

SFGate.com

[Print This Article](#)[Back to advertisement](#) | [your ad here](#)Article
SFGate.com

Jabberwock Inn, Monterey

James Nestor

Thursday, January 7, 2010



All in the golden afternoon full leisurely you glide up a winding brick walkway, past the stone gnomes, to the entry. A twinkle-twinkle of the door charm, a big hello from embroidered-sweatered host, and you're through the rabbit hole into a plush kingdom of stuffed dolls and stunning views.

Built in 1911, this Edwardian mansion served as a private residence until the Catholic Church moved in in 1920 to hold catechism classes. In 1981, it was sold to a Lewis Carroll enthusiast who refurbished it with all manner of Victorian accoutrements and thinly veiled psychedelic-drug references: Mirrored globes perch between ferns in the garden, creepy girl-animal statues crouch in shadowed corners, music boxes chime on marble tabletops.

In 2007, the new owners, Dawn Perez and John Hickey, added their own touches to the mix in the form of dozens of butt-swallowing floofy couches and a kaleidoscope of confusing toys. Think of the nicest relative's house you've ever stayed in, then double it.

Comfort zone

Upstairs from a dining room, sunporch, and multiple living rooms are seven guestrooms, from small and spartan (\$169) to large and opulent (\$299). The room we stayed in, the Borogove (all room names are from Carroll works), offers an in-room Jacuzzi, (gas) fireplace, a rocking chair upon which is seated a teddy bear in little Converse high-tops, a few couches, a crystal carafe filled with brandy, a confusing array of wedding pictures of people you don't know and a spectacular wall-size view of Monterey Bay. For those of simple mind (like us), hours of entertainment can be had creating your own slo-mo trampoline by inflating, then deflating the king-size Sleep Number bed.

Bath and beyond

The in-room Jacuzzi is as adventurous and "romantic" as you will it to be, with high-powered jets, two Victorianesque showerheads and basic toiletries. However, less romantic is the water closet, separated with walls of stained glass from the Jacuzzi area, making for some awkward breaks for those couples less intimate with the full range of the human body's inner workings. Toothbrushing and feet washing are had at the little standing sink in the opposite corner.

▶ E-MAIL

your favorite Chronicle stories
with the new e-edition.Click here to subscribe
for only \$1.90 a week.

San Francisco Chronicle e edition

Ground for approval

The Jabberwock is nestled on a half-acre of fantasy-themed gardens with a panoply of shrubs, koi ponds, little waterfalls and assorted topiary. Down a cobbled brick pathway is a full-size bocce ball court open to guests. There, you'll be greeted by two French poodles, one named Dude that sports a frizzy cop-style mustache and stares at you soul-deep with his furrowed brown eyes. As you walk the gardens he'll be watching your ... every ... single ... move.

Gearing up

With no in-room television, you'll have to use your imagination: We found the creepy tinkle-tinkle of the ceramic music box on our coffee table a good soundtrack for interpretive marionette dancing. For visuals, try staring out the huge windows at the commanding view of Monterey Bay and pretending it is an HD TV picture of a commanding view of Monterey Bay. (The free brandy helps.)

In the vicinity

The Jabberwock is in a suburban neighborhood, up the hill a few blocks from Monterey's Cannery Row. And when you're tired of munching deep-fried sea life, you can check out the real, squiggling thing just down the street at the glorious Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Good to know

The Jabberwock features a "five star" breakfast at a communal table from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m., with orange, pineapple, coconut juice, fruit, and a 1 1/2-pound slab of bread pudding finger-deep in sugar, cream and raspberry sauce. It's like the sweetest, most filling dessert in the world ... and it's for breakfast! Milk and cookies are available around 5 p.m. The nightly hors d'oeuvres hour (around 7 p.m.) on the sunporch offers wine, cheese, crackers, lonely-looking meatballs, taquitos and salsa.

Highs and lows

High: It's exactly like staying at your rich grandma's house. Low: It's exactly like staying at your rich grandma's house. For the price, the accommodations (the Borogove is \$330 with taxes) may at first seem a bit wanting in spots: Most of the refurbishing done in the 1980s is unchanged - those things that have been updated usually involve teddy bears and doilies. But the Jabberwock's Victorian frivolities and general goofiness give it a unique, entertaining and refreshing charm. It beats the dickens out of the surrounding big-chain hotels here or anywhere else. Come in good spirits, and before you know it you'll see yourself through the looking glass - laughing, schmoozing and having a fantastical good time.

Vitals: 598 Laine St., Monterey. (888) 428-7253. www.jabberwockinn.com. Rooms \$169-\$299. Parking is plentiful and free at the inn and on the street.

- James Nestor, 96hours@sfchronicle.com

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/01/07/NSGM1BATMP.DTL>

This article appeared on page **G - 24** of the San Francisco Chronicle

© 2010 Hearst Communications Inc. | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Feedback](#) | [RSS Feeds](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Site Index](#) | [Contact](#)