

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE: TRANSFORMING A CALIFORNIA HILLSIDE INTO A MEDITERRANEAN VILLAGE BY THE SEA



Landscape architecture defines outdoor space and draws upon many disciplines, ranging from horticulture, geology and ecology to art, design and lighting. At The Resort at Pelican Hill[®], it incorporates the additional component of Palladian principles.

Pelican Hill was created in the image of Italy's most renowned architect, Andrea Palladio, who championed classic building principles in perfect harmony with the natural landscape. Successfully carrying this theme from the buildings into the environment where they were placed, achieving cohesiveness and harmony, was paramount. Applying Palladio's distinct style, the Resort's design goals focused on the simplicity of form and geometry, as well as balanced landscape architecture.

Bill Burton, of Burton Landscape Architecture Studio, the company that took on the challenge, described it as "creating a relaxed harmony within a classical structure." At Pelican Hill, this meant transforming a verdant hillside by the Pacific Ocean in Southern California into a Mediterranean village by the sea. The landscape architects brought everything together, from planting mature olive and cypress trees to creating intimate walkways and courtyards for carefully orchestrated personal and communal guest experiences.

Olive trees are the central unifying theme of the landscape. More than 750 mature olive trees, including 30 century-old trees, all chosen for their unique trunk and limb character, are planted on the 504 acres of the Resort. The evocative image recalls the manicured maturity of the countryside in Tuscany or Umbria, imbuing the Resort with a timeless sense of permanence and tradition.



Like a true Mediterranean village, Pelican Hill has fruit-bearing olive trees which can be (and has been) harvested to make rustic olive oil. Generally, Mediterranean vegetation was chosen when possible, not just to support the Palladian and Italian theme, but because Newport Beach is one of five areas in the entire world that truly replicates a Mediterranean climate.

Complementing the olive trees, other species landscaped into the Resort are 69 Canary Palms and more than 250 specimen trees, such as Italian Cypress, Italian Stone Pines, Moreton Figs, citrus, Aleppo Pines and Canary Island Pines. Some of these trees, including several types of olives, were saved from the site and replanted. The trees define the public and residential outdoor areas of the Resort and offer a framework for all the other vegetation, including low, dense shrubs, flowering bushes, vines, groundcovers and sparingly used accents. All trees and plantings, not just the olive trees, were mature when put in the ground at Pelican Hill, imparting a sense of place and continuity.

As in nature, the landscaping reflects seasonality, color variations and order, but is balanced by a sense of the random. Punctuating the refined Italian order, ensuring that the landscape does not become too uniform or repetitive, are carefully orchestrated experiences created with different flower colors, fragrances, contrasts and textures, in both the plantings and accents.

The Resort's Bungalows (photo at right) were conceived as an intimate village built on multiple terraces, carefully scaled for a sense of privacy and harmony with low walls and gentle slopes. Striking, yet subtle is the single, well-chosen flower color to articulate each terrace, while the vines will ultimately conceal the walls in a green veil. Pelican Hill's Villa enclave features dense tree plantings on graded slopes at the rear of the area for privacy and streetscapes of pine and olive trees with shaded lawn overlooks inserted to afford ocean views. Secluded behind the Villa's walled entrances are highly articulated private and personalized garden spaces with framed ocean views.



Woven into the landscaping are vital village components: courtyards, charming pathways, fountains and a "main square." Anchored with huge Moreton Fig trees, the courtyards, or auto courts, feature custom paving tiles created exclusively for the Resort and laid in intricate traditional Italian patterns. The main and largest court is modeled after the Piazza del Campo in Siena, Italy.

Eight stone fountains were individually designed and hand-carved by Burton Studio artisans. Conceived as the main square, the Coliseum Pool is the Resort's heart, hub, and an alluring pleasure forum where guests gather daily to meet, converse, people watch, relax and be pampered.

Interesting Landscape Architecture Facts & Figures:

- There are more than 1,100 trees, all mature specimens, on the Resort grounds. They include more than 750 olive trees (30 of which are 100 years old), 69 Canary Palms and more than 250 other specimen trees such as Italian Cypress, Italian Stone Pines, Moreton Figs and Aleppo Pines. Some of the trees, including several varieties of olives, were saved from the site and replanted.
- Over 200,000 shrubs and vines were planted.
- Among the dozens of flowering plants and vines planted at the Resort are: Red Carpet Rose, White Rose, Bird of Paradise, 'Lipstick' Daylily, 'Lighting Bolt' Daylily, 'Cup of Gold' Daylily, Bougainvillea 'La Jolla,' Bougainvillea 'Jamaica White,' Bougainvillea 'Barbara Karst,' Bougainvillea 'James Walker,' 'Big Red' Kangaroo Paw, 'Yuletide' Camelia, 'Nuccio's Gem' Camelia, 'Spellbound' Camelia, 'Hana Jiman' Camelia, 'Shishi Gashira' Camelia, 'White Doves' Camelia, Kaffir Lily, Yellow Kaffir Lily, Fortnight Lily, Cup-of-Gold Vine, Blood-Red Trumpet Vine, Pink Powder Puff, Violet Trumpet Vine, White Chinese Wisteria, Star Jasmine, Orange Jessamine, Carolina Jessamine.
- Walls include 73,000 square feet of limestone, especially chosen and quarried for the Resort.
- Three of the four 40-foot-tall Moreton Bay Fig trees were originally planted nearly two decades ago as 48-inch specimen trees on Irvine Company property. Chosen for their perfect shape, they were boxed and moved to the site.
- The Resort has five auto courts (totaling more than 80,000 square feet) paved with customized paving tiles that were created and manufactured just for Pelican Hill.
- There are eight custom-designed, hand-carved stone fountains, including one which hosts water plantings and fish, and another that is a traditional koi fountain.
- Pelican Hill Golf Club's fountain (photo at right), an unearthed Spanish wine vat from the 17th century, features a unique water circulation system developed to bathe the sides of the urn in a sheath of water, yet never splash outward.
- The Coliseum Pool holds 380,000 gallons of water and its radiant bottom, comprised of 1.1 million custom, radially set, 1.5-inch square glass tiles, took more than eight months to manufacture and install.
- It took over 6,500 man hours to complete the Resort's landscape installation. That is the equivalent of a single person working 24/7 non-stop for nearly nine months.

