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## Mother's Day Weekend Getaway

Soak up some California beauty with mom at Carmel-by-the-Sea for a weekend of picturesque views, local charm, and alfresco fun.



Photo by: Emily Nathan Written by: Sarah Latta

### Carmel-by-the-Sea

If you've never been to Carmel-by-the-Sea, California, picture a quiet English village along a rugged Pacific coastline. On the Monterey Peninsula just a two-hour drive from San Francisco, this seaside enclave is as charming as its name. Quaint, moss-covered cottages, a budding art scene, and streets lined with boutiques and restaurants make this town a relaxing escape.



Photo by: Emily Nathan Written by: Sarah Latta

## Beach Weekend

Last spring, when it was time to plan a Mother's Day meet-up with my mom, Robin, Carmel beat out all competition. We wanted to stick to the basics (shopping and eating!), but step outside our comfort zones. I set my sights on two Northern California pastimes: plain air (or open-air) painting and beach yoga. The result: a very special, customized mother-daughter vacation with plenty of room to let loose and laugh.



Photo by: Emily Nathan Written by: Sarah Latta

## Open-air Painting

For our lesson, Big Sur-bred landscape painter Cyndra Bradford, of **Galerie Plein Aire** on Dolores Street, drove us to Point Lobos, a nearby state natural reserve that inspired local watercolorist Francis McComas. During the four-hour lesson, Cyndra taught us how to mix oils, how to suss out some surprising, vibrant colors in the scenery, and how to accept that, when it comes to plein air, there's little need for perfection.

Afterward, a stroll through Cyndra's gallery gave us a newfound appreciation for artful endeavors. *\$200 per person (\$300 for two) for a four-hour lesson and supplies; 831/625-5686.*



Photo by: Emily Nathan Written by: Sarah Latta

## Beach Yoga

To my mother, downward dog means ordering the family pets to lie down, but she donned yoga attire after learning our lesson wouldn't involve pretzel-like poses. We got our outdoor "om" on with Brie Mathers, a certified yoga instructor for the **Yoga Center of Carmel** and owner of **Yoga-by-the-Sea**. On scenic Carmel Beach, Brie led us through calming bond-buidling poses liked "joined tree," funny-faced goddess squats, and tandem stretches. *\$85 per person (\$125 for two) for a 75-minute lesson; 831/277-7222.*



Photo by: Emily Nathan Written by: Sarah Latta

## Carmel Eateries

Mom and I are always up for a good meal. Even though we don't always like the same dishes, our unanimous dinner winner was **Basil Seasonal Dining** on San Carlos Street (831/626-8226), which serves inventive seasonal cuisine such as a chili-crustad ahi tuna salad. For lunch, we loved **La Bicyclette** at Dolores Street and 7th Avenue (831/622-9899) for its turn-of-the-century French ambience, duck confit crepe, and impressive wine list.



Photo by: Emily Nathan Written by: Sarah Latta

## Satisfied Sweet Tooth

To satisfy our sugar cravings, we headed to **Cottage of Sweets** on Ocean Avenue (831/624-5170), which looks straight out of Hansel and Gretel and lured us with its dangerously delicious homemade fudge and caramels.



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## Carmel Shopping

We're home decor fanatics, and **Carmel Bay Company** on Ocean Avenue (831/624-3868) is like sifting through your most stylish neighbor's yard sale: We swooned over reclaimed metal mirrors, succulent shaped candles in pots, and paintings by local artists. **The Cheese Shop Inc.**, on Carmel Plaza's lower level (800/828-9463), drew us in with its aroma; the delicious free samples like aged provolone made us linger. **Blackbird Art & Design**, in the Doud Arcade (831/624-8688), sells local art and jewelry, including delicate sea glass pieces made by Monterey Peninsula women artists.



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## Stay in Carmel

Boutique hotels and quiet inns abound, and nearly each one includes a complimentary breakfast and a fireplace, which is most welcome during cool Carmel mornings. Mom and I felt blissfully pampered at **Tradewinds Carmel** (rates start at \$250; 831/624-2776), a 28-room Asia-inspired hotel that offers kimono robes for use during your stay, organic Aveda products, and gourmet chocolate-covered strawberries at check-in.

Left: Alfresco dining on Ocean Avenue

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