



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel photos

Villa Maria Del Mar Chapel is one of the featured sites on the Live Oak Tour of Del Mar.

WALK this way

Foot tour is on the cutting edge of Live Oak history

Live Oak
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SENTINEL CORRESPONDENT

The Lincoln Windmill building — the first stop on the Live Oak Walking Tour of Del Mar — is a telling example of past and present elements converging.

A windmill sits (but does not spin) at the top of a wood-shingled structure built in the shape of a Dutch cottage. From the outside, it is the quaintest of buildings — a transplant from 19th-century Holland.

Inside, a man tinkers away, but not on wooden shoes. This is a bicycle shop, complete with the newest bike models, scores of nutrition bars, vitamin water, Gatorade and a signed jersey from Lance Armstrong.

The tour — as it is meticulously related in a fold-out packet — focuses on the neighborhood's antique beauty and historic charm, but part of its enchantment lies in the way those qualities are frequently set against slices of modern life.

This is one of several walking tours of Live Oak (which encompasses the area between Seventh and 41st avenues) designed by a group of proud residents.

Two plans are completed — the Del Mar tour and a Twin Lakes tour — and one of Pleasure Point is in the works. Brochures are available at the Live Oak Family Resource Center on Capitola Road.

The project was spearheaded by Norm Poitevin, a retired nurse, who began working on it last year at the prodding of the Santa Cruz Planning and Community Development Department. He was chosen after

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“We all have a passion for Live Oak, and the history is a thing related to the business,”

DOUG SALESKY,
‘AMBASSADOR’ FOR
AMSTERDAM BICYCLES

he and several other Live Oak residents collaborated on a 40-page book about the neighborhood in 2003. The descriptions themselves were written by fellow resident Phil Reader.

“The Del Mar tour seems to be more popular,” Poitevin said of the neighborhood around East Cliff Drive near the East Lake Village shopping mall. “We’ve printed about 300 brochures for that one, compared with about 200 for Twin Lakes.”

That popularity should come as no big surprise to anyone who has taken the Del Mar walkabout.

The walk is mostly flat, and distances between each destination are short, with the exception of one five-block stretch halfway through that allows for some impromptu exploring along the coastline.

The landmarks themselves are mostly wooden buildings draped in quiet colors and possessed of modest charm — the sort of eye candy that can go unnoticed until it’s pointed out.

Speaking of candy, candy has a sizable role in the neighborhood’s history. The Lincoln Windmill was the home of Buckhart’s Candies from 1936 until 2003, when it was replaced by the current operation, Amsterdam Bicycles.