



Calhoun: The NPS Institutional Archive
DSpace Repository

History of Hotel Del Monte

Hotel Del Monte Site, Grounds and Buildings

2013

California's Most Historic Resort Hotel Del Monte

Naval Postgraduate School (U.S.)

Monterey, California : Naval Postgraduate School

<https://hdl.handle.net/10945/30480>

Downloaded from NPS Archive: Calhoun



Calhoun is the Naval Postgraduate School's public access digital repository for research materials and institutional publications created by the NPS community. Calhoun is named for Professor of Mathematics Guy K. Calhoun, NPS's first appointed -- and published -- scholarly author.

Dudley Knox Library / Naval Postgraduate School
411 Dyer Road / 1 University Circle
Monterey, California USA 93943

<http://www.nps.edu/library>

☪ CALIFORNIA'S ☪
MOST HISTORIC RESORT
Hotel Del Monte



The Making of a Legend

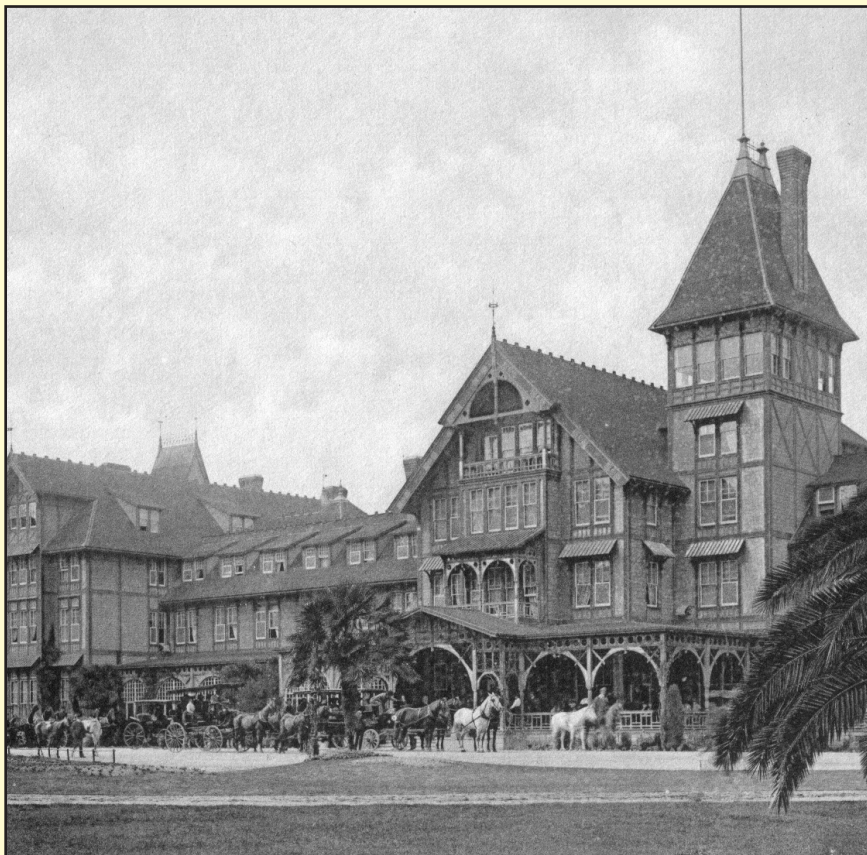
In its prime, Hotel Del Monte was a 20,000-acre resort complex with extensive botanical gardens and sports facilities. It was the forerunner of today's Pebble Beach Company and the catalyst for Monterey's modern-day tourism industry.

Del Monte offered the finest cuisine and recreational activities included golfing, tennis, swimming, polo, racing, yachting, deep sea fishing and horseback riding.

Guests included American presidents and world leaders, industrialists and business executives, famous artists and poets, film stars and other notables.

The hotel's influence on its surrounding community and the international influence of Hotel Del Monte guests forever changed the Monterey Peninsula.

This booklet provides an introduction to the Hotel Del Monte and its remarkable history. *On the cover: Artist view of Hotel Del Monte and grounds, 1926.*



The main entrance of Hotel Del Monte was the beginning and ending point for the original 17-Mile Drive.

HOTEL DEL MONTE

California's Largest
and Best Loved Resort



Railroad pioneer Charles Crocker (with cane) built the original Hotel Del Monte and shaped its world reputation.

The original Hotel Del Monte was opened in 1880 and built by railroad pioneer Charles Crocker. Despite its relative isolation in the West, Del Monte was instantly popular and the hotel had to turn down 3,000 requests for accommodations in the first six weeks of operation.

The hotel was often billed as "The Most Elegant Seaside Resort in the World" and "California's Largest and Best Loved

Resort." Del Monte landholdings included a 7,000-acre parcel section called the Hotel Del Monte Park Reservation.

The hotel's park reservation is today's world-renowned Pebble Beach resort. Charles Crocker created the original 17-Mile Drive as a local excursion from Hotel Del Monte to the park reservation with visits to historic and scenic sites in Monterey and Pacific Grove along the way.

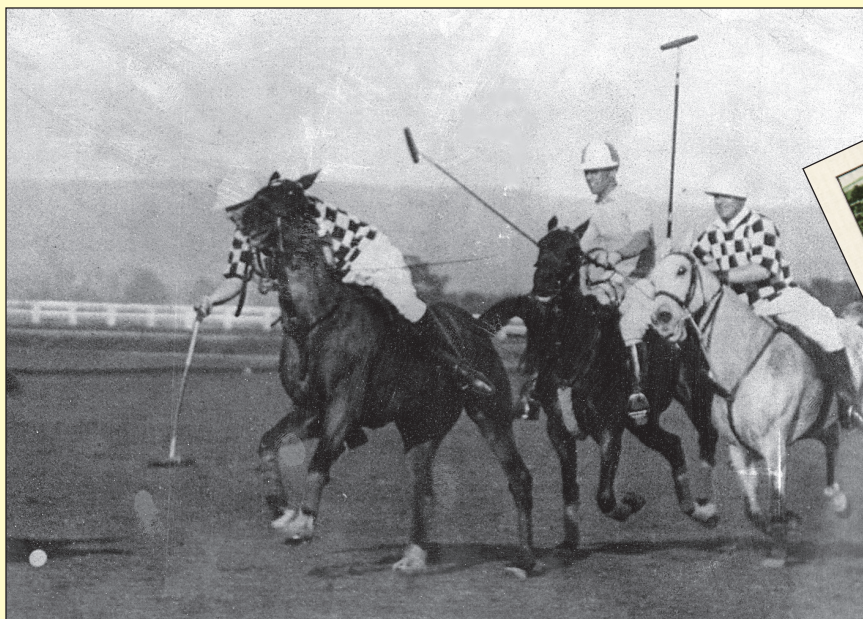
Hotel Del Monte

By 1915, Hotel Del Monte and its parent corporation, the Pacific Improvement Company, had fallen on hard economic times. The PI Company hired Samuel F. B. Morse, then 30 years old and a former All-American quarterback who led Yale University to championship seasons and national fame, to serve as a liquidator and find buyers for several railroad properties, including Del Monte.

Despite financial obstacles, Morse initiated several innovative programs to improve Del Monte – including the development of the Pebble Beach golf course. He later offered to buy Del Monte himself and with backing from San Francisco banker Herbert Fleishacker formed the Del Monte Properties Company in 1919, acquiring Hotel Del


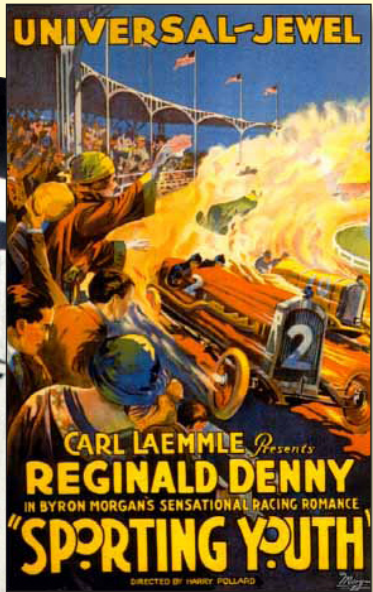
Monte, Del Monte Lodge (Pebble Beach Lodge) and the 20,000-acre resort complex. According to hotel literature, it was “the largest resort plant of its kind in the world.”

A vibrant and athletic man, Morse quickly began to develop a philosophy of Del Monte as a “sports empire.” He built more golf courses – Cypress Point and Monterey Peninsula Country Club – to go along with the auto and horse race track, polo fields, tennis courts, swimming, yachting and deep sea fishing. His success brought him widespread recognition as one of America’s leading business executives and a major profile of Morse in a 1940 issue of *Fortune* magazine noted that “Morse’s associates claim that he can

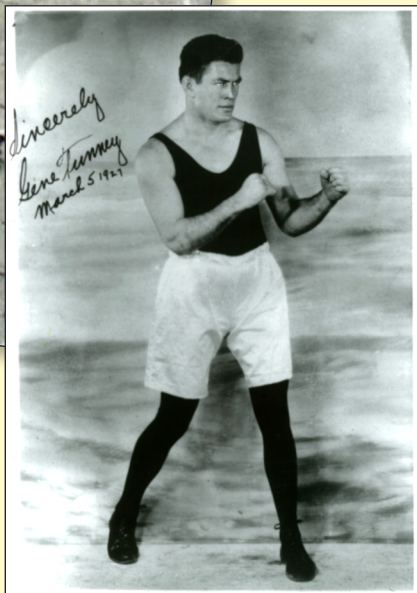


“Del
situate
insul
we l
pla
E
t

THE Sports Empire



DEL MONTE
Del Monte is a sports empire
located on the Monterey Pen-
insula in California. As far as
resorts of its kind in the world,
Del Monte is the largest facili-
ty of its kind in the world. It
embraces as it does the outdoor
sport, with a matchless beauty,
and scenery of startling beauty,
it is without a rival in what it
has to offer those who are seek-
ing happiness.
There are two hotels, "Del
Monte", and the Lodge at
Pebble Beach.
Golf 365 days a year."



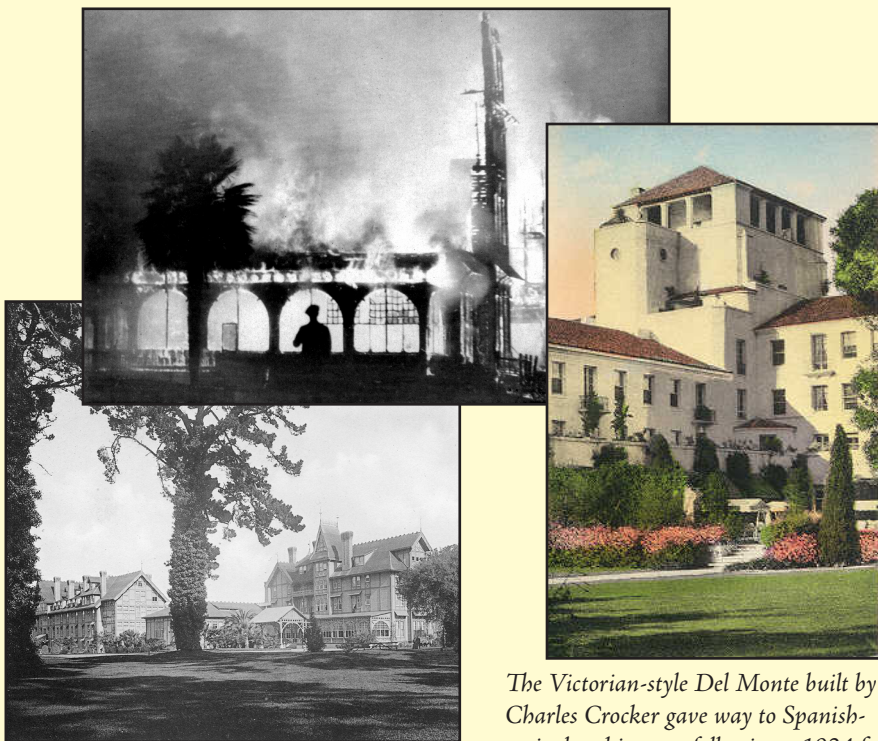
Architecture

There have been three Del Monte hotel buildings. The first two hotels were wooden Gothic structures designed by Arthur Brown, Sr., an architect of the Southern Pacific Railroad, and built by SPRR workmen.

The first hotel opened in June 1880 and was destroyed completely by fire in March 1887. The second hotel was built with the same basic plan of the original but was enlarged through the addition of two long, linear wings extending toward the beach. The hotel was reopened partially in December 1887 and began full operation of the new resort in June 1888.

A second devastating fire occurred in 1924. Firefighters dynamited the main section of the hotel to prevent the blaze from spreading to the wings. A new Spanish-style architectural design was drawn up by Lewis P. Hobart and Clarence A. Tantau, noted San Francisco architects. Built of reinforced concrete, it was constructed between 1924 and 1926.

The Victorian-era wings were renovated by adding an exterior stucco skin and a tile roof to make them architecturally compatible with the new Mediterranean design. These wings were recently renovated by the Navy and received recognition from the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.



The Victorian-style Del Monte built by Charles Crocker gave way to Spanish-revival architecture following a 1924 fire.

Notable Guests



Aviation pioneer Charles Lindbergh (center) poses for a photo with Hotel Del Monte clients and staff.

President Theodore Roosevelt visited Hotel Del Monte in May 1903. To his daughter Ethel, age 12, he wrote: "This is a beautiful hotel...with gardens and a long seventeen-mile drive beside the beach and the rocks and among the pines and cypresses. I went on horseback. My horse was a little beauty, spirited, swift, sure-footed and enduring. As is usually the case here they had a great deal of silver on the bridle and headstall, and much carving on the saddle. We had some splendid gallops." Roosevelt's companions for the ride along the 17-Mile Drive were the mayor of Monterey, the president of the University of California, and the commander of the 15th Infantry Regiment, Monterey Presidio.

In the midst of the Jazz Age and the Roaring Twenties, Hotel Del Monte captured the imagination of a nation on the move and a society undergoing rapid change. Screen legends such as Mary Pickford, Charlie Chaplin, Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Ginger Rogers, Jimmy Gleason, Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., Jean Harlow, Carole Lombard, Clark Gable, William Powell, and Marlene Dietrich were frequent guests. Other guests included Eleanor Roosevelt, Walt Disney, the Duke of Kent, aviation pioneers Amelia Earhart and Charles Lindbergh, artist Salvador Dali, cartoonist Rube Goldberg, Robert Ripley (of Ripley's Believe It or Not! fame), heiress Gloria Vanderbilt, violinists Jascha Heifetz and Yehudi Menuhin, and authors Zane Grey, Ernest Hemingway, and Fannie Hurst.

The Del Monte Legacy

Hotel Del Monte has been through many changes caused by fires, earthquakes, wars and downturns in the nation's economy. But the vision and philosophies of Charles Crocker and Sam Morse endure through the elegant architecture of today's Herrmann Hall and stately grounds that surround the once famous hotel.

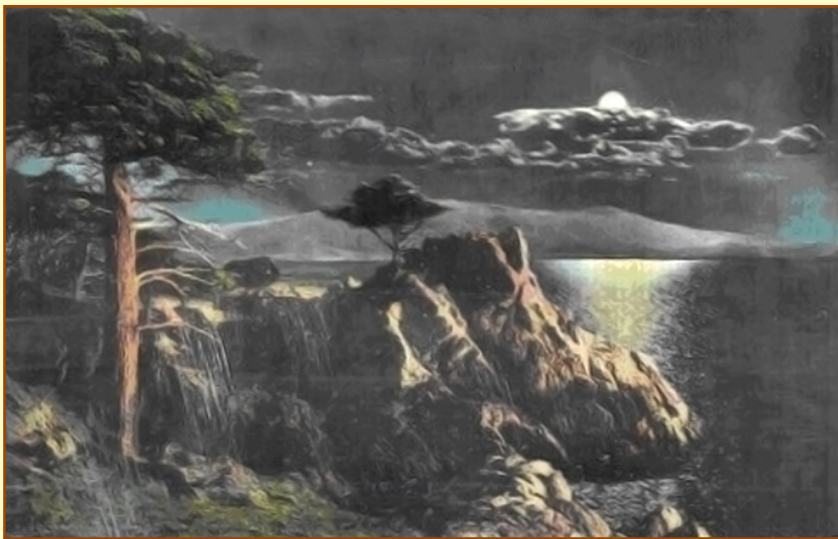
While Crocker deserves the credit for developing the original Hotel Del Monte and assembling the 20,000-acre complex, it is Morse who deserves the recognition for original thinking that transformed and reinvigorated an aging Del Monte.

Bing Crosby said, "I shall always be grateful to that eminent sportsman Sam Morse, the man whose vision, dedica-

tion and devotion to quality made this one of the showplaces of the world. Without him...it would all be Coney Island."

At Hotel Del Monte, Sam Morse created an indelible legacy of art, architecture, and environment that helped to preserve the region's dynamic history and culture even as it redefined the Monterey Peninsula.

After he sold Del Monte to the Navy, Morse concentrated his business operations at Pebble Beach. The hotel now serves as the administrative building for the Naval Postgraduate School (www.nps.edu). In 2009 NPS will celebrate its centennial, a history interwoven for more than half a century with the magic of Del Monte.



The original 17-Mile Drive was a scenic and cultural tour developed for Hotel Del Monte guests. The Lone Cypress was the midway point along that original drive.