

## Hillsborough Caroland Chateau HISTORY

A French chateau called **Carolands**, is hiding in plain sight in the town of Hillsborough, 20 miles south of San Francisco. Featured in a recent documentary called:

**"The Heiress and Her Chateau: Carolands of California"**, the home, originally set on 500+ acres, was commissioned in 1912 by **Harriett Pullman Carolan**, a daughter of **George Pullman**. Her father was known for his elegantly appointed sleeping cars revolutionized 19th century train travel and made him one of the richest men in the country. His daughter Harriett, then married to Frank Carolan, inherited a fortune. Harriett had the Chateau built in 1915 (100 years ago). A little history:

At 65,000 square feet, Carolands was the second-largest home in the country at the time it was completed in 1915. A few numbers provide scale: Ninety-eight rooms. Four kitchens. Seventeen bedrooms. Eighteen bathrooms. Separate rooms for flower arranging, for polishing silver, for baking, for storing vegetables. Every inch of it done in the most refined, tasteful style that money could buy, from the gold-plated doorknobs to rooms imported in their entirety from French estates.

Then the **Carolands** suffered a roller-coaster ride of misfortune over its hundred-year history. Its completion in 1915 also signaled the end of Harriett and Frank's marriage. She closed up the estate and moved to New York City, and the house sat unattended and deteriorating for almost 30 years.

The **Carolands** was then purchased by Countess Lillian Remillard Dandini, heiress to a San Francisco brick company fortune, stepped in to buy it in 1950. The countess lived at Carolands until her death in 1973. The Carolands entered a particularly dark period. A pornographic movie was secretly filmed there. A caretaker assaulted two teenage girls on the property [this was in 1985 and the survivor of that ordeal is still alive, scared married and living in Georgia], one of whom died. The Loma Prieta quake caused substantial damage.

There were people interest in the property : Someone wanted to buy it and make it a condo, and someone else wanted to turn it into a dairy." Also, there was a guy who bought it and couldn't afford it and ended up going to jail for embezzlement." Neighbors called for Carolands to be destroyed as a dangerous eyesore.

In 1991 a Decorator's Showcase was staged at Carolands when 68,000 visitors in six weeks got the opportunity to view the property. Among them was Dr. **Ann Johnson**, whose husband Charles was chairman of financial company Franklin Resources and principal owner of the **San Francisco Giants**. The couple purchased Carolands more than \$20 million. It was then endowed as a private foundation to ensure that Carolands will be preserved in the future. Ann Johnson's legacy is the preservation of this house. It will no longer be bought and sold."

The chateau for the most part remains closed to the public, however there is a process and procedure to arrange to visit the location and take a tour FREE.

From the Chateau's website [www.caroland.org](http://www.caroland.org), I found the following information: The Johnsons donated the Chateau to Carolands Foundation in 2012. Carolands Foundation is conducting small group tours, without charge, on Wednesdays at 2:00 PM. Tours are available by reserved appointment only, generally booked months in advance, and restricted to guests of 16 years old and up. When I spoke with a Chateau representative I was told that you go online and make a reservation and choose a date, it is free, but if you pull a 'no-show' you are restricted from going for 1 year. I asked her why they didn't charge and she basically told me that 'they don't need the money'. There are occasional activities open to limited attendees. Still, with its history and beauty and location – well worth the effort to go online, book a date and take a tour. Here is important information about how to view this masterpiece and the terms and conditions. Go to [www.carolands.org/tours](http://www.carolands.org/tours)

Tours are complimentary and conducted ONLY on Wednesdays at 2:00pm by reservation only. Tours vary in length, but please allow for two hours. Tours involve as many as 100 steps, both up and down, and include a considerable amount of standing. Guests may not self-tour, and audio tours are not available.

## RESERVATIONS

Applications for tour reservations for 1-4 visitors must be made on [carolands.org](http://carolands.org). Other than student tours, guests must be 16 years of age. Minors 16 to 18 years must be accompanied by an adult. Guests are limited to one visit per year.

Visitors without a printed reservation confirmation and picture ID will not be admitted onto Carolands' grounds. Reservations are not transferable. Guests are asked to arrive at 1:45pm for check-in.

## CANCELLATIONS

Guests are urged to cancel reservations within 48 hours when they are not able to attend so that others may have an opportunity to tour. To cancel your reservation please email [tours@carolands.org](mailto:tours@carolands.org). Reservations that are not cancelled within 48 hours count as a visit.

## ACCESSIBILITY

Guests who need wheelchair access are asked to contact the Foundation to arrange for special accommodations. Inquiries may be sent through [tours@carolands.org](mailto:tours@carolands.org).

## STUDENT TOURS

Inquiries about student educational programs may be sent to [tours@carolands.org](mailto:tours@carolands.org).

## GUEST RULES

*In order to ensure the enjoyment and safety of guests and to provide for the preservation of the historic building and grounds, the following rules apply:*

## PARKING

To preserve neighborhood privacy and to ensure guest safety, Carolands Foundation requires that all vehicles park inside the Carolands gates. Guests may not park on Hillsborough streets.

#### SMOKE-FREE POLICY

Carolands Château and grounds are smoke-free.

#### MOBILE PHONES

Cell phones must be turned off while on tour.

#### DRESS

For safety and protection of antique floors, guests are asked to wear flat shoes. The interiors of the Château may be cold in the winter and warm during the summer, and guests are asked to dress accordingly. Backpacks are not allowed.

#### PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography is not permitted inside the Château. Photography is permitted outside the Château for personal use only. Commercial photography or filming is not permitted.

#### SMART EYEWEAR

Smart eyewear (i.e. Google glass) is not permitted.

#### PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Carolands Foundation does not assume responsibility for personal items. Valuables should be secured in guests' cars. Art supplies are not permitted without prior approval of Carolands.

#### FOOD & BEVERAGES

Food and beverages may not be brought onto Château property. Bottled water is provided to guests during the tour.

#### PETS

The only animals allowed on the property are service animals.

#### FOUNTAINS, POOLS AND STATUARY

Guests are not permitted to wade or make other contact with water features, nor are they allowed to climb statuary.