

Apples and Art in Oak Glen

By: Kathy Strong



The foothill area of the inland empire of San Bernardino is close to the desert, yet a "history" away in agrarian offerings. Take a leisurely day trip and discover its rich bounty.

Begin your exploration of the inland empire's mile-high countryside just five miles north of Beaumont, off Interstate 10. Follow Beaumont Avenue lined with pine trees and open fields to verdant Cherry Valley in the foothills of the San Bernardino Mountains – the site of the four-day-long Cherry Festival each June. Follow the signs on Oak Glen Road in Cherry Valley to The Edward-Dean Museum, which is nestled among cherry orchards and ranches, a tranquil setting appropriate for its home-like exhibits of eighteenth-century furniture, including paintings, ceramics, crystal, rugs, Oriental treasures and one of the finest collections of Far Eastern bronzes in the United States. Avid art collectors, Edward Eberle and Dean Stout, began the museum in 1958, inspired by the beauty and tranquility of Western European museums and gardens.

[assets/news/story/cfhimages/200509/gug2.gif](#) Continue your day trip by following Oak Glen Road as it climbs higher into the foothills of the snow-topped San Gorgonio Mountains. The pastoral drive features hills dotted with oaks, an occasional ranch and orchards laden with apples. A dangling red apple sign welcomes you to Oak Glen, where the crisp, juicy fruit is grown in mile-high orchards fed by pure mountain streams. The largest apple-growing region in the southland, Oak Glen sells all of its produce directly to the public and is the largest operation of its kind in the United States.

The scenic drive through town, be it for apple buying or a slice of homemade apple pie washed down with fresh cider, is a treat in the fall harvest period when the local 15 ranches tout orchards painted in shades of crimson red, burnt orange and amber. Visitors may stop at roadside stands and barns for the more than forty varieties of apples sold and may also glimpse cider presses in action. The Los Rios Rancho along here is now the headquarters for the Wildlands Conservancy, but began as an apple farm in 1900.



Today, visitors may hike and picnic on the scenic grounds filled with nature trails, forests and wetland ponds that are home to migrating birds. The ranch's operations are under the management of the Riley family that offers a store and bakery filled with apple delights. A visit to Los Rios may also include an old-fashioned hayride, a barbecue, U-pick orchards and a variety of entertainment.

How to Get There: Trip Information: Take the I-10 west. Exit on Beaumont Avenue, turn right. Beaumont Avenue becomes Oak Glen Road. Follow Oak Glen Road through Cherry Valley to Oak Glen. Oak Glen is approximately 43 miles from the desert. The drive takes about 50 minutes. The Edward-Dean Museum 9401 Oak Glen Road, Cherry Valley 951-845-2626 www.edward-deanmuseum.org Open Friday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call for guided tours. Los Rios Rancho / Riley's at Los Rios Rancho 39610 Oak Glen Road, Oak Glen 909-797-1005 www.losriosrancho.com Open September through Thanksgiving, 7 days a week, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Open Thanksgiving through Christmas, Wednesday through Sunday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.