

A Unique Wedding Venue- Historic Hayes Mansion, San Jose California

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When a mansion that was once considered to be the finest examples of 19th century architecture in the Santa Clara Valley of California has been reincarnated into a first class conference center and one of Northern California's premier wedding venues, you have to ask what is this all about?

Hayes Mansion located fifteen minutes from downtown San Jose was designed by leading architect George Page to replace the original Queen Anne style family home of Mary Folsom Hayes Chynoweth, a matriarch of one of California's richest pioneer families. The original sixty-two room mansion succumbed to a fire in 1899 and unfortunately Mary never lived to see her new home having died before its completion in 1905. Her two sons, Everis and Jay, did enjoy many years living in the mansion while making use of its six hundred acres including a private park that later became Frontier Village Amusement Park and now known as Edenvale Garden Park. It is here where they grew their own fruits and vegetables as well as raising livestock. In fact, the estate was completely self-sustaining because they had their own power plant on the grounds.

In 1954 the Hayes family sold the property and unfortunately it subsequently fell into disrepair becoming an eyesore resulting in its having to be boarded up for several years. In 1983 the Redevelopment Agency of San Jose rescued the Hayes Mansion with the intent of providing a mixture of moderate and market rate housing units.

After acquiring the property, the Agency issued a Request for Proposal for the potential reuse of the Mansion as a potential multi-family housing on the 6.2-acre site. Nothing every happened and the City of San Jose subsequently purchased the Hayes Mansion from the Agency. Shortly thereafter the city issued another Request for Proposal in 1986 for concept proposals for the renovation and reuse of the Hayes Mansion (such as an executive conference center) however housing proposals were strictly prohibited from consideration.

As a result of various marketing studies, considerable bond money was raised to renovate and modernize the mansion that ultimately led to the construction of several new rooms bringing their total up to the present day two hundred and fourteen. In addition a new modern kitchen was added as well as 33,000 square feet of meeting space, extensive and varied dining spaces, a full service spa and fitness center and a swimming pool. Today, the Hayes Mansion is under the management of Dolce International that was granted a ten year contract in 2003 to reposition it as the Dolce Hayes Mansion and Conference Center.

During a gorgeous early October weekend with hardly a cloud in the sky we visited the mansion where we witnessed several weddings and receptions taking place.

One that was most impressive was being celebrated on the spectacular circular manicured emerald green lawn surrounded with its lush flora and towering palm trees

located in the center of the drive. In the background and dominating the mansion's complex was the magnificence of the Mediterranean Revival-style architecture of the original Hayes Mansion that appears to be built as a Maltese Cross with its red-tile roof.

It was from the steps of the mansion where the wedding procession made their journey up the aisle to the sounds of a three piece classical ensemble in the background. We even had a brief chuckle when one of the ring bearers, a tiny tot, had second thoughts and began to cry, leaving her partner the chore of carrying the rings to the alter.

At the same time that the outdoor wedding was taking place, we spotted two other weddings in separate ballrooms and a reception in the Silver Creek Dining Room with its large picture window overlooking the swimming pool and back gardens. In other words, the place was hopping; nonetheless, the staff was in full command of the comings and goings and had everything under their control without people bumping into one another. All events were conducted with much aplomb professionalism and savoir-faire.

We were informed by the very competent Hayes Mansion's wedding coordinators the weddings celebrated at the Hayes Mansion include a ceremony site for one hour and up to two hundred wood padded chairs, a reception facility rental for up to five hours, tables, chairs, china, glassware, white linens and a dance floor, reception hors d'oeuvres, salads, intermezzo entrées, wedding cake and cake cutting service, coffee and tea. The bride and groom are also given a complimentary mansion suite for the night of the wedding.

Besides the mansion's gorgeous grounds that evokes a bygone age of the late nineteenth century when only a privileged few could afford such luxury, we were very much in awe with the mansion's stunning interior displaying some of the most beautiful craftsmanship, imported marbles and exotic woods that adorn its large and airy rooms, as well as photos of the Hayes family, beautiful paintings, superb stained glass skylights, curved wooded archways, and the ornate tiled fireplaces that all contribute to the enhancement of its romantic ambience. Inside each of the guests' large airy rooms are large wooden desks, refrigerators, in-room safes, fluffy bathrobes and coffeemakers, remote control color TVs, irons and full-size ironing boards.

Hayes Mansion could also boast of having a state-of-the art spa- a twelve thousand square feet facility that includes a Jacuzzi, a romantic relaxation lounge, a twenty-five meter swimming pool, fitness facilities, and locker facilities with an eucalyptus steam room and redwood sauna in each area. It is described as the only destination spa in Silicon Valley where you can stay all day long! Added to all this is that the location of the mansion is only a forty-five minute drive to the Monterey Peninsula or San Francisco and a mere thirty minutes from the famous boardwalk and beaches of Santa Cruz. You can now well understand why couples seeking a unique wedding venue or romantic getaway experience are attracted to this magnificent hotel.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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