

city guide

ALL ABOUT



W

hen I moved here 20 years ago, people were fond of saying, "You'll love Sacramento; it's so centrally located." What this implied, of course, is that the best thing about the city was its proximity to other places—places that were cooler, hipper, a lot more fun. So for months, I dutifully left town on the weekends: to the coast, to the mountains, to the wine country, all admittedly close by. It wasn't until I crossed the country on Amtrak that I began to appreciate the town I called home. Los Angeles, Denver, Chicago, Seattle—I stopped in all of them, with lots of

SACRAMENTO

dusty towns in between. And what I realized is that Sacramento, far from being someplace to leave, has a unique charm all its own. It has a downtown where people actually live; camellias that bloom at Christmastime; summer weather that allows us patio seating, outdoor concerts and plenty of farmers' markets. It also is the state capital and has two universities that attract some of the country's best and brightest. It has the rivers—the Sacramento and the American—which offer us pleasure during the summer months with hours of fishing, boating, dipping; and plenty of drama as winter rains push the water near the tops of levees and whole neighborhoods wait breathlessly for the next news report. In the two decades I've been here, I've grown nostalgically affectionate toward this old river town, this state capital, this city of camellias. I've also learned that with all its pleasures and secrets, it is an impossible task we take on in this issue, telling All About Sacramento. But we hopefully have uncovered something new, something dear, something compelling—and you can bet the suggestion that it is "centrally located" won't be included.

By *Thea
Marie Rood*

TOP 10 WAYS TO SPEND THE DAY

1. CRUISE THE FARMERS' MARKETS Stalls of freshly picked, locally grown strawberries, corn, tomatoes and peaches help create one of Sacramento's best outdoor events: the farmers' market.

At least three markets are open year-round: the Public Market, located on the waterfront in Old Sacramento, which features produce, flowers, meats, breads, desserts and wines; Denio's Roseville Farmers Market, on Vineyard Road, offering fruits, vegetables and juices; and the Davis Farmers Market, at Fourth and C streets in Central Park, that sells produce, plants, honey, seafood, bakery goods, cheeses and candy. Most other farmers' markets are seasonal, running May through August or September.

Probably the biggest is the Thursday Night Market, held through Aug. 13 on K Street Mall. In addition to blocks of fresh fruits and vegetables, the street fair also features outdoor music, grilled food and various street entertainers, and many stores and restaurants on the mall are open. Similar markets are cropping up in outlying areas of Sacramento, including the Tuesday Night Downtown Market in Roseville, and the Friday Night Market in Folsom.

2. INDULGE IN A GREAT CUP OF COFFEE Let Seattle claim they started the revolution in coffee. We know differently, for in fact Sacramento had some of the earliest and hippest coffeehouses around. The first to roast beans on site was Coffee Works Inc. on Folsom Boulevard in East Sacramento, followed quickly by other locally owned businesses. Java City, with its original location at the very trendy corner of 18th and Capitol, is the largest on-site roaster in Sacramento. La Bou also is a Sacramento-based corporation, now with franchise shops throughout the area.

Many unique coffeehouses are located in Sacramento's midtown and downtown. Favorites include a converted gas station (Capitol Garage

3. GO TO THE THEATER I'm not talking about multi-domed cineplexes here, showing 14 movies in ear-

\$40,836 Median Household Income

shattering surround sound. I'm talking live drama, where you can see the actor sweat, where you can mingle in a dusky lobby at intermission discussing character motivation, where you can be moved to tears or laughter by real people speaking wonderfully written language. This type of theater abounds in Sacramento.

That said, don't visit this city—or



TOM MYERS

Coffee Co. at 14th and L) and a restored firehouse with a dalmatian over the door (New Helvetia Roasters and Bakers at K and 19th), as well as Espresso Metro (at 11th and K) and Weatherstone Coffee and Trading Co. (at H and 21st). The revolution has also spread outward, and you can now get a great cup of French roast just about anywhere, including Coffee Republic in Folsom, Capital Crimes and Coffee in Davis, Boulevard Coffee Roasting Co. in Carmichael, Peet's Coffee and Tea on Fair Oaks Boulevard and William Glen at Fulton and Marconi. Take that, Seattle.

worse yet, live here for some time—without catching a performance at the B Street Theatre, located at 27th and B. Owned and operated by Buck and Timothy Busfield (of *thirtysomething* fame), it is an intimate 150-seat theater that presents new works, written by some of the country's hottest playwrights.

The Sacramento Theatre Company produces classics and new plays at 1419 H St. from September through May. STC makes way, in the summer months, for one of Sacramento's oldest theater traditions—now in its 48th year—Music

who are we?

"We hear it over and over again," says Sam Burns, president of the Sacramento Convention and Visitors Bureau, "it's the people that make Sacramento." Apparently, we are pretty impressive, since approximately 4.5 million visitors come to the Capital City each year. But specifically, who are we?

gender / age stats

COUNTY	POPULATION TOTALS	SEX / AGE BREAKDOWN			
		Male	Median Age	Females	Median Age
Sacramento	1,041,219	509,619	31	531,600	32.8
Yolo	141,092	69,939	28.3	71,153	29.5
Placer	172,796	85,578	34.5	87,218	35.7
El Dorado	125,995	63,018	35	62,977	35.6

SOURCE: SACRAMENTO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS REGIONAL DATA CENTER

Circus, an outdoor tent theater. Other summer-only events include Shakespeare in the Park, performed at an outdoor pavilion in Land Park, and Shakespeare Lite, held on Fridays at lunchtime at Seventh and K.

Interesting local theater also can be seen at the Chautauqua Playhouse in Carmichael; the Department of Dramatic Art at University of California, Davis; the California State University, Sacramento Theatre Arts Department; and the Sacramento City College Actors' Theatre.

4. TAKE IN THE ARTS SCENE

Visual arts in Sacramento are booming, with galleries exhibiting the finest

of local talent—both newly emerging and nationally recognized. A good way to get started is to attend Second Saturday, held the second Saturday of each month, when the city's art galleries have simultaneous opening receptions. (Call 264-5558 for details.) Some interesting spots to visit anytime: the Artists' Cooperative of Davis, the New Artworks Fine Art Gallery in Fair Oaks, the Artists' Collaborative Gallery in Old Sacramento, the Del Paso Arts District in North Sacramento, and the Fire & Rain Gallery at 24th and J and in Folsom.

As for performing arts, the Sacramento Ballet is a real pleasure, both in its interpretations of classics and its newer, more modern works. The Sacramento Opera Association has now produced lovely and unique performances locally for 18 years, including *Aida*, *Carmen*, *Madama Butterfly*, and *The Midnight Angel*. The Sacramento Philharmonic Orchestra has recently completed its second season, featuring soloists such as pianist Andre Watts, soprano

Christine Brewer and violinist L. Evin Csury. The Folsom Lake Community Concert Association presents a five-concert series—for a total price of \$50—and will begin the 1998-99 season in the fall with an 18-piece orchestra performing a tribute to Gershwin. The Sacramento Light Opera, when not producing Music Circus in the summer, presents a Broadway series, bringing events such as *Riverdance* to the Community Center Theater.

5. JAZZ IT UP The Jazz Jubilee, which focuses on the first 50 years of jazz—from the origins of Dixieland in New Orleans to the big band era—is the largest musical event held in the city and draws international and local

bands, as well as thousands of tourists. Held Memorial Day weekend, the event is now in its 25th year. Originally held in the streets and restaurants of Old Sacramento, it has now branched out to several locations around the city, including the Convention Center and K Street Mall, as well as Cal Expo and several hotels.

6. DO THE FAIR THING Before we became parents, my husband and I often went to the California State Fair in the evening. Holding hands in the cool August night air, we'd watch people screaming by on nerve-shattering rides, listen to the carnies bark for games you can never win, drink a beer under the fireworks display. Now, we're more likely to go in daylight hours, so our daughter can ride the painted carousel, peek at the newborn piglets and eat popcorn while jugglers pass fiery batons back and forth between unicycles.

This year's state fair will mark the 145th anniversary of the event, and the 30th anniversary at the Cal Expo

site. It runs Aug. 21–Sept. 7. Call 263-FAIR for more information.

7. EXPLORE THE PAST IN OLD SACRAMENTO

It helps to take a young child or an out-of-town visitor to Old Sac, the restored and renovated original downtown, primarily because longtime residents often forget the charm of this 1800s blast-from-the-past. My toddler had a ball, for example, waving at carriage drivers, clomping her feet on the wooden sidewalks, running up and down on the decks of the *Delta King* riverboat hotel. There are also museums to visit, trains and boats to ride, and Saturday children's matinees. There is a river taxi, a gourmet food market, valet parking. Grab a kid or a tourist and check it out again.

8. MESS ABOUT IN MIDTOWN

Park your car at, say, 17th and J, near Hamburger Mary's (a cool restaurant) and The Beat (a cool music store), and spend the afternoon walking through a wide and fascinating range of shops and cafes. Some places not to miss: The Bread Store (which bakes a cinnamon-raisin loaf that sells out by mid-morning); the Tree of Life (a new-age shop that sells tarot cards and herbal money candles); Susan's Mixed Bag (with cards, kitchenware, bath oils and gifts); and Crossings (a clothing boutique). Other fun spots include The Gifted Gardener, Lofings Lighting Inc. and Flower Concepts, all at 22nd and J. Lastly, don't miss How Tacky, which sells the silliest and most obnoxious items you can think of, and Cinemania, which sports a large sign announcing, "We Rent Weird Videos Here."

As for restaurants, you have too many choices: from Biba's and Cafe Bernardo on Capitol Avenue, to Paragary's and TwentyEight on N Street, to Harlow's and Tapa the World on J Street. Especially if you have kids along, try Original Pete's Restaurant or The Old Spaghetti Factory, both near 20th and J. Tres Hermanas, a Mexican restaurant at 24th and K, has great tostadas and a shady patio that encourages diners to while away the af-



RUDY MEYERS



5.4% Sacramento's Unemployment Rate (Civilian)

739,900

Labor Force for Sacramento, Placer and El Dorado Counties (Civilian)

ternoon. After lunch—or after the theater at night—there is Rick's Dessert Diner at 23rd and K, a 1950s replica that serves a mean Key lime pie.

9. GO DOWNTOWN As the capital, Sacramento has always had an intense downtown. Walk the streets during the daytime, and you see business-suited men and women with cell phones plastered to their ears, rushing to power lunches and legislative deals.

In general, don't miss the following activities: a tour of the Capitol, where you can sometimes see a famous face walking the hallways or peer down on the chaos we call democracy. Capitol Park, which surrounds the building, is also lovely, with a variety of native trees, friendly squirrels and the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial. A block over, you can enter the K Street Mall, which is the site of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, built in 1889; the Sacramento Community Center and newly-built Convention Center; the Crest Theater (an original movie palace that offers both film and live presentations); and the Downtown Plaza shopping area.

Other must-sees downtown are the Crocker Art Museum at Third and O, the beautiful Sacramento Public Library at Eighth and I and the Governor's Mansion at 15th and H. A white wedding-cake Victorian, the Governor's Mansion housed 13 governors—until the Reagans, who refused to live in what they called a "firetrap." Highlights of the tour include a piano in the front parlor played by John F. Kennedy when he visited during his presidency; the spare—and characteristically spartan—bedroom Jerry Brown stayed in during breaks from school; and—if you have a good guide—the story of Earl Warren's habit of crossing H Street in a white terrycloth robe to swim in what was then the Mansion Inn's swimming pool, waving at passersby as he walked.

In terms of nightlife, there are ballet performances, live theater, special events, films and, of course, restaurants, including famous chains and some lo-

cally owned successes, such as A Shot of Class at 1020 11th St.; Chanterelle at 1300 H St.; and River City Brewing Company at Fourth and K.

10. MEET THE NEIGHBORS The town of Davis is a fun day trip, just west of Sacramento on Interstate 80. Home to the University of California, which was originally an agricultural school, Davis has incorporated a love of the environment into its culture. Bicycles are the preferred mode of transportation (with nearly 30,000 registered bikes, it is considered the Bicycle Capital of the World), solar energy housing is available and food co-ops and farmers' markets abound. Downtown you also can find an eclectic collection of boutiques, coffee-houses and restaurants. (Best bets



fast or lunch, our favorite is the Village Cafe on California Avenue, but for pure romance, there is no beating the Slocum House just down the street: a lovely place at the top of winding outdoor stairs, it features patio dining—with live music—throughout the warm months and gorgeous food all year long. Special events in town include Fiesta Days held in May: pony rides, classic cars, food and a petting zoo for kids. All that aside, how can you not love a town that lets chickens and roosters run wild to congregate on every corner?



DAVE BROOKS

include La Esperanza; Konditorei Cafe and Bakery; and Cafe California.)

Another great spot is Folsom, originally a gold-mining town just east of Sacramento, which now has enough bike trails to please even a Davis resident. Cyclists can start at Folsom Lake and ride the American River Parkway all the way into downtown Sacramento. Before hitting the trail, however, be sure to check out Folsom's Historic Sutter Street, an area that houses antique stores, gift shops and homey restaurants in buildings from the late 1800s. For nourishment, good choices are Sutter Street Grill, Lanza's Italian Restaurant and Yager's Tap House and Family Grille. Or cross the river to the Cliff House and overlook Lake Natoma while you dine.

A third hangout is Old Fair Oaks, a tucked-away secret near Sunrise and Fair Oaks boulevards. There are antique stores, an outdoor theater pavilion, an old-fashioned hardware store, a popular kids' playground and some great places to eat. For a casual break-

173,100 Number of Sacramentans employed in the service industry (including hotels, health services, engineering and entertainment)

169,200 Number of Sacramentans employed in government (including federal, state and local government, as well as state education)

112,000 Number of Sacramentans employed in retail (including restaurants, food stores, automotive dealers and general merchandise)

45,200 Number of Sacramentans employed in manufacturing jobs (including industrial machinery, lumber and wood products, electronic equipment and computers)

SOURCE: EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

BRING THE KIDS!

Have you slid out of a shoe lately? You can at **Fairytale Town**, a major attraction in William Land Park, across the street from the **Sacramento Zoo**. Built in the '50s, it features a collection of nursery rhyme slides (including one from "There Was an Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe"), as well as Cinderella coaches, pirate ships and live animals. Watch for special events throughout the year at the zoo, such as ice cream socials, live outdoor concerts and special exhibits (the zoo is currently featuring a pair of white tigers and a prehistoric zoo). Also located in Land Park is **Fun-**

derland, an amusement park with pony rides, a miniature train and other attractions for the age 2-12 set.

The **Folsom Zoo** features animals native to California (such as mountain lions, wolves and bears), most of them brought to the zoo because of injuries or illness and nursed back to health. The zoo offers a variety of special events, including storytimes and holiday parties for the animals.

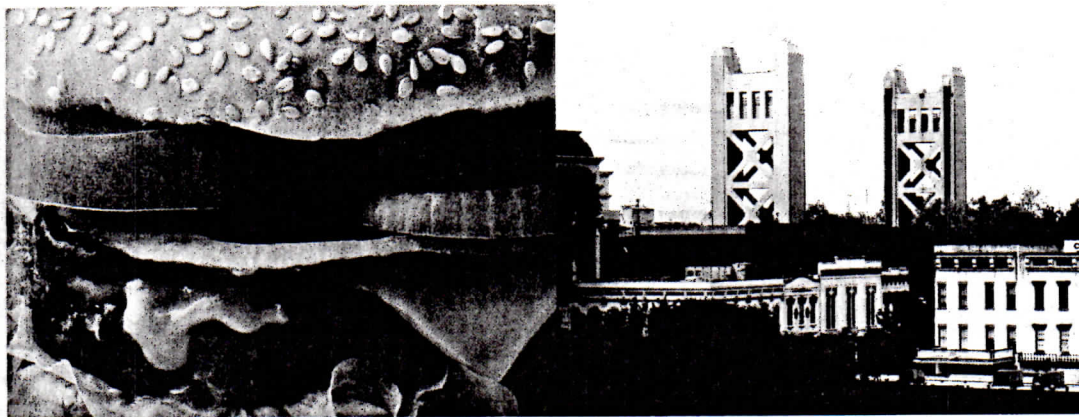
Other favorite kid attractions include the **California State Railroad Museum** in Old Sac. Also located there is the **Old Sacramento Schoolhouse**, where kids can sit in antique desks and write on chalkboard slates; **Discovery Museum**, with hands-on science and technology exhibits; and the

Eagle Theatre, which presents children's matinees on Saturdays.

Other children's theaters include the **Fantasy Theatre for Children**, a touring group that performs at schools, hospitals and special events, and the **Fair Oaks Theatre Festival**, which is currently showing *The Little Mermaid* on Saturdays in its outdoor pavilion. The **Sacramento Ballet** also welcomes families to its performances.

And watch for kid movies and remastered classics at the two existing movie palaces: **Tower Theatre** at 2508 Land Park Dr., and the **Crest Theatre** at 1013 K St. The **Starlight Movies**, films shown outdoors in Old Sacramento on Thursday evenings throughout the summer, are fun too, particularly for older kids and teenagers (call 264-7031).

There's plenty of other outdoor fun, from horseback rides along **Lake Natoma** (call Shadow Glen Riding Stables in Fair Oaks at 989-1826) to boat rentals at the **CSUS Aquatic Center**. At the **Nimbus Fish Hatchery**, kids can feed baby fish and learn about the life cycle of salmon (especially spectacular during spawning season, October to December). ■



DID YOU KNOW...?

☛ The Sacramento opera season must end by the first week in March because of the pollen count. Sources tell us that natives do all right, but the imported singers—say, from New York—are often knocked out with allergies and can't perform.

☛ The population of Sacramento grew by 62 percent in 1950, and by 81 percent in 1960, the biggest increases the region has seen since its inception. (Sacramento's population in 1850, by the way, was 6,820.)

☛ Sacramento's first suburban shopping center, **Town and Country Village**, was established at the corner of **Fulton** and **Marconi** avenues in 1945, shortly after **World War II** ended.

☛ **Mother Ginger's** skirt in **Sacramento Ballet's** *The Nutcracker* weighs 70 pounds. Also, toe shoes cost \$50 to \$100 a pair, and some dancers go through a pair every performance.

☛ Classes began in 1947 for the newly formed **Sacramento State College** (CSUS today), but the new cam-

pus didn't open until February 1953. Until then, classes were held in various spots around town, such as a room above **Shakey's Pizza Parlor** on **J Street**.

☛ Speaking of **Shakey's**, this eventually national chain got its start in Sacramento and the **J Street** restaurant was the original location. Similarly, **Tower** (music, books, videos) began here, at the corner of **Broadway** and **Land Park Drive**.

☛ Sacramento was destroyed by floods four times between 1850 and 1853. Citizens voted to pay taxes to build—and later improve—a levee system, but it failed during the winters of 1860 and 1861, when the city again was flooded.

☛ The **Firehouse Courtyard** is the only performance site that has been part of every **Jazz Jubilee** since the first one in 1974.

☛ In 1852, the first agricultural fair was held at **J.L.L.F. Warren's** **New England Seed Store** at 111 **J**

Street. The event—which later evolved into the **California State Fair**—saw **Warren** introduce the **camellia**, shipped from the **East Coast**, to Sacramento. Current fair tidbits? How about: 1.5 million pounds of ice are used; 85,000

corn dogs are eaten; 1,707 wines are submitted by 357 California wineries; 5,000 people ride the 70 mph, 160-foot-tall **Skyscraper**; and 506 lost parents are reunited with their kids annually.

FAMOUS SACRAMENTO

Sacramento may not be Hollywood, but that doesn't mean we haven't seen our share of glitzy tinsel-town fame. The following is a list of recent and not-so-recent films shot on location in the Sacramento region.

RECENT

<i>Life</i> , 1998	<i>Phenomenon</i> , 1996
<i>Letters From a Killer</i> , 1997	<i>Spring Awakening</i> (CBS), 1994
<i>George Wallace</i> (HBO), 1997	<i>What's Love Got to Do with It</i> , 1993
<i>Second Civil War</i> (HBO), 1996	<i>Frankie & Johnny</i> , 1991

NOT-SO-RECENT

<i>Showboat</i> , Universal, 1935	<i>Steamboat Bill, Jr.</i> , Keaton, 1927
<i>Huckleberry Finn</i> , Paramount, 1931	<i>The Volga Boatman</i> , DeMille, 1925
<i>Tom Sawyer</i> , Paramount, 1930	<i>Tess of the U'rbervilles</i> , MGM, 1924
<i>The Michigan Kid</i> , Universal, 1928	<i>The Iron Horse</i> , Fox, 1924