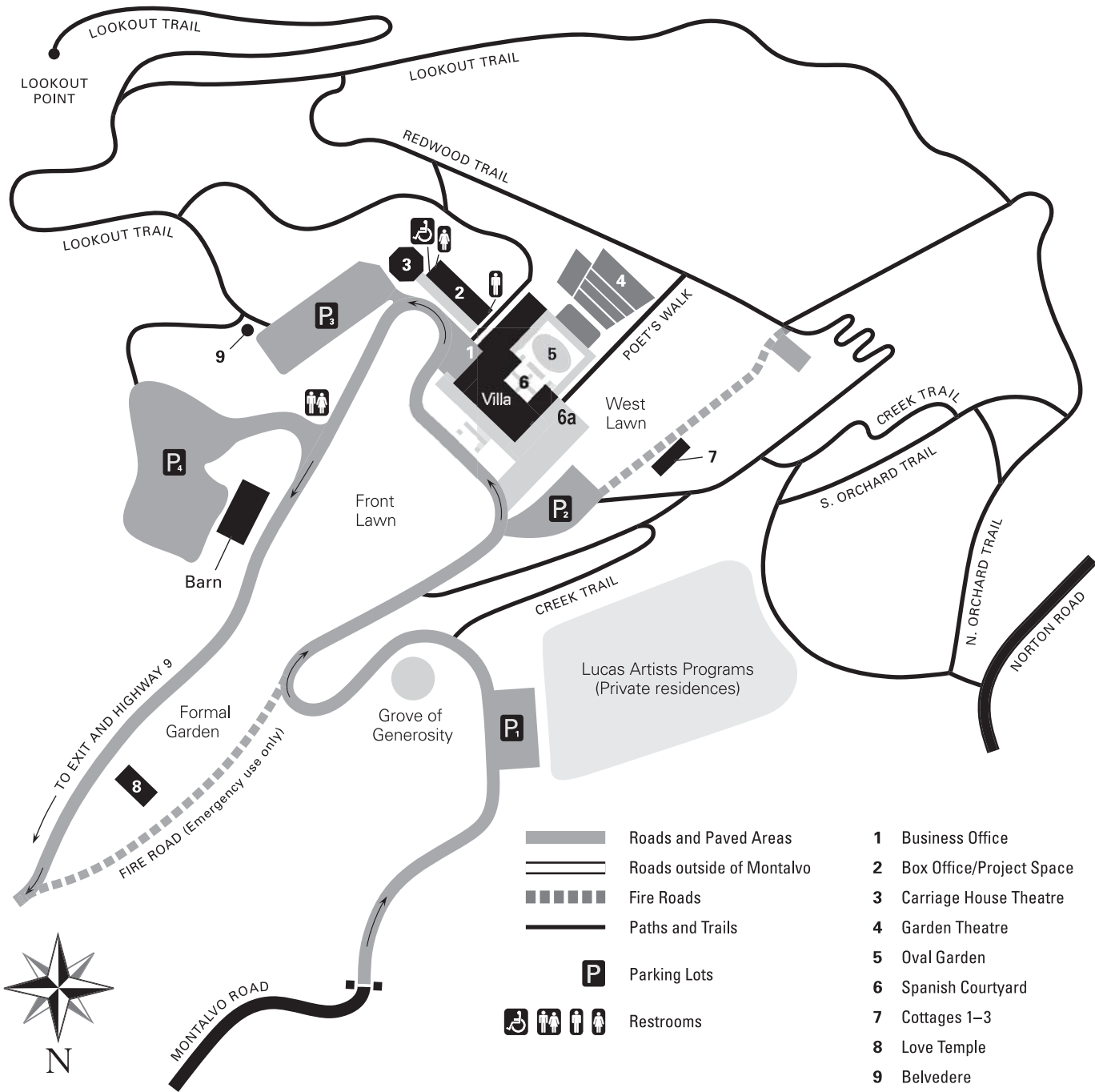


# montalvo

## ARTS CENTER

15400 Montalvo Road :: P.O. Box 158  
 Saratoga, California 95071  
 Main: 408.961.5800  
 Online: [www.montalvoarts.org](http://www.montalvoarts.org)

**Box Office:** 408.961.5858 (M-F 10 am-4 pm)  
**Become a Member of Montalvo:** 408.961.5849  
**Become a Volunteer:** 408.961.5828  
**Private & Corporate Rentals:** 408.961.5856



# Montalvo: A Brief History

James Duval Phelan (pronounced FEE-luhn) was born April 20, 1861 in San Francisco, the only son of Alice and James Phelan. The senior Phelan came to San Francisco during the Gold Rush and went into the merchandising business and real estate. His son, James, greatly expanded the family fortunes as a businessman but always held a great interest in the arts. He became the youngest mayor of San Francisco (to this date) in 1897 and served on a reform platform for three terms. In 1914, he became the first *popularly* elected U.S. senator from the state of California, serving from 1915-1921.

## :: The Historic Villa

The Villa was built in 1912 and was named for the early 16<sup>th</sup> C Spanish writer Garci Ordoñez de Montalvo. In his novel, "*Las Sergas de Esplandian*", is found the earliest use of the word *California*. The island of California was ruled by Amazons who rode on the backs of griffins who also guarded their treasure. Montalvo was Phelan's treasure hence the griffins on the entrance pillars. When Phelan died in April 1930, he left Montalvo to the San Francisco Art Association as a charitable trust for public use.

## :: Montalvo Arts Center Today

Central to Phelan's wishes is the Artist Residency Program at Montalvo, begun in the late 1930's. The Lucas Artists Programs, with specially designed studios for the various disciplines, was completed in 2003 with accommodations for ten artists, plus one culinary fellow. Integrated through the residency program, other public program offerings include classical and contemporary music performances; literary, drama and film presentations; visual arts exhibitions and installations; and educational classes and performances for all ages.

## :: Self-Guided Walking Tour (See map on reverse)

1. **Historic Villa:** see above
2. **Project Space & Box Office:** A working arts center, Montalvo hosts visual exhibitions and public performances throughout the year. This pavilion and building were added in the 1980s to house the gallery, restrooms and box office.
3. **Carriage House Theatre:** Originally the garage which could house up to 20 vehicles, with a rotating turn-table in the center. Now a 300-seat theatre.
4. **Garden Theatre:** Senator Phelan had a small stage behind the villa where he presented plays, poetry reading and classical concerts enjoyed by guests seated on a sloped lawn. Dedicated to Lilian Fontaine (mother of Joan Fontaine and Olivia deHavilland), the theatre seats 1200.
5. **Oval Garden:** Originally the villa swimming pool (you can see where the ladders have been removed). The oval garden now plays host to weddings and private events.
6. **Spanish Courtyard:** Originally shaded by palm trees, the wisteria and herringbone brick are original. The wall fountain honors writer Garci Ordoñez de Montalvo and California's heritage (see above). The poem was written by Phelan.
- 6a. **Spanish Doors & Stained Glass:** 16<sup>th</sup> C, brought from Granada, Spain by Phelan. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella and members of their court are depicted, as are the coats of arms of various areas of Spain. The window over the doors depicts Juan Cabrillo's flagship, San Salvador, and accompanying ships on his exploration of the California coast.
7. **Cottages:** The first building built on the property and used by Phelan during construction of the Villa, then by his guests, and later as a part of Montalvo's Artist Residency program. Now used as staff offices and meeting rooms.
8. **Love Temple & Formal Garden:** The lower or Italian garden did not have a fence around it in Phelan's time and was planted as a formal garden with flowering plants lining the pathways (it is currently under restoration). Beyond the Temple of Love there is a succulent garden. The grounds had much statuary, most of which is gone due to vandalism. There were the *Four Seasons* (three still exist) at the foot of the lawn and the Adam & Eve, which Phelan brought back from Italy, located on the west side of the garden.
9. **Belvedere:** A look-out place to view the scenery, it is located a little above parking lot #3. This area was originally a paddock area for exotic deer in Phelan's time.