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Winehiker Witiculture

Movie stars, socialites, and now wine bloggers?

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The Flamingo Resort, Santa Rosa, circa 1959: it was the place to stay north of the bay within two years of its opening, a posh retreat for the Hollywood Jet Set. One could find the likes of Jayne Mansfield, dramatic and daring in her then-scandalous two-piece swimsuit, soaking up the sun poolside and presumably posing for the local paparazzo.

I remember our family trips to see my nana in Kenwood. We would motor up Highway 101 from Santa Clara all the way to the Highway 12 exit into downtown Santa Rosa, and would always drive past the Flamingo before turning south toward Kenwood and the Sonoma Valley. I profess a fondness for art deco and googie architecture, and even as a young kid was struck by the way the resort's iconic tower - with flamingo perched atop - evoked all things exotic to me. It was the epitome of cool before I knew what cool really was. I knew the good life must be happening, right there in Santa Rosa.

Little did I know at the time that I would someday return as part of a new revolution. Fast-forward nearly fifty years: the Flamingo Conference Resort & Spa has undergone a recent major refurbishing, and the City of Santa Rosa has declared it a historic landmark. It is still the place to see and be seen, and it is, as was announced today, a place where wine bloggers from all over the U.S., possibly even the world, will convene October 24-26 for the North American Wine Bloggers Conference, the first event of its kind.