



An American Tour: 6



San Simeon's *Hearst Castle*

In 1865, George Hearst, a wealthy miner, purchased 40,000-acres of ranchland that included the Mexican Ranchos of Piedras Blancas, San Simeon and Santa Rosa in California. In 1919, his only son, William Randolph Hearst, inherited the land from his mother. By then, the ranch had grown to encompass 250,000 acres. Originally known as "Camp Hill," its wilderness offered a place for family members and friends to "rough it" on camping trips. Despite elaborate arrangements with separate sleeping and dining tents, Hearst envisioned more comfortable accommodations. His simple instructions to famed San Francisco architect Julia Morgan in 1919: "Miss Morgan, we are tired of camping out in the open at the ranch in San Simeon and I would like to build a little something"

Hearst and Morgan's collaboration was destined to become one of the world's greatest showplaces. As they were planning and constructing his dream home, Hearst renamed the rocky perch from which it rose "La Cuesta Encantada" - The Enchanted Hill. By 1947, Hearst and Morgan had created an estate of 165 rooms and 127 acres of gardens, terraces, pools and walkways. The estate's magnificent main house, "Casa Grande," and three guest houses are of Mediterranean Revival style, while the imposing towers of Casa Grande were inspired by a Spanish cathedral. The blending of the architectural style with the surrounding land, and Hearst's superb European and Mediterranean art collection, was so seamless that world-renowned architectural historian, Lord John Julius Norwich, was moved to say that "Hearst Castle is a palace in every sense of the word." There are 90,080 sq. ft. of living space, including 61 bathrooms.

Hearst Castle is one of the largest of approximately 5,000 historic house museums in the U.S., with one of the most sophisticated guided tour programs in the country. California State Parks strives to keep the estate looking like a private residence. As early as 1952 President Sproul of UC Berkeley proposed that William Randolph Hearst's ranch at San Simeon be given to the Division of Beaches and Parks as a monument. Trial tours undertaken in Sept. 1952, lasted over two hours but were quickly pared down to one hour, plus the bus ride up and down the hill. Donated to the state in 1957 by the Hearst Corporation, dedication ceremonies for the Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument were held June 2, 1958.

