

WOMEN'S DATING



People Can Learn and Connect
at Hidden Villa's Farm & Community

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People Can Learn and Connect at Hidden Villa's Farm & Community



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The Short Version: Located on 1,600 acres in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains outside of San Francisco, [Hidden Villa](#) is a nonprofit organic farm and educational ranch that attracts 55,000 visitors each year. Hands-on workshops and fun events that focus on homesteading, sustainability, cultural explorations, and natural living are scheduled throughout the year for young couples, families, and seniors alike. Many come to Hidden Villa — which boasts hiking trails, a historic hostel, and romantic cabins — as volunteers to give back to this unique community. Hidden Villa's many opportunities for learning and exploration bring visitors together and help them create unforgettable experiences. [Share](#)

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When Frank and Josephine Duveneck purchased Hidden Villa's 1,600 acres of vineyards, olive groves, and fir trees outside of San Francisco in 1924, they saved the property from a fate of certain development and commercialization. While previous owners had used the land for economic gains, the progressive and socially minded couple chose instead to preserve the wilderness for both environmental and civic benefit.

They opened their house to shelter refugees fleeing from the Nazis, helped Japanese-Americans returning from internment camps, and even lent their home as the meeting place for the organizers of what is today the United Farm Workers union.



Frank and Josephine Duveneck bought the property that became Hidden Villa in 1924.

Frank and Josephine also founded the first multicultural and racially integrated summer camp in the country, a forbearer to the environmental educational programming that exists today as an outreach effort to school-aged children. Their vision was so grand that they instilled it in their children, who donated the property to the nonprofit trust created by their parents before they passed away.

Today, a strong team of trustees, staff, and volunteers continue to grow Hidden Villa programs with summer camps, sustainable agricultural programs, and environmental educational initiatives for both children and adults. More than 55,000 people from around the world visit the organization each year for an unforgettable, hands-on experience that leaves them deeply connected to the Earth and those around them.

Public Programs Teach Visitors About the Environment

While environmental education for youth remains a large part of Hidden Villa's mission, [the calendar of events](#) is filled with activities geared toward visitors of all

ages.

“You’ll find every age enjoying this space: infants peeking out from their strollers, groups of school-aged children using their five senses in the garden, teenagers digging into the roots of their food, adults in their 20s up through seniors in their 80s teaching, exploring, volunteering, and working,” said Marc Sidel, Director of Visitor Services.



Hidden Villa programs include learning how to create a compost, make ice cream, and practice sustainable farming.

Couples, family members, and friends can learn about the best practices for creating healthy compost for a garden and learning to make ice cream using fruits and herbs from the garden and milk and cream from the resident dairy cow, Tilly. You’ll find yoga classes (some featuring baby lambs) and tours that introduce you to the subtle smells and use of plants in the garden as well as cheese-making classes and seasonal guided hikes along the eight miles of trails on the property.

There’s also a big focus on sustainable agriculture. Visitors can learn about animal husbandry and sustainable farm practices. Not surprisingly, with all the fruits and vegetables, it’s possible to purchase Hidden Villa-grown organic produce, meat, and eggs at the Los Altos Farmers Market or through the Community Supported Agriculture Program.

Make Memories at Special Events

Along with the regular public programs, Hidden Villa organizes events that are perfect reasons to spend the weekend with loved ones there. In the spring, visitors of all ages get to watch expert Animal Husbandry Manager Blair give sheep their annual haircut. The event starts with the herding dogs rounding up the sheep, while visitors learn about the process of using the wool to make beautiful sweaters. There are plenty of kids crafts and hands-on spinning planned throughout the day.

Later in April is another popular event that sells out: Women's Full Moon Circle. Open for women and teenage girls only, there's singing, storytelling, healing, empowerment, and love shared through a guided program that focuses on honoring nature, vitality, and joy.



Sheep Shearing Day, Women's Full Moon Circle, and Japanese Cultural Day are among the many popular events at Hidden Villa.

Hidden Villa also holds a Japanese Cultural Day on May 19 to honor the center's history and the diversity of its visitors. The afternoon will feature Undo-Kai field games, food, song, dance, flower arranging, a tea ceremony, and origami, among other activities.

The Homesteader's Faire later in May will bring backyard gardeners, farmers, fermenters, and foragers to the farm for demonstrations, conversations, music,

keynote speakers, and local food. Visitors can learn everything from wine and beer brewing to foraging for wild food and canning and preserving techniques.

“We’re excited to bring a diverse and enthusiastic group of people together to share skills and engage in conversation around sustainability, stewardship, and self-reliance,” Marc said.

Stay at the Historic Hostel or a Private, Tranquil Cabin

With so much to do at Hidden Villa, many people prefer to stay on the tranquil property. The Hidden Villa Hostel, dating back to 1937, was renovated substantially in 2001, work that inspired the American Institute of Architects to name it one of the 10 best sustainable projects in the United States.

Open from September through May, the hostel can sleep 39 guests, and it is often rented out for yoga and meditation retreats, family gatherings, and celebrations.

Marc said guests often come from Silicon Valley companies or communities in the Bay Area, as well as international guests who help keep alive the diversity that was so important to the Duvenecks.



The Hidden Villa Hostel is a great accommodation for those who want to interact with other visitors.

For couples or those seeking solitude, another accommodation on the property is Josephine’s Retreat, a cozy, one-room cabin with a redwood deck, electric heater, running water, and a kitchenette. Just as Josephine Duveneck used the cabin for reflection and inspiration, so do modern-day couples looking to get away from the hustle-and-bustle of city life.

Finally, Hidden Villa offers two larger facilities to rent for special events. The Duveneck House and Dana Center both offer the rustic charm and beautiful views that make the property so peaceful.

Hidden Villa: Find Companionship While Meeting Others

The staff relies heavily on volunteers to help with tasks at Hidden Villa, including farm upkeep and educational programming. Those who come to the facility do so with an open mind and a willingness to learn, Marc told us.

“We approach everything we do as a learning opportunity,” he said. “With a farm full of animals and produce and wilderness areas teeming with a diversity of flora and fauna, those ‘teachable moments’ are everywhere.”

Couples can create lasting memories together by spending an hour or two — or more — at Hidden Villa, while young families can spend quality time together more easily in a natural environment. It’s the simple act of connection — with each other and with nature — that makes Hidden Villa such a unique place.

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