within the community and gives prospective visitors new reasons to connect with and explore the destination.”



photo by Ryan Krouse/Untamed Horizons Media



Watch all the videos on Visit Carlsbad’s YouTube channel: @VisitCarlsbadCA.

All the film subjects gathered together for the premiere at Omni La Costa (photo courtesy of Visit Carlsbad/taken by James Phenicie).