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# Montecito JOURNAL

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**YOUR WESTMONT**



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# CALIFORNIA ROMANTICA



Diane Keaton to present her 300-plus-page book on Spanish Colonial Revival architecture at Four Seasons Biltmore Sunday April 27 (story and interview begins on page 34)

*Montecito*  
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### The New Biltmore Seawall

It only (!) took three years to build, but now that it is finished, we wonder what the fuss was all about, p.5



### Village Beat

Miramar owner Rick Caruso warns of "litigation ahead"; Santa Barbara Youth Ensemble to stage "Fiddler On The Roof," p.9



### The Way It Was

Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World found its way to Santa Barbara in 1902, p.22

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## COMING & GOING



by James Buckley

### A Romantic Californian



Academy Award-winning actress Diane Keaton will be at Four Seasons Biltmore on Sunday, April 27, to make a presentation on "California Romantica"

The first thing Diane Keaton wanted to acknowledge during our telephone interview that took place Thursday morning, April 10, was the help she received in putting together her new book, "California Romantica." She specifically mentioned Harry Kolb, Joan Kreiss, Suzanne Perkins, Melissa Birch, and Pamela Regan – real estate professionals all – in addition to "everybody connected with Casa del Herrero." Because of that help and the generosity of so many others in Montecito and Santa Barbara, Ms Keaton "wanted to do something" to repay that courtesy. She has settled upon hosting a \$135-per-person Pearl Chase Society fundraiser, dubbed "An Afternoon with Diane Keaton," set for Sunday afternoon, April 27, from 2 pm to 4:30 pm at the Four Seasons Biltmore. Admittedly "afraid to fly" (though does when she has to), Diane will drive up from her Los Angeles-area home with graphic designer Lorraine Wild. Ms Wild is on the faculty at California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), and is responsible for the layout and design of the book.

"California Romantica," published by Rizzoli New York, is a \$65 coffee-table tome that features a heartfelt foreword written by Ms Keaton, text by D.J. Waldie, and lovingly reproduced photographs by Lisa Hardaway and Paul Hester. Four of the nineteen homes featured in the book are in Montecito (Casa del Herrero, the Olgilvy Estate, El Bosque, and Ravenscroft) and another – the French Ranch – was designed by Montecito-based architect Tom Bolly. Isla Mar, in Hope Ranch, is also featured.

*Q. You discovered Ravenscroft, one of our favorite homes in Montecito. Do you know*

*the history of the design of the living room and its enormous fireplace?*

**A.** Yes. It was designed so that the horses could come in and get warmed by the fire.

*In particular, Mrs. Ravenscroft's favorite horse, Jack. As an actress, you might be amused to know that the design of the living room was taken from a popular London stage production of the era.*

No way!

Yes.

Oh, I did not know that at all. Hilarious!

*According to David Myrick's account in his two-volume "Montecito And Santa Barbara," Marguerite (Peggy) Doe Courtney, who later married Henry Ravenscroft – hence the name of the home – asked Smith to design a living room that duplicated the stage set of the play, which is why the living room is 52 feet long.*

That says a lot about George Washington Smith: that he was a game guy; that he took on the owners' ideas and wasn't afraid of them and didn't feel that it was encroaching on his genius. It's an act of generosity on his part and, because of that, his work is probably the most prevalent in this book and it's the most unusual and most diverse. He wasn't afraid of a new idea. That was one of my favorite homes.

*Did you happen to see the lathe house on the Ravenscroft property that, according to Harry Kolb, was where the first commercially grown orchids on the Central Coast were grown?*

Oh yes. And, it is being restored by Marc Appleton, so of course it is going to be astonishing and beautiful. I love that I saw it [in its decayed state] and caught it right before they began the restoration. I'm a preservationist, as you know, and I feel the beauty shines forth no matter what state these homes are in. You mustn't be afraid of them. When you see the beauty of this particular home, it's so astonishing. I just fell in love with it.

*The Olgilvy House, which is nearby, was another of your choices.*

It's interesting, of course, because it's had so many owners, Ellen DeGeneres being one of the most recent. It was restored with a lot of detail and attention to its history. I never saw it before it was restored, but it's stunning, and the garden is extraordinary, although I don't know what it looked like before. The person that owned it when I was able to get in and shoot the house had changed the dining room and kitchen,



A fountain detail outside the Ogilvy House, most recently owned by Ellen DeGeneres



A small slice of George Washington Smith's Ravenscroft, as seen from an upstairs portal

which people frequently do, as those are areas that frequently need expanding, with the way we live now.

*Kitchens were not a strong point of a George Washington Smith house.*

No. Not a strong point of anyone's at the time.

*"California Romantica" lists "text by D.J. Waldie and photos by Paul Hester and Lisa Hardaway," so where do you fit in?*

I guess you could call me the producer of the book. I put it together. I had the idea. I gathered the people I wanted to work with, the most important of course was D.J. You have essentially a picture book and mainly people's attention is to look at it rather than read it, but in this

case the reading is the strong point. It is nothing but an honor to have D.J. write about each of these homes. The way he writes about California and about the history of California and this particular type of architecture is remarkable; it's literally the most unusual aspect of this book.

Lisa and Paul came and I saw their work and was very impressed with them; they shot digitally, which gave us a lot of options, more opportunities to see the homes in a different light.

My job was to select the homes and

**COMING & GOING** Page 36 ▶

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## COMING & GOING (Continued from page 35)

find Lorraine Wild, who I think did an incredible job in designing this book with the idea in mind of the romantic aspects of these homes.

You wrote the foreword yourself though, correct?  
Yes.

Here is just some of what you wrote: "The promise of heaven in a home lies somewhere out there, almost within reach. It resides in a place mapped by the history of our longings..." You end with "Here they are... the dark side of romance, and the bittersweet lie of perfection." Those are words of a writer, a novelist even. Is there a novel or two in you demanding release?

Oh no (laughs). I wish. That's so sweet of you to say that. No. But I do like to express my feelings about anything that has a profound effect on me. I'm very drawn to the visual, so it really did mean a lot to me to have the opportunity to create this book, one of many on the subject. I was very excited by it from my own personal history of these homes, with my father and my mother, and our travels through California and visits to missions, going to places and staying at places like Rosarita Beach Hotel – even though that is not mentioned in this but which is in Baja California – does have a profound effect.

You have renovated, restored, and lived in three Spanish Colonial Revival homes. You've also written: "I wanted 'old' and 'Spanish' to stop being code words for demolition. I wanted us to give renewed vitality, and even a refined Modernism to the historic dream of living in a perfect California Spanish home." What most defines the romance and/or livability of that style of home to you?

If I were to pick one thing, I would say 'the arch,' in all its facets. It's an indoor/outdoor idea and there's something soothing about an arch and all the implications of it, both inside, in the interior, as well as in the courtyards, the exterior courtyards. I love all the California missions and all the arches and the colonnades. Very much about our Spanish past is [delineated by] the arch.

Were you present during the photo shoots?

I was there for some of them. I was there for all the scouts, and I took pictures myself and would show what I was interested in to the photographers. Before they would go, we would always have a meeting and we would talk about what we were going for.

Do you have any connections or experiences in Montecito?

Not really. I've stayed at the Biltmore as a child and as an adult and I've brought my own children, but I haven't been there since [Ty Warner's] restoration. I'm eager to see that. Of course, I have a dream that someday I'll have a



Bath designed by Tom Bolla for The French Ranch, a contemporary Spanish Colonial Revival Spanish house in Montecito but it has not happened.

You were in the original cast of "Hair"; do you ever attend any of the annual reunions?

No. I didn't even know they had an annual reunion.

Michael Butler, the original producer of "Hair" apparently puts together an outing nearly every year.

I didn't really know him well, because he was sort of an exotic figure and I was straight out of acting school. It was an unusual experience for me anyway, because I wasn't exactly a hippie so I don't exactly know why they cast me. It was very exciting, but I didn't really have a clue of what was going on until after I left the show to go do a play with Woody Allen called "Play It Again, Sam." When I actually saw ["Hair"] for the first time, as an audience member, I understood it was a remarkable show. But, being in it, I had no idea. Sometimes you have to leave in order to look back and see what a great show it was.

You won an Academy Award for "Annie Hall," and the casual sincerity you have displayed on screen in other films, such as "The Godfather," draws audiences to your characters. That same sincerity comes across in the foreword you wrote for "California Romantica." Do you have to work at that?

That's kind of you to say, but I don't know the answer. Do I work on being 'casually sincere'? I hope not.

•••

The \$135 price for attending "An Afternoon with Diane Keaton" in the Loggia Room at Four Seasons Biltmore on Sunday afternoon, April 27, from 2 pm to 4:30 pm includes a copy of "California Romantica," and a one-year membership in the Pearl Chase Society. Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be served and both Ms Keaton and Ms Wild will make presentations. You are invited to call 805-961-3938 for reservations and more information.

M/