

MONTEREY COUNTY

## neighborhoods

People stroll past classic cars in Oldtown's Passport to Cherry Jubilee. Oldtown Salinas is home to the National Steinbeck Center and dozens of locally owned restaurants, shops and boutiques. The neighborhood around Oldtown features some of the best examples of Victorian architecture in town, including John Steinbeck's home on Central Avenue.

### North Salinas

Salinas' northern neighborhoods are some of the newest and fastest-growing. They feature walkable communities, such as Creekbridge, that mix retail and residential uses in the same buildings. Small neighborhood parks can be found filled with families and teenagers on weekends. North Salinas also is slated for considerable growth in the next two decades.

### South Salinas

Home to Oldtown, Salinas' exquisite Victorian neighborhoods and lots of locally owned restaurants, shops and boutiques, south Salinas maintains the charm of the city's history and agricultural heritage with such landmarks as the National Steinbeck Center. It is surrounded by some of the richest farmland in the region.

### East Salinas

East Salinas, formally known as the Alisal, is known for its colorful and cultural streets and its hard-working residents. The area experienced its first population boom in the 1930s as people migrated to the Salinas Valley in search of work. Today, it remains home to many new immigrants who work in the fields and to many of the city's 2000-plus Latino-owned businesses.

### Big Sur

With its towering redwood trees and serene setting high above the Pacific, Big Sur draws visitors of every stripe, from those seeking a quiet retreat to those paying homage to author Henry Miller. Visitors can spend an upscale, relaxing weekend at the Ventana Inn or search for inner truth meditating at Esalen Institute (which opens its hot springs to the public between 1 a.m. and 3 a.m. for \$20).



PHOTO BY RICARDO DOLZ/THE SALINAS CALIFORNIAN

### Carmel

Carmel is Monterey County's destination for the rich and famous. The forested city lies on a 1-mile stretch of white sand beaches. Residents boast its European charm and urban sophistication. Pets are welcome in many of the high-end restaurants, galleries, and boutiques, and there is even a "Fountain of Woof" in Carmel Plaza where dogs congregate for fresh water.

### Carmel Valley

With all the charm of Carmel-by-the-Sea, Carmel Valley welcomes visitors with shopping, vineyards, equestrian facilities and lots of breathtaking views. You can day hike at Garland Regional Ranch with vistas of the entire valley and rugged Pacific coastline, relax on the white sandy Carmel River State Beach, or visit the protected marine sanctuary of Point Lobos.

### Castroville

Castroville, best known for the artichoke fields surrounding this community, is at the crossroads of three major highways — Highways 1, 156 and 183 — and is the second oldest community in the county. The community of about 6,700 was founded in 1863 and has been rapidly growing since 2006. Additions include a new library, plaza and community center.