

# Old Town San Diego

## Angel's *Be Alive!*

Angel Gomez, Club Director of Sales



Send your photos to me at [agomez@cityemployeesclub.com](mailto:agomez@cityemployeesclub.com). I would love to see them!



Angel Jr. and me in front of Old Town San Diego sign.



La Casa de Estudillo Museum.



The Cosmopolitan Hotel restaurant and bar.



Take a look inside the schoolhouse.



Angel Jr. in the Fiesta de Reyes Plaza.

### Hello again!

This month we traveled to Old Town San Diego. Some historians call this the birthplace of California. There is so much to see that you need to spend a few hours to take it all in.

Old Town San Diego is only about 90 minutes from Los Angeles. There are parks, restaurants, arts, crafts, hotels and of course lots of shopping. This place is so relaxing that everyone should take the drive down south. Let's begin.

### History:

Old Town San Diego is considered the "birthplace" of California. San Diego is the first permanent Spanish settlement in California. In 1769, Fr. Junipero Serra came to establish the very first mission in a chain of 21 missions that formed the beginning of California's colonization. In the 1820s, a small Mexican community of adobe buildings was formed, and by 1835 it had attained the status of El Pueblo de San Diego. In 1846, a U.S. Navy Lieutenant and a Marine Lieutenant raised the American Flag in the Old Town San Diego Plaza.

In 1968, the California Dept. of Parks and Recreation established Old Town State Historic Park to preserve the rich heritage that characterized San Diego during the 1821 to 1872 period. The park includes a main plaza, exhibits, museums and living history demonstrations.

### Old Town features:

*Alvarado House* is a reconstruction of an original from 1842, which was once home to the sister of the last California Governor appointed by Mexico.

*Casa de Bandini* was originally a one-story adobe home of Don A. Bandini. Built in the early 19th century, this adobe was the headquarters of Commodore Robert F. Stockton in 1846. The building was purchased in 1869 by Alfred Seeley, who added the second story and opened it as the Cosmopolitan Hotel. It now operates as the Cosmopolitan Restaurant.

*Casa de Estudillo* was built in 1825 as the home of Don Jose Antonio de Estudillo, a Spanish aristocrat. It became a sanctuary for women and children during the American occupation in 1846. For a number of years it was incorrectly identified as "Ramona's Marriage Place" from Helen Hunt Jackson's "Ramona." The adobe structure is considered to be one of Old Town's outstanding show places. La Casa de Estudillo was turned over to a caretaker in 1887, who sold its tiles, locks, doors and windows. In 1910, architect Hazel W. Waterman supervised the restoration of the house with funds provided by the Spreckels family.

*Colorado House* was originally a hotel, and now houses the Wells Fargo Museum. The building is a reconstruction of the 1860 original. The Wells Fargo Museum is a historically furnished Wells Fargo agent's office, including one of the famous 30 coaches shipped to Wells Fargo in 1867; a panoramic painting of

San Diego in 1855; and a gold watch given as reward for care of San Diego treasure on a stagecoach.

*Seeley Stable Museum:* Albert Seeley ran the San Diego-Los Angeles Stage Line, which was put out of business in 1887 after the coming of the railroad. Seeley Stables was the Yuma/San Diego stage stop in the 1850s. It has been reconstructed and now houses a collection of vintage carriages and transportation memorabilia.

*Whaley House* is the most haunted house in the United States, according to legend.

*Casa Machado y Stewart* was originally built in 1836 by Corp. José Manuel Machado. After his death, the house was occupied by his daughter, Rosa, who married John S. Stewart, a shipmate of Richard Henry Dana Jr. on the *Alert*. It has been reconstructed and features an extensive period vegetable garden.

*Robinson-Rose House:* James Robinson built this two-story structure in 1853 as his family residence and as the home of the San Diego *Herald*, the San Diego and Gila Railroad office and other private offices.

Fire destroyed the roof in 1874. The reconstructed building now serves as Old Town State Historic Park's visitor center.

Old Town San Diego is amazing. There is much to see, and it's close to us Angelenos. While in San Diego you are near amusement parks, a baseball stadium, a football stadium, and of course the beach cities, too. This is another place to bring your family to learn about our California history and it's just a short (very nice) road trip. My son really liked learning all about this area's history. Many things happened here in old town San Diego. Bring your family out and explore beautiful Old Town San Diego.

Always bring plenty of water, sunscreen and some snacks. Please send me your photos to [agomez@cityemployeesclub.com](mailto:agomez@cityemployeesclub.com)

As always, *Be Alive!*,  
Angel

The Courthouse Museum and Colorado House.

### Old Town San Diego

2415 San Diego Ave.  
San Diego, CA 92110

#### VISITOR'S CENTER HOURS:

10 a.m. - 5 p.m. daily.

**ADMISSION:** free.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Historical buildings, galleries, more than 100 shops, lots of crafts, arts, restaurants, tours

**DIRECTIONS:** Take the 5 freeway south. Stay on 5 south until Exit 19 for Old Town Avenue. Turn left into Old Town, then take the third left onto San Diego Avenue (just about 100 miles, about 90 minutes south of Los Angeles. Time will vary with driving speed and traffic.)

