

New Best Western adds a local touch

Hotel features begonia motif, works by Capitola artist

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*Hotels & Boarding
Houses*

CAPITOLA — Everything is coming up begonias at the new Best Western on 41st Avenue in Capitola.

Capitola's newest hotel, the Best Western Capitola By-the-Sea Inn & Suites, has a local flair, from the begonia carpeting to the prints by Capitola artist Sally Bookman.

According to the Santa Cruz County Conference and Visitors Bureau, the new Best Western brings the total number of hotel rooms in Capitola to 162.

The new hotel will also increase the amount of money brought in through the hotel tax, which brought in \$286,246 last year.

Dan Aspromonte, owner of the Capitola By-the-Sea Inn & Suites, said that the inspiration for the hotel's decor came from former Capitola mayor Tony Gualtieri, who suggested that Aspromonte use the word "begonia" in the name of the hotel.

"I asked a lot of people about the name Bella Begonia for the hotel, and while locals liked it, out-of-state people asked me what begonias had to do with Capitola," said Aspromonte.

So, instead of using begonias in the name, Aspromonte decided to use begonias as an accent.

The hotel sports begonia carpeting throughout all corridors, and conference room as well. There are also begonia lights that were designed by Johnson Lights.



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

The new Best Western on 41st Avenue near Capitola Road used local themes in its design.

In addition to the begonia decor, the hotel was designed with lots of long, sweeping waves to pay homage to the nearby ocean. There is also a fountain in the lobby, which is awaiting delivery of a sea

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other sculpture.

The lobby and corridors are not the only spots in the hotel that has a Capitola flair.

Each room contains two to three prints by Capitola artist Sally Bookman. Each print shows a different scene from Capitola Village. Featured prints include "California Coast," "Red Balloon," "Esplanade," and "Rooftops."

Aspromonte is busy collecting posters from past Capitola Begonia Festivals, Art and Wine Festivals, and Wharf-to-Wharf runs to decorate the breakfast nook inside the lobby.

Some Capitola residents have questioned the location of the new 54-room hotel on busy 41st Avenue just south of Capitola Road, but Aspromonte thinks the location makes perfect

sense.

"It is really the only hotel of its kind in the Capitola area. There are a few hotels in the village, but those hotels are in their own special category," said Aspromonte.

Aspromonte also said that he believes 41st is the most important thoroughfare in the county because of its proximity to the ocean, mall, and Highway 1.

William Wessel, manager of the hotel, said business has been good.

"We may not get the walk-in business that hotels on Ocean Street get, but we have been getting a lot of referrals and business people," said Wessel.

Larina Hobbs of the Conference and Visitors Bureau said she found the location "a little bit odd," but she said the central location actually does make sense.

The three-story hotel has been nearly full since the first guest checked in July 1.

"We received our permits at 5 p.m. on June 30, and had guests the next day," said Wessel.

Sixteen of the rooms are mini-suites that have a separate sitting room with desk and couch. Some have fireplaces. There are also three suites with

whirlpools and kitchens.

The hotel also has a pool, spa, gym, conference room, and laundry facilities for guests.

Best Western is the newest hotel in the county, but won't be for long. A Hampton Inn is scheduled to open on Ocean Street in Santa Cruz at the end of October.