

Cluff Vista Park

AWARDS | 2005 SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER GENERAL DESIGN HONOR AWARD, AMERICAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

Van Atta Associates, Inc.

PROJECT TEAM | SUSAN VAN ATTA, ASLA, PRINCIPAL/ MICHAEL SANCHEZ • GUILLERMO GONZALEZ • BETHANY CLOUGH • JACK KIESEL

LOCATION | OJAI, CA CLIENT/OWNER | OJAI VALLEY LAND CONSERVANCY & CITY OF OJAI LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS | BOSTROM & ASSOCIATES, INC. CIVIL | DTR ENGINEERING ARTIST OF THE "GUARDIAN SPIRITS" | PAUL LINDHARD ARTIST OF THE COPPER TRELLIS | JAN SANCHEZ COMPLETION DATE | 2002

Located at the entrance to Ojai, the park is on a plateau with panoramic views of the surrounding mountains and an overlook to Ojai valley's beautiful downtown village. Thus the concept for the park arose: A Reflection of Nature.

Cluff Vista Park combines the artistic talents of Ojai's artists with the Landscape Architect's aesthetic and environmentally sensitive native planting design to create a unique regional public space. Connecting the native vegetation of the Los Padres National Forest to the urban setting, the seven themed gardens serve as botanical collections for demonstration of native plant landscaping.

The gardens and seating areas are connected by the Trail of Discovery – a wandering decomposed granite pathway defined by stone seat walls and stone curbing that is punctuated with artist carved portrayal of the footprints of native animals and leaf impressions.

The Overlook Circle is enclosed with trellises that provide shade and resolve the odd triangular shape of the property by leading from the two points of

the triangle to the center of the site. In this space, one feels a sense of magic, like an ancient sacred site. You are enclosed and protected, yet your view looks out to the downtown, across the valley floor, then ascends across the foothills up to the crown of the Topa Topa mountains. People often gather here at sunset as the mountains reflect a rosy glow, locally known as the "pink moment".

To the edge of this area, a round reflecting pool with a bubbling fountain functions as water source for the Riparian Garden, flowing down through a rock and boulder watercourse to a waterfall at the low point of the park. The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy succeeded well in preserving this scenic and ecologically significant land from the pressures of regional growth.



The presence of basalt stones mark the southwest entry to the park – they are one of the Guardian Sprits public art installations. The Deergrass Meadow is visible through the columns of the arbor.

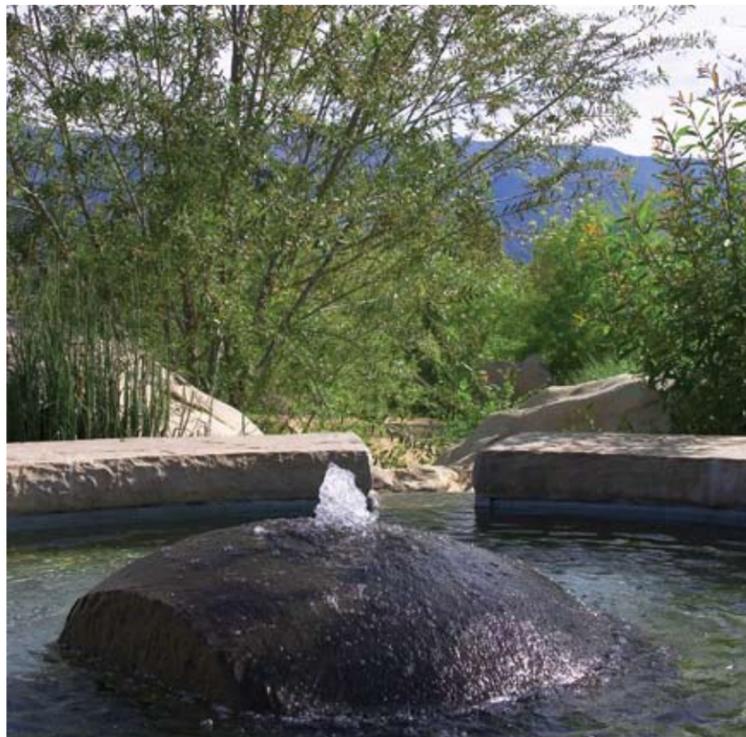
The waterfall at the base of the Riparian Guardian with the silvery Narrow Leaved Willow arching outward.

One of two broad arbors leads directly to the center of the park.





Native Matilija Poppy leans into the Overlook Circle and Narrow Leaved Willow shades the omphalos pond.



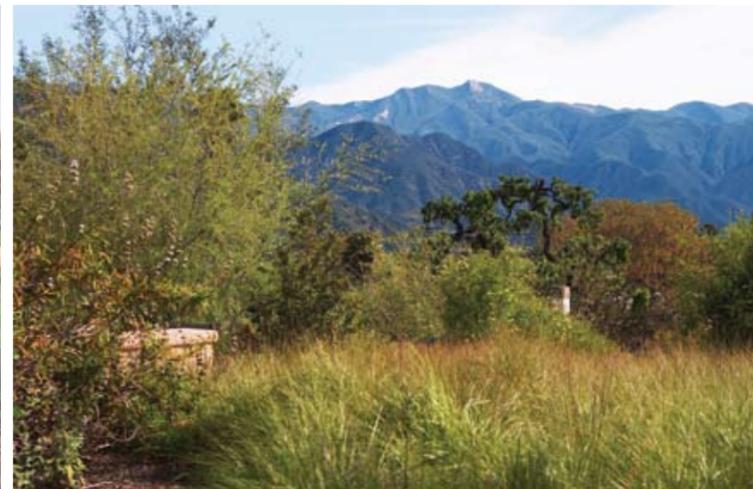
The omphalos stone fountain softly bubbles and shimmers.

Water slides over the surface of the omphalos stone at "pink moment".



The Trail of Discovery meanders alongside the Riparian Garden. The sides of the pathway are bordered by stone curbing where you might find footprints of wildlife or leaf impressions here and there.

A view of the meandering pathway through the park.



The soft tufts of Muhlenbergia rigens in the Deergrass Meadow seem to form a grassy bed for the majestic Chief Peak.

The Donor Plaza overlooks the main thoroughfare of Ojai, with the dome of the Post Office Tower in the distance. Beyond, foothills trail up and away to the peaks of the Los Padres National Forest.