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UNION TRIBUNE

## Town focus **Rancho Santa Fe**

# Duplicating history

### Inn keeps renovations in line with architect's design

By **Patty McCormac**

**R**ANCHO SANTA FE — When the proprietors of The Inn At Rancho Santa Fe decided to renovate the original building on its grounds, they wanted to stay with the architect's design.

Although Lilian Rice is no longer living, her designs are so historic and unique that today's caretakers worked closely with the Rancho Santa Fe Historical Society to make sure the ambience of the original building was preserved during the renovation project.

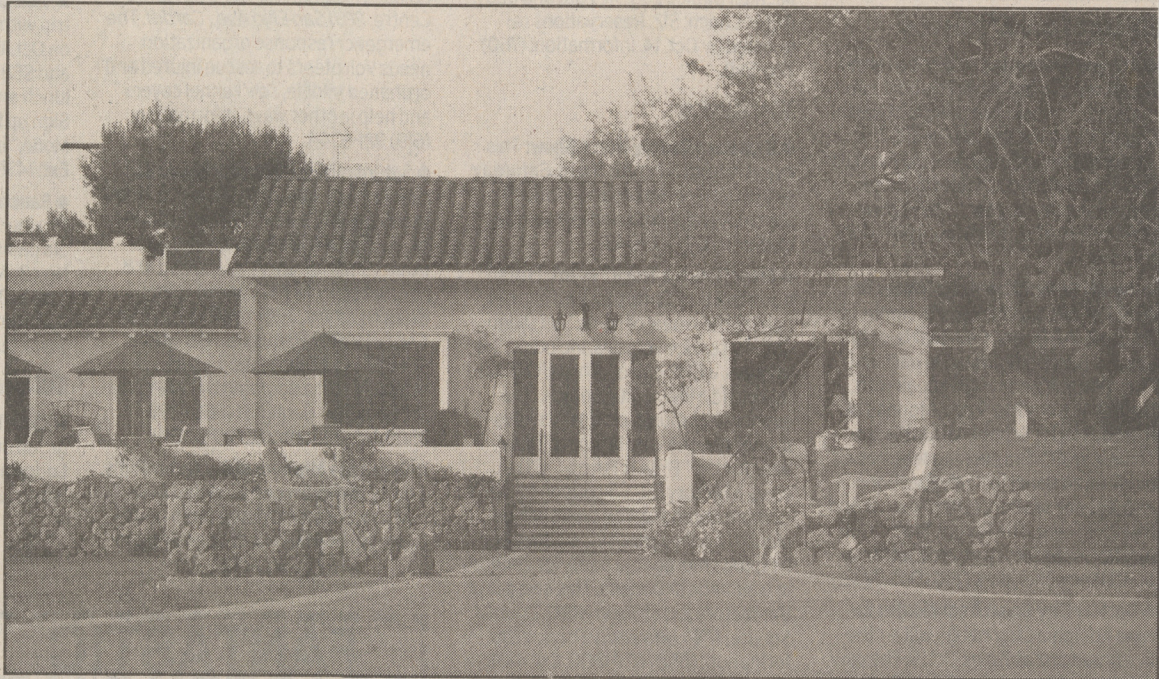
"They came to us to look at old photographs and ran some plans by us to see if the renovation in the front facade was keeping with the original design," said Fran Foley, archivist and curator of the historical society. "They were mindful of the historical status of it being the first building in Rancho Santa Fe."

Toby Franklin, general manager of the Inn, said it was the owners' intention to maintain Rice's feeling. "She designed the Inn, most of the downtown and lived in a house on the property of the Inn," Franklin said.

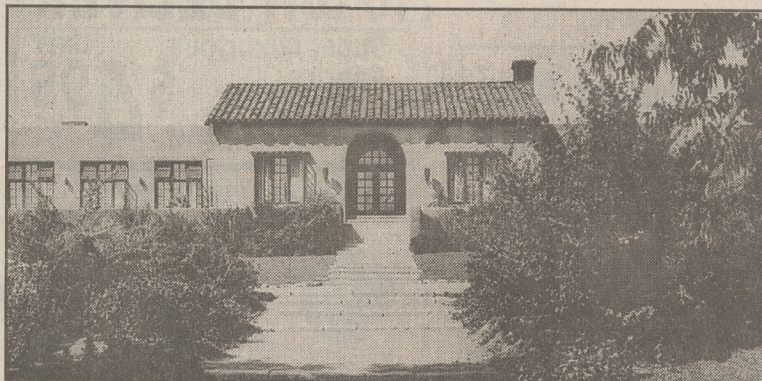
The renovation began in April and ended in July "with a lot of planning prior," he said.

The difference visitors can expect to see is more elegance in fabrics as well as fixtures and furniture that reflect the Spanish Colonial Revival style so favored by Rice, Franklin said.

"When we did the courtyard, we exactly duplicated her style of trel-



The original building at The Inn At Rancho Santa Fe (above) as it appears today, after a remodeling project completed in July. Below, the building as it appeared after it was completed in 1923. *Courtesy photos*



lis. The tiled fountain has the same look it would have had at the time," he said. "The bar was given its own entrance from the living room and also spills out to the courtyard, which adheres to our inside-outside flow."

The building, originally named La Morada, was built on 900 acres purchased by the Santa Fe Railroad to farm eucalyptus trees.

"Someone told them they would

make good railroad ties," Franklin said. "The wood was too soft, so the railroad company had a huge place chock-full of eucalyptus trees and didn't know what to do with it."

In 1923, a young, up-and-coming female architect named Lilian Rice was hired to build a guesthouse on the property to house prospective buyers of the land.

La Morada is an adobe with ex-

posed beam ceilings. "Windows are strategically placed. How she lights a room is very natural, all in a way that blends the outside with the inside," Franklin said.

"The inn came before the town, which is very European. Think of a castle or an inn. In European terms, it is in the center of town," Franklin said. "The center meridian lines up perfectly with the inn. The town is built around the inn."

Stephen Wheeler Royce bought The Inn in 1958. The Royce family still operates it.

For more information about the Inn, call (858) 756-1131.

**Patty McCormac** is a free-lance writer from Vista. Do you have a story idea for Rancho Santa Fe? Contact Robbin O'Neal at (760) 476-8215 or [robbin.oneal@uniontrib.com](mailto:robbin.oneal@uniontrib.com). For special events, please alert us at least four weeks in advance. We work ahead!

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