

HOLIDAY GUIDE

Forever young — a remarkable doll collection that dates to the 1680s

By DENNIS TAYLOR

THE FRONT door of the historic building at 213 Forest Ave. in Pacific Grove remains locked 24/7, because the astonishing treasures inside may be seen by appointment only.

But appointments typically are easy to get. Just call, and the proprietors of The Carmel Doll Shop, Michael Canadas and David Robinson, will enthusiastically conduct a tour of one of the most remarkable specialty businesses in the world.

Although a high-end doll merchant exists in the San Francisco Bay area, and another can be found in Chicago, Canadas and Robinson say a collector must travel to Paris to find a store that truly rivals their business.

“This is a place for the adult children — it isn’t a place where you’d shop for a child,” Canadas explained. “You won’t find a Cabbage Patch Kid or an American Girl here.”

What do they have there is one of the most elite collections of vintage dolls, dollhouses, doll clothing, doll furniture, doll accessories and miniatures anywhere on the globe. Much of their inventory is for sale, and much of it is on exhibit for visitors in the area of the shop they call the Grovian Doll Museum.

A royal history

“The oldest piece is our William and Mary doll, which dates to the 1680s,” said Canadas, gesturing toward a figurine created during the reigns of two British monarchs, King William III (1689-1702) and Queen Mary II (1689-1694). The doll has bright rouge on her cheeks, ruby lips, and brown hair pulled tightly away from her forehead.

“She’s not wearing her original clothing. At some point, probably around 1740, she got a new dress,” he said.

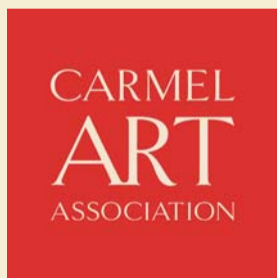
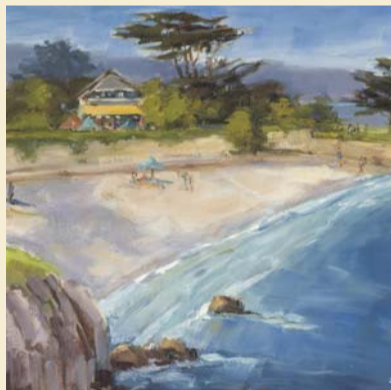
A wooden doll in a dark-brown nun’s habit, made around 1720, is “probably our most important piece,” Canadas said



PHOTO/DENNIS TAYLOR

David Robinson, left, and Michael Canadas bought the world-famous Carmel Doll Shop in 1989. They moved the business to Pacific Grove in 2009. After renovating a storefront at 213 Forest Ave., they turned it into a one-of-a-kind collection of vintage dolls and accessories.

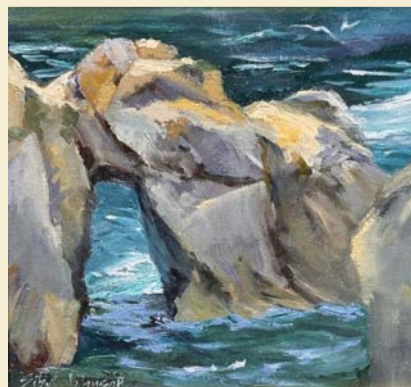
DOLLS *con't.* page 40A



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H O L I D A Y G U I D E

From the casual sipper to the pickiest drinker, Monterey County offers wine for all

By ROXANNE LANGER

WHAT DO winter movie-binge nights with friends, holiday hostess gifts, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Eve have in common? Someone has to select the wine to serve or to give to friends — which can be a daunting task for the wine aficionado and an overwhelming one for the wine novice, so we created a holiday wine guide to offer a few suggestions.

If you're going to sit home and watch, "It's a Wonderful Life," or head out to a holiday picnic at the beach, try Tamara Franscioni's Mini Vacay Bubbly Rosé, which comes in a can. Trust me when I say that this sommelier-turned-mom/winemaker knows what she's doing. Made from pinot noir grapes, the wine is clean, fruity (think strawberries) and zesty — in short, tasty and fun. It comes in a perfect size, too. One can equals about one-and-a-half glasses of wine. I never thought I would be recommending canned wine, but this one is worthy. 2022 Mini Vacay Bubbly Rosé is \$44 for an eight-pack. Order online at the winery website, or find in local stores and at the Carmel farmers market.

Holiday Wrath

If you prefer your rosé sans bubbles, try the Joyce 2021 rosé from Arroyo Seco. More angular than fruit-forward, this wine offers refreshing minerality and strawberry fruit. Purchase for \$25 at A Taste of Monterey at 700 Cannery Row.

Looking for a white wine hostess gift? Wrath's 2020 San Saba chardonnay is perfect for your friends who prefer their chards creamy, rich and full-bodied. Lots of baking spices, butter and fruit move to a slight tropical note on the finish. Find it for \$49 at local stores, Wrath Winery's website and the Wrath tasting room (Carmel Plaza).

If your host prefers reds, Wrath has an answer for them, too. Its 2020 Pommard 4/777 pinot noir is earthy with more concentrated black fruits (cherry and berry), and goes for \$39.

If you enjoy a treasure hunt, see if you can track down a bottle of 2020 Wrath pinot noir (Tondre Grapefield) at a local store. The winery, where it was priced at \$49, is



WINE con't. page 39A

Joyce's 2021 Arroyo Seco rosé is an elegant and inexpensive choice — refreshing and not too sweet.

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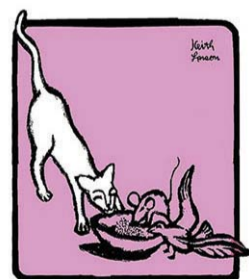
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HOLIDAY GUIDE

Living history and living room adventures for your favorite readers — young and old

By ELAINE HESSER

MANY PEOPLE still enjoy the look and feel of a good book, and if it's been written by locals or set in our own backyard, so much the better. If you're still searching for gifts, time's a-wasting, so let's get right to it.

"Raising the Blackbirds" is a novel by Edward Moncrief, who was the founding executive director of Community Housing Improvement Systems and Planning Association, known familiarly as CHISPA, back in 1980. The organization has since built more than 1,000 homes for farmworkers and their families, and he led similar housing-related organizations elsewhere in the state. He also freelanced for the Salinas Californian and the Monterey Herald. Read his full bio at edward-moncrief.com.

Although it was written and published some years back — the second edition came out in 2016 — the book remains relevant as Monterey County tries to come to terms with its homeless population, and the nation continues to deal with myriad problems presented by immigrants, legal and otherwise.

Moncrief tells the story of local immigrants through the eyes of Mexican-born Sixto Torres. In 1970, Torres arrives in the Salinas Valley just as Caesar



Edward Moncrief

Chavez is rallying farmworkers to action at Hartnell College.

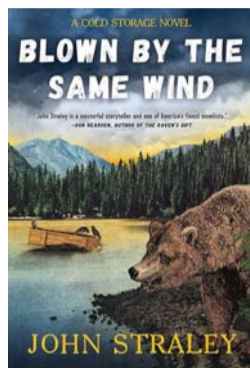
Torres joins the social and economic fight, and readers get a glimpse into a carefully researched world in a complex story that rings true, likely because of Moncrief's extensive experience.

Murder up north

Murder mystery fans might enjoy "Blown by the Same Wind," by longtime author and poet Richard Straley, who lived in Sitka, Alaska, for nearly 40 years. He worked as a private investigator and writer, becoming the state's writer laureate in 2006, then moved here with his wife, marine biologist Janice Straley, to be closer to his family. His bio is at johnstraley.com. Be sure to have a look at his blog there for a delightful description of how humans talk to dogs, inspired by a recent Del Monte Kennel Club dog show.

Straley's latest novel, "Blown by the Same Wind," is his fourth set in the fictional town of Cold Storage, Alaska. Filled with quirky characters, including a wonderful dog named Dot and some big, scary, stinky bears, it takes place in the tumultuous summer of 1968.

As the story begins, Life magazine has recently done a feature about Cold Storage, which has brought all kinds of people to visit. The town also gets an influx of college kids — with their long hair, hippie music



and pot — who come to work in the canning industry over the summer.

Among the newcomers is a monk from Kentucky who may or may not be the famous real-life Trappist theologian, author and mystic, Thomas Merton, and a few Southerners who are living out their own conspiracy theories. There's a lot of humor, some of it dark, and some graphic violence. It's also a fun read and a great ride.

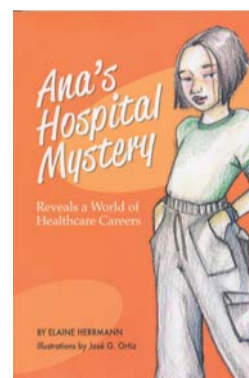
Shrinking a hospital

Elaine Herrmann's "Ana's Hospital Mystery" is a solid choice for tweens and young teens interested in medicine. Herrmann (guyvictorpub.com) has a master's degree in public health and has devoted part of her career to helping young people learn more about jobs in healthcare — including ones that aren't strictly medical, like housekeeping, working as an electrician, preparing meals or directing visitors.

As Ana visits her hospitalized grandmother over a period of several days, she overhears employees discussing unexplained thefts around the facility, including in the gift shop. She decides to investigate, and the adventure turns into something like an escapade with Scooby-Doo and the gang,



Elaine Herrmann

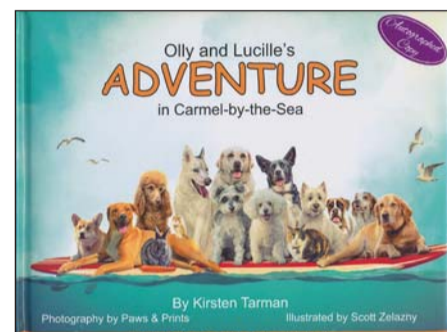


but with zero danger and more education. As Ana encounters employees and volunteers, she learns about their jobs. The hospital environment is quickly demystified and Herrmann's reassuring tone might ease the fear that comes when a loved one has an extended stay in a medical facility.

For the even younger set

Carmel author Kirsten Tarman's children's picture book, "Olly and Lucille's Adventure in Carmel-by-the-Sea," is delightfully illustrated by Scott Zelazny, with photography by Paws & Prints. The

BOOKS cont. on page 46A



Canine sleuths Olly and Lucille star in this delightfully illustrated children's book (above).

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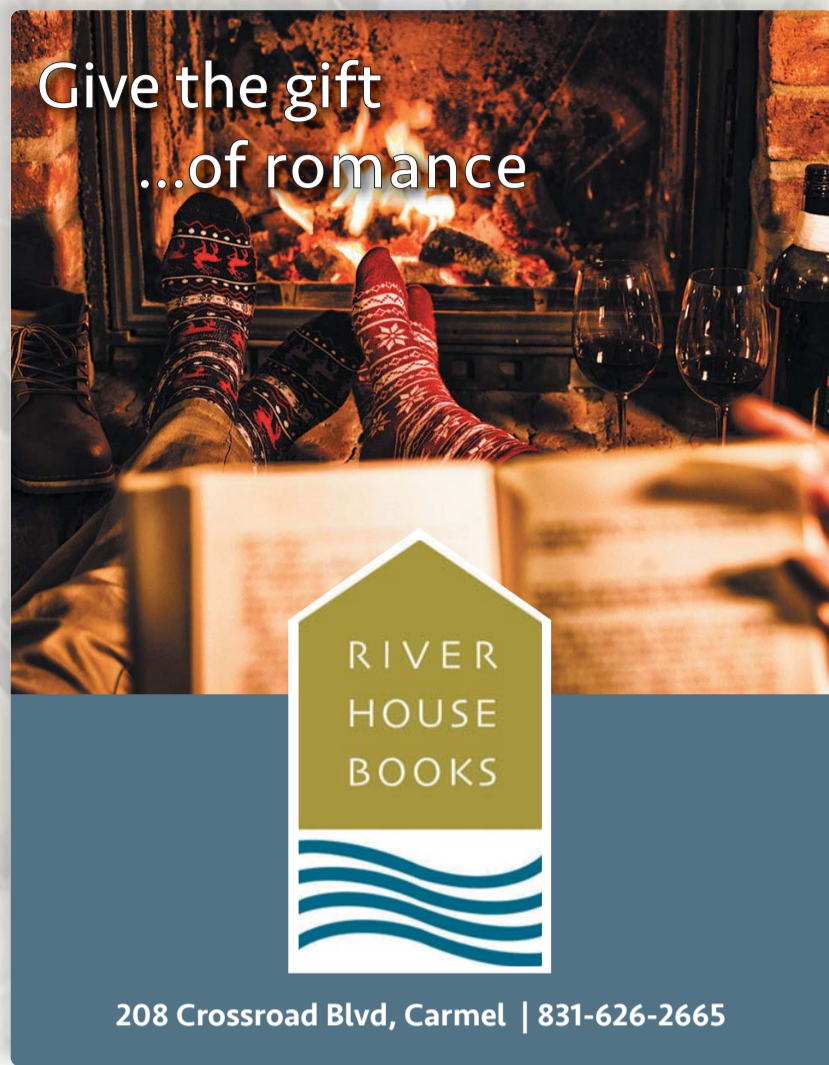
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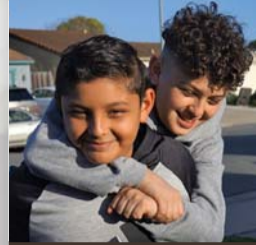
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HOLIDAY GUIDE

Santa's workshop is far away. These hometown treasures are not.

By SALLY BAHO

AS YOU do your holiday shopping, be sure to look in our own backyard for locally crafted or themed gifts; the Monterey Peninsula is teeming with artists and artisans who make presents that are as special as this place we call home.

Carmel Valley Art Association & Gallery (8 Del Fino Place) is a treasure trove of unique gifts, with the works of 35 local artists providing a wide variety of options. Jeweler John Aliotti sells an array of estate jewelry and one-of-a-kind hand-made Hopi and Navajo pieces, along with works from other Native American tribes. Artist Will Bullas' work can also be found there. Whimsical prints like "Crabernet" — a crustacean with a glass of cab — or "3 Sheeps to the Wind," which features some sheep enjoying a few too many drinks, are perfect for the wine lover in your life. Also at Carmel Valley Art Association is jeweler Pamela Forman's line of hand-beaded FirePoppy accessories.

Artisana Gallery at 612 Lighthouse

Ave. in P.G. carries the works of many area artists, from Marcia Perry's original artwork to Will Sandford's poppy pottery, along with breathtaking images by local photographer Greg Magee. All the apparel for sale there is made by local artists and manufactured right here. Plus, they have a beautiful selection of Big Sur jade.

Friendly competition

Did you know you no longer need to go into the **Monterey Bay Aquarium** to browse its gift shop? You can find it at 585 Cannery Row, and it does not require aquarium admission. Pick up a penguin stuffie or an ocean-themed book for your grandchild. The shop's best seller is Monterey Bay Aquarium Monopoly. After all, who doesn't love a little friendly competition at the holidays? The board features an array of local sea life, and instead of Chance and Community Chest, players draw cards from stacks labeled Take the Plunge and Act for the Ocean. The board

also features the only free parking for blocks.

The gift shop at the **P.G. Museum of Natural History** (165 Forest Ave.) has some fun stuff celebrating monarch butterflies and whales. Long live Sandy, the life-size gray whale sculpture that's become a mascot for the museum since its arrival as a temporary exhibit in 1981.

The holiday gift guide from the **Pebble Beach pro shop** is full of appropriately themed gifts for the duffer in your life. Offerings range from apparel to home goods — Pebble Beach collectible ornaments, such as a bagpiper figurine or a golf ball — and branded throw blankets. Get your grandchildren started on the game with golf-themed children's books or diminutive Pebble Beach attire and plush toys.

Readers' havens

There are a number of bookstores in the area that are gold mines of gifts. **Pilgrim's Way Community Bookstore and Secret Garden** on Dolores between Fifth and Sixth has a wide selection of good reads, journals, and fun gifts for the garden. **River House Books** in the Crossroads — also locally owned — has plenty of bestsellers, foreign and domestic magazines, children's books, photography, a fine selection of cookbooks, food and wine references, and more. **Olivia and Daisy**, in Carmel Valley at 13766 Center St., is a woman-owned independent book-



LOCAL con't. page 43A

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HOLIDAY GUIDE

WINE from page 34A

sold out. Buy a bottle and put it under the tree with your name on it as a gift for yourself or someone else special. A charming, well-balanced, earthy wine with black fruit and minerality, this pinot pairs well with earthy flavors such as mushrooms and rich meat sauces.

Intriguing choices

Need an impressive gift for someone with an educated palate? Try a bottle of 2022 syrah from Samuel Louis Smith, a Salinas-based winemaker who produces small batches (1,000 bottles annually) made with grapes from the Santa Lucia Highlands and the Santa Cruz Mountains. His resume includes working in France, Australia, Santa Barbara and Oregon's Willamette Valley.

Any vintner making wines with high acid and low alcohol (low in American terms — the French would say “normal”) gets my attention and should also get that of your favorite oenophile. This wine is light to medium bodied — especially when compared to other California syrahs — has ample red and black fruits and finishes with some spice. The high acid makes it great for pairing with food and the pleasing fruits and spice make it an enjoyable quaff on its own. Order on the winery's website (samuellouiswines.com) for \$47.

Need a few more wine options to im-



A six-pack of Mini Vacay brings fun to any party.

press (or just enjoy)?

Consider the 2019 Talbott Fidelity Pinot Noir which shows lovely blackberries, blueberries and plum, with fig, earthiness, spice and forest floor. Winemaker Kamee Knutson brings out the best from the Sleepy Hollow vineyard and captures it all in this wine. At \$100, it's a bit of an in-

SIPS con't. page 45A



Samuel Louis Smith, head winemaker for Morgan, also has his own small-production label.

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MC GIVES!

HOLIDAY GUIDE

DOLLS from page 33A

of "Sister Marie," who has been passed down through descendants of James II (King of England, 1633-1701).

"It's amazing to me that these things once were toys," Robinson marveled. "The quality is amazing."

Smiling Bye-lo Baby

Among their rarest pieces is a Smiling Bye-lo Baby, a doll made in 1923 and popularized by the 1931 song, I Found a Million Dollar Baby (in a Five and Ten Cent Store).

"When that song was written, they made millions of Bye-lo dolls, but only a handful of Smiling Bye-Los," Canadas explained. "I've only seen two in my life, and we have one of them."

Old doesn't necessarily mean valuable, noted Robinson, who breaks the heart of many a caller who suspects that their grandmother's favorite doll might be priceless.

"The value of a Jackie Kennedy doll, for example, is mostly sentimental," he

'Old doesn't necessarily mean valuable'

said of a figurine of the former first lady made in the 1960s. "The only way that doll would have real dollar value is if the owner had left it in the box with the pink tissue paper in place."

'Let's go crazy!'

Canadas, who grew up in Carmel and Carmel Valley, traced his fascination with vintage dolls to his grandmother, a Pacific Grove resident.

ANTIQUES cont. on page 42A



Left to right are the American bisque doll from 1923 known as a Bye-lo Baby, an 1860s-era doll from England made from poured wax, and a French doll, circa 1900, in African costume

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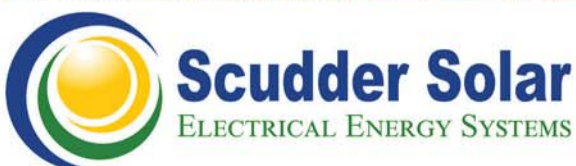
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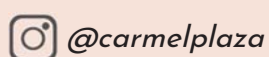
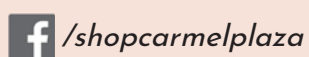
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HOLIDAY GUIDE

ANTIQUE from page 40A

“When I was small, she’d grab me by the hand and say, ‘Let’s go crazy!’ and take me shopping through those wonderful antique shops that were around in the 1960s,” he reminisced. “She had a love for old dolls, and passed that on.”

Antiques to vintage

At 20, Canadas bought an antique doll in need of restoration and took it to the original Carmel Doll Shop (then in Carmel-by-the-Sea) for repair.

“I didn’t really know anything, but I knew they weren’t doing the repair properly,” he said. “But as I watched, I became friendly with the owner, who left town two or three years later because of some kind of family emergency.”

Canadas and Robinson, who co-owned two antiques businesses — one on Light-house Avenue in Monterey, one in the San Francisco Bay area — bought the Carmel

Doll Shop in 1989.

“We were young, we had energy, and nobody said, ‘No, you can’t do this,’ so we just did it,” Canadas said.

Robinson, a graduate of Monterey High and Monterey Peninsula College, had no interest in dolls, but recognized a business opportunity.

“The passion for dolls is Michael’s contribution,” he said. “But I’m handy, and I can do restoration. I was used to finishing and doing repairs on the vintage furniture at our antiques shops, and transferred those skills to dolls.”

They soon sold their other two businesses and focused on the dolls while moonlighting as restaurant workers to make ends meet.

“One year, Michael flew to Washington, D.C., to do a specialized doll show and grossed twice as much money over four days than he would’ve earned in the restaurant industry in a year,” Robinson said. “When he came home, he quit the

restaurant job and said, ‘This is what I’ll be doing.’ A year later, I quit mine.”

Influential friends

As participants in major doll shows nationwide, they built their social circle, client base, reputation and brand. They made influential friends — CEOs, politicians,

celebrities, even royalty.

“One minute, you understand that you’re dealing with a very powerful person. The next, you get to see them as a 7-year-old, a side no one else gets to see,” said Canadas.

UNIQUE cont. on page 44A



Carmel Doll Shop co-owner Michael Canadas discusses a vintage dollhouse with local collector and client Denise Woodward.

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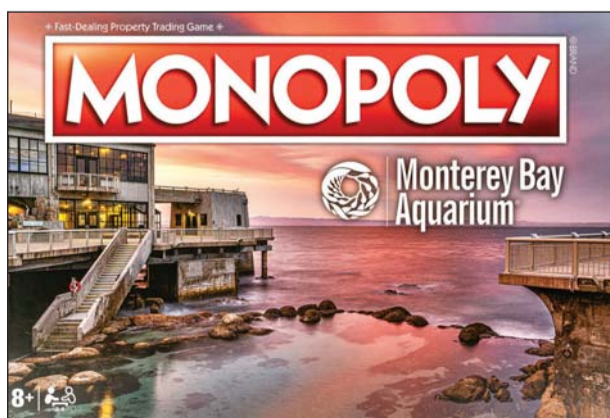




H O L I D A Y G U I D E

LOCAL from page 38A

seller where folks take pride in bringing people together through shared reading experiences, highlighting community favorites along with their own staff picks. **Bookworks** at 667 Lighthouse Ave. in P.G. also has a great selection of good reads, with a section dedicated to local authors and interests. They carry hand- and locally made cards, so you can stick to the locally inspired theme. Be sure to grab



Local gifts abound (from top): Artisana Gallery ceramics, a poinsettia from Dirty Girl, Bookworks' local interest section, P.G. Museum monarchs and Monterey Bay Aquarium Monopoly.

a dirty chai latte — spiced tea with a shot of espresso and milk — at the café in the front before or after you've done your shopping.

Jan de Luz at Dolores and Sixth will elegantly customize linens, tote bags, towels, etc. that make great gifts. Maybe a bespoke set of robes for the newlyweds in your life? Or perhaps an organic French cotton blanket, embroidered with your new grandbaby's name? The work there is beautiful, timeless, and they turn things around quickly ... et voilà, you have the perfect, personal gift for the special people in your life.

The Green Directive (77 Soledad Drive in Monterey) specializes in plastic-free alternatives to soaps, shampoos and conditioners, etc. They carry several locally made soaps and CBD pain relief creams. Similarly, **Eco Carmel** on San Carlos between Seventh and Eighth carries eco-friendly homewares and a wide assortment of 100 percent organic holiday pajamas, as well as fair-trade, handcrafted wool ornaments for your tree. Another way to gift green is to shop at some lovely plant stores, like **Dirty Girl Plant Co.** at 1098 Del Monte Ave. in Monterey, which carries potted plants, pots, dirt, watering cans, and everything

you could need for the green thumb in your life. Likewise, **Planted**, in Carmel on San Carlos between Seventh and Eighth, offers plants, pots, accessories and more for the plant lover in your life. They sell houseplant themed gift baskets, and will put one together to suit your needs or

even build you a terrarium — a mini aquarium for plants — which makes the most charming gift.

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HOLIDAY GUIDE

UNIQUE from page 42A

Among their close friends is doll enthusiast Barbra Streisand, who wrote about the Carmel Doll Shop in her 2010 book, "My Passion for Design."

"I have two doll buddies, Michael Canadas and David Robinson, who own the Carmel Doll Shop," Streisand wrote. "The

three of us have gone on shopping trips everywhere from Pasadena to Paris."

Canadas and Robinson frequently drop everything, cancel all appointments, and fly away to rendezvous with collectors who have valuable dolls to sell — especially if another collector is likely to get there first.

"We travel all over the world to find these things, which can be exciting, but I

can tell you after 40 years that it's a hard job and a lot of work," Canadas said. "The only really fun thing is the shopping — the discovery of some hard-to-find item that we've never had before. That thrill is still there."

Creepy-doll themes

In 2009 they purchased and restored their current venue, Pacific Grove's historic Angwin Building (built in 1902), originally a barber shop/billiards hall/taxidermy museum. "It was filled with masculine energy," Robinson said. "We like to assume John Steinbeck probably got his haircuts and beard trims there." The Angwin later had a 25-year-run as a camera shop.

Following the 2 1/2-year restoration, Pacific Grove's Heritage Society officially designated 213 Forest Ave. as a Heritage House.

"We love it when P.G. old-timers tell us how happy they are that we preserved the building exactly as it was," Robinson said. "The truth is, there's almost nothing in here that wasn't redone."

The shop and building have since been featured on two quirky television shows, "Oddities" and "Ghost Adventures."

"Both segments had creepy-doll themes," Robinson said with a laugh. "Zak Bagans and the 'Ghost Adventures' crew

were hoping to discover dolls that carry spirits. They didn't have any luck with the dolls, but they did find three spirits in our building of the human variety."

Despite relocating to Pacific Grove, they opted to keep the Carmel Doll Shop name.

"If you're Mutual of Omaha and you relocate your headquarters to Denver, you don't change the name," Canadas reasoned. "We're long-established under that name. We have a brand."

Five-day workshops

In recent years, they've expanded their business to include the Carmel Doll Shop Boutique — on-site sewing workshops, three a year, five days each, where attendees from all over the world learn to recreate dolls and doll fashions.

Canadas and Robinson invite the public to visit their location over the holidays to view their festive Christmas window, an annual tradition for The Carmel Doll House, or tour the shop by appointment.

Images of their dolls, doll accessories, dollhouses and specialty items can be found at carmeldollshop.com. Individuals or groups who would like to arrange a tour of the shop and the Grovian Doll Museum may call (831) 643-1902 or email carmel-dollshop@gmail.com.



The French child doll in the blue hat is circa 1880, from the Jules Nicolas Steiner firm of Paris, France.

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HOLIDAY GUIDE

SIPS from page 39A

dulgence, but a worthwhile one. Find it on the winery's website or at the Carmel tasting room.

Then there's ROAR — fabulous pinot noirs made by the Francioni family (yes, Tamara of Mini Vacay is a family member), sourcing from amazing vineyards including Rosella's, Gary's, Soberanes, Sierra Mar and Pisoni. You truly can't go wrong with any of them, and whether you are gifting the wine or serving it at a holiday meal, all palates should be pleased.

The issue is more in acquiring the wines, as many are set aside or, in winery lingo, "allocated" to wine club members who sign up in advance of releases. High-end retailers locally and statewide usually have some available, though, so (just this once) jump on your computer and order away!

Bubbles

Now let's talk sparkling — bubbles make the season! The good news is that there are several high-quality local

sippers and more offerings on the horizon. The great news is that Caraccioli Cellars has put Santa Lucia Highlands and the winery on the sparkling wine world map by winning the 2023 National Trophy at The Champagne & Sparkling Wine World Championships in the UK with its 2017 Brut Rosé (\$70). A blend of estate chardonnay and pinot noir grapes from the Escolle vineyard, this bubbly has delightful strawberry flavors with yeasty brioche and steely minerality. And the absolutely best news? Some of these bottles are still available. It's perfect pairing for a movie night, a hostess gift, a holiday aperitif or, last but not least, a celebratory toast after a romantic holiday marriage proposal.



Visiting a local tasting room — like Wrath —sw makes holiday shopping more fun.



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HOLIDAY GUIDE

BOOKS from page 35A

front-cover warning — “There’s a bunch of cute pets in here” — is spot-on. The mysterious tale has several of Tarman’s family pets helping to find a missing dog named Ruby, following the clues to real-life Carmel locations and meeting several other well-known local pets, whose photos and stories are included near the end.

Tarman made the book interactive, with a map that families can take to follow the characters’ route through town, questions for discussion sprinkled throughout the story, and activity pages designed to spark age-appropriate conversations. Nonprofit organizations benefiting pets and their people are also highlighted, and they receive a portion of the proceeds from the books.

Just for fun, a cult

“Carmel Conundrum” is a cozy murder mystery by author Stacy Wilder, one of this village’s many Texan fans. The story is set here and follows parallel plotlines involving corporate identity theft and a cult that preys on homeless people. The latter is led by a charismatic guru who calls himself Apollo, and runs a compound that could never have made it through the planning commission.



South Carolina-based investigator Liz Adams is drawn into the strange goings-on while she and her lie-detecting Labrador, Duke are visiting a Carmel client.

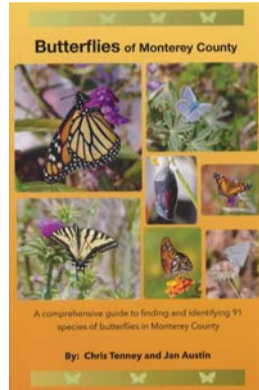
Wilder’s work is reminiscent of the Lucky Santangelo novels Jackie Collins wrote in the 1980s, with evocative descriptions of clothing, architecture, food and wine that create a world of luxury you want to inhabit, even if it is a little dangerous. It’s even filled with people you think you’d like to hang out with. Except for Apollo, that is. You don’t need The Pine Cone to tell you he’s bad news.



Stacy Wilder

Following the butterflies

“Butterflies of Monterey County,” by Chris Tenney and Jan Austin, is exactly what it claims to be — “A comprehensive guide to finding and identifying 91 species of butterflies in Monterey County.” With more than 200 glossy photo-filled pages, the volume translates scientific information into layman’s terms. It lists six families of local butterflies and then breaks them down into species. Each is listed with multiple photos, along with times of year and places to look for them. There’s even a checklist in the back to track your finds. Visit the montereybutterfliesonline.com for more information.




Kristen Tarman

We received many other submissions for this story, but there wasn’t room enough to write all of them up (or even time enough to read them all). Among those that crossed my desk were “Poetry-by-the-Sea” by R.M.S. Thornton, a short collection of verse about local events and people, and Jon Eric Am-

brosia’s “Monterey Moonrise: A true story with a mix of reality, fantasy and emotion.” For more local choices, check out your local bookseller. They’ll happily point you in the right direction.



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