

Angel's Be Alive!



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Solstice Canyon Loop

Hello again, everybody!

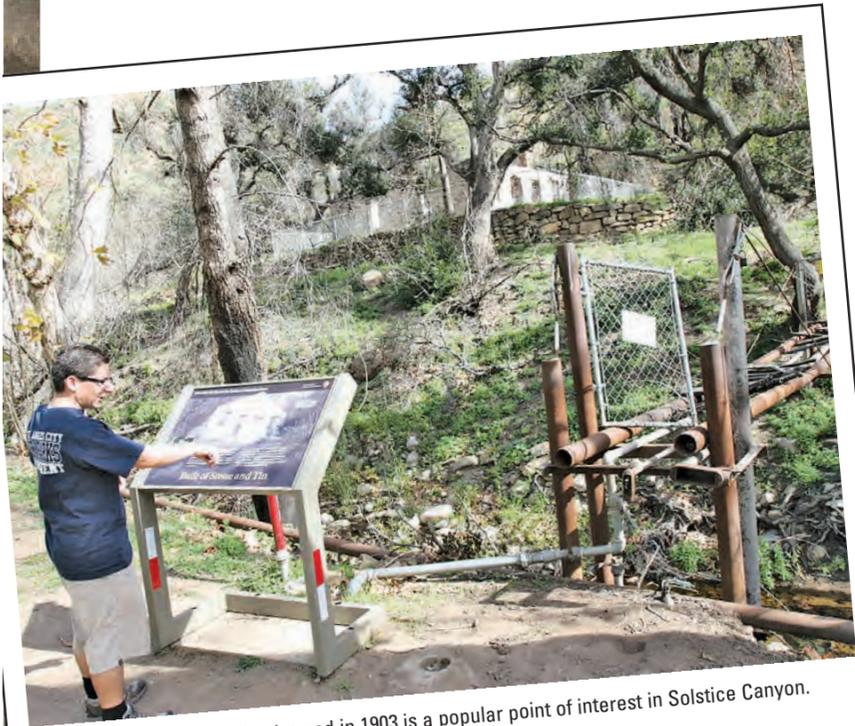
Ready for some more good hiking fun?

This month we visit Solstice Canyon Loop in Malibu. This is a fairly easy (day) hike and only about three miles round trip. On our adventure, you will see a lovely creek, a 30-foot waterfall, a hidden statue, old ruins, and ocean views. Wow, what more could you ask for!

The solitude, serenity and abundant natural resources have attracted people to Solstice Canyon for centuries. The Chumash Indians were some of the first people to inhabit the area.

In 1901, Henry Keller purchased the homestead claim on the land. He thought that Solstice Canyon had the best fishing and hunting around; then in November 1903 a fire burned through the canyon. This photo shows you the structure, which is still visible from Solstice Canyon Trail. The cottage is believed to be the oldest existing stone building in Malibu.

Another interesting place to stop and walk through is the Roberts Ranch, which was built on the property in 1952. Roberts owned a chain of grocery markets, and in 1931 Fred and Florence began to buy Solstice Canyon parcels. They hired a renowned African-American architect, Paul R. Williams, to design the house. The house was later featured in an issue of *Architectural Digest* for its stunning blend of natural features within the design, including waterfalls, creeks and trees. Today, you can see a small part of the past in the horseshoes and colorful pieces of glass glittering in the walkways at Tropical Terrace, near the building's foundations. The house burned down in October 1982.



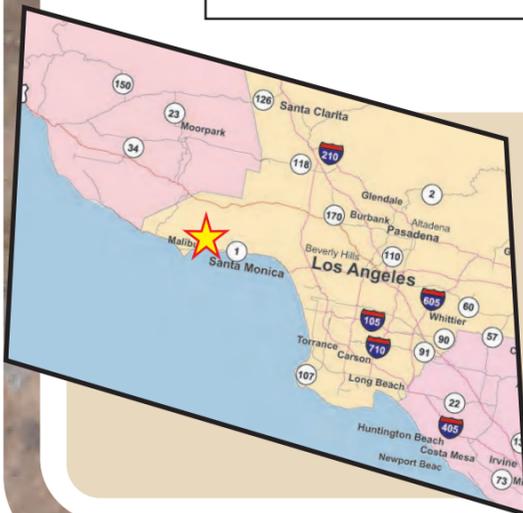
The house of Henry Keller, burned in 1903 is a popular point of interest in Solstice Canyon. It is visible from the Solstice Canyon Trail.



Another view of the Henry Keller house, burned in 1903. The cottage is believed to be the oldest existing stone building in Malibu.

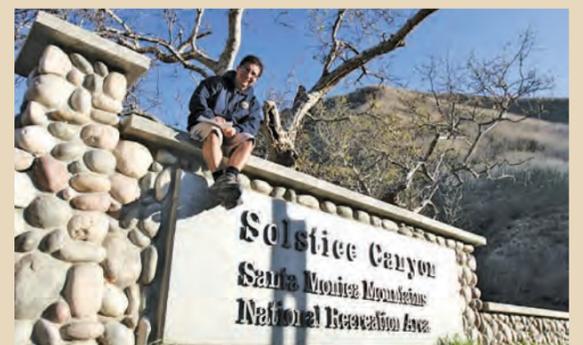


This plaque marks the location of the former Roberts Ranch, which was built in Solstice Canyon in 1952. The house burned down in 1982.



Directions:

From Highway 101, take Kanan Dume Road 12 miles to Pacific Coast Highway and turn left, south, toward Los Angeles. Take PCH approximately three miles to Corral Canyon Road and turn left. There is a 76 fuel station on that corner. If you are heading north on PCH, take a right. Drive 50 yards to a large stone wall with a huge sign. Parking over night is **not** allowed from sunset to 8 a.m. Are there parking fees? On our visit, no one asked us to pay, but bring a few dollars just in case. Keep driving up the paved road and you will pass a wooden bridge; there is a nice open area to park. There is a huge structure made of wood and stone next to the area; there are a public phone and free maps.



The Hike:

Hiking Information:

HIGHLIGHTS: Creek, 30-foot waterfall, ruins, hidden statues, ocean views

HIKING DISTANCE:
Three miles round trip

ELEVATION: 500 feet

HIKE TIME: Two hours

DIFFICULTY: Easy

GPS COORDINATES AT TRAILHEAD:

N 34 (degrees) 02.260',
W 118 (degrees) 44.848'

INFO: www.parks.ca.gov

Let's begin! From the parking area, you can see the stone wall (4) to the right – it's the beginning of the two trails you can choose from, the Solstice Canyon Trail straight ahead or the Rising Sun Trail going up the stone stairs. We chose the Rising Sun Trail because it looked a little more challenging.

The first thing I noticed were all the birds flying around; here is a picture of one little bird watching me (5). The next thing you come up to is an old windmill pump. At this point, if you look back you will get a really great shot of the ocean, and if you're lucky, on a clear day you can see Catalina Island, too (6).

Continue upward to the next sign. When you get to the top, turn around and enjoy the ocean view one more time. Continue on the path until you see the Rising Sun Trailhead sign (7). Keep going up even more. By this time you should be a little out of breath and at the highest point of the hike. From this point, it is all downhill. Looking to the left you can see a huge rock formation; keep going and the path will take you right over the rocks. It's really peaceful in this area, with mountains in front of you and ocean views behind you.

At this point, the trail will lead you to the stone stairs (8) going down to the Roberts Ranch ruins. Look for the palm trees; they are right in front of where the Roberts home used to be. Here's another view of the stone stairs going in the other direction. Be very careful when walking down these stairs – they will loop to the left and around to the right until you are right in front of the Roberts Ranch Ruins (9). Take another moment and look all around. To the left is the hidden sanctuary and garden (10). I took a moment to pray. It's amazing that this sanctuary is still standing. The statues are really old; take a closer look. The bench is where I'm sure they both enjoyed their wonderful view of their home and waterfall.

There's a hidden symbol on the rocks—can you see it? There is just so much to look at; everywhere you look you can find something interesting. The house, the waterfall and the stone structures are all around.

After you spend some time in the sanctuary and garden area, come back down cross the creek and go up the other side. On my way up I saw a small lizard, butterflies and a frog (11), all steps away from each other. Go up a little more and then cross the rocks to find another stone structure, which looks like a place to sit and maybe tie up some animals. I read that at one time there were giraffes, camels, buffalo, African deer and exotic birds roaming the canyon on the Roberts' Ranch. See if you can find this very interesting plaque (12). The plaque has a horseshoe in the center with the palm prints of Fred and Florence Roberts with their two sons, Jim and Jack. The waterfall was small, but I'm sure in the rainy season it looks amazing. If you're into treasure hunting, try and find this beautiful carving of a horse (13).

There's a corner fireplace, steps that lead up to the house and what looks like a cooking area (14). Take a good look and, yes, that's a bathtub I'm sitting on. Behind me is most of the interior of the home (15). This is a current photo of the home. Notice the steps and the big rock to the left. Now look at this original photo (16). The foundation is still very clear, and the home must have been amazing, so take your time looking and enjoy the peaceful setting.

As I walk away from the home, we are now traveling on Solstice Canyon Trail. I finally see two other people walking up to the Roberts home. So far, I have seen three people all day, so it's pretty quiet up here. Soon you will come to a "Y" intersection; you can take the left or right side of the road. Either way, they'll meet again in a few hundred feet. I took the left side of the road. Keep following the trail and you will see an old stone structure. This is the Keller Home, built in 1901 and unfortunately burned in 1903. If you stop, there is a picture of Henry in front of his home.

One of the last places you will see is the picnic area, which is actually at the beginning, but again I started from the other side of the trail. I'm sure if you start this way you will see things a little different and may see more interesting things along the way.

When you're done, you may want to stop off and get some awesome Mexican food at Corral Beach Cantina (17). When you get back to Pacific Coast Highway, just turn right to get to the restaurant; it's about a mile past Kanan Dume Road on the left-hand side.

Hiking is so much fun; I encourage everyone reading this to go out and explore.

Always be safe and **Be Alive!**

