

## Discovering Deetjen's Big Sur Inn ©

By Connie J. Schlosberg

Driving the always beautiful Pacific Coast Highway – otherwise known as Highway 1 – has been a dream of mine for as long as I can remember. My husband and I got that chance not too long ago while vacationing in California. We started from San Francisco with our destination being San Diego. Unfortunately, we encountered torrential rainstorms along the way that eventually put California in a state of emergency. The beginning of our journey showed us a magnificent coastline with towering mountains looming right near the shoreline. This drive in itself is enough to make your head spin. However, the best was yet to come.

The storm increased as the road winded along these dark mountains as they touched the turbulent ocean. Skies grew eerie and the rain intensified. The road was covered with slippery mud. The ride became treacherous since PCH is built high above the ocean right next to the mountains, leaving no room for error. The small town of Big Sur appeared in the mist alit with candles. It was early evening although it appeared otherwise. Judging from the weather, we decided it would be in our best interest to find a place to stay for the night.

The sign read "Deetjen's Big Sur Inn" and we pulled into the small driveway. By the time we got to the door, we were drenched with cold rain. Inside the entrance gave way to a romantic dining area with a warm blazing fireplace. We instantly fell in love with this place all decorated in times of yore. We walked into the next room to inquiry about

a vacancy and the status of the storm. The pleasant staff informed us the electricity was out possibly for a couple of days but rooms were available.

The inn has cottage rooms with bathrooms and fireplaces and also ones with shared baths. We took a room with a shared bath and made dinner reservations for later on. We were given a lantern and directions to our room. Outside the wind was howling but we eventually made it up the stairs to our chambers. All the rooms have unique names as opposed to numbers. Ours, the Honeymoon, is rather large and the bathroom is clean with an old-style tub. The room has a wood burning stove to keep warm and a queen-sized bed with multiple quilts. We groomed ourselves as best as we could and fought the rain and wind to get to the restaurant.

Their restaurant featured a menu that would rival any four star dining establishment. We dined on deliciously prepared pasta and decadent desserts while listening to classical music. The time spent there did not seem as though a storm was blowing fiercely outside. We sat by the fireplace while a Persian cat entertained us.

The next day, the sun peaked for a while. We were able to glance over the inn. It was even lovelier in an unassuming way in daytime. The inn's setting is very peaceful. This is not your typical quaint country inn. The history of the Deetjen's is interesting in itself. Back in the 1930's, escaping the Norwegian authorities, Helmuth Deetjen came to California and fell in love with the beauty of Big Sur. After meeting his wife Helen Haight, they bought several acres of land in Castro Canyon and built their dream home. The Deetjens would share their home with wayward travelers and the rest is history. Set among the redwoods in the Santa Lucia Mountains, Deetjen's is now on the National Register of Historic Places and is a non-profit corporation.

Sadly, our stay had to end. PCH was closed the rest of the way to San Diego so a change in plans had to be made. We vowed to return again in sunnier times. Our experience at Deetjen's is gone but the memory still lingers.

To find out more about Deetjen's visit their website at [www.deetjens.com](http://www.deetjens.com).