Sands of Time Bury Dream Villa

MINOR WILMANN

The dream villas of the early 20th century, built by the Vanderbilts, were often more like palaces than homes. One such villa was Sands of Time, located near Los Angeles. The villa was designed by architects Charles L. Moore and Henry S. Williams, and featured a two-story structure with a central tower.

The main entrance was through French doors that opened onto a spacious foyer with a central staircase leading to the upper floor. The villa was furnished with antiques and artwork, including paintings by famous artists of the time. The kitchen was equipped with modern appliances, including a refrigerator and a dishwasher.

The living room was furnished with comfortable couches and chairs, and had large windows that overlooked the gardens. The dining room was also spacious, with a large chandelier hanging from the ceiling. The bedrooms were decorated in a variety of styles, from Victorian to Art Deco.

The villa was owned by William K. Vanderbilt, who was the son of the renowned railroad magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt. The villa was later sold to a variety of owners, and is now a historic site.

The villa is a testament to the wealth and influence of the Vanderbilts, and is a reminder of the opulence of the early 20th century. It is a place where one can step back in time and experience a glimpse of the past.
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VANDERLIP built The Villetta, a miniatura of his dream house.
The Villetta served as a guest home and still stands near the shingle cottage.
The plans are preserved today by Vanderlip's son, John, youngest of the six Vanderlip children, who with his wife and children are the only permanent Vanderlip residents on the Peninsula.

But what has become of the estate and the stuff of Vanderlip's dream?
A drive over the rolling hills reveals a children's day camp where the villa would have stood on 16 lush acres with breathtaking views to the sea and back over the rolling hills.

A few marble columns lay hidden in the tall grass of a wooded area. A duck pond, near where Vanderlip once kept a collection of more than 500 rare birds, has long since dried up.

Others of the marble columns decorate the garden of The Cottage and still more form a colonnade on a hill near The Villetta, where 268 steps leading to the top are guarded by tall cypress trees planted by Mrs. Vanderlip in 1926.

Mrs. Vanderlip had brought the seedlings from Italy in a suitcase.

Some of the acreage is almost dense now with the trees and flowers planted by the Vanderlips and elsewhere tall grass covers the land.

But if you look closely, you'll see the stuff that dreams are made of, even a dream that hasn't come true.
Family's Home Born of Dream

BY MARION COLLINS

It's a rare and lovely scene from the Vanderbilts' home in San Francisco, where the first great gables of gold and silver gleamed in the moonlight. Here, in 1892, Mrs. Louis Demuth founded her famous San Francisco Opera, which she named after her daughter, Ethel.

She was one of many who believed in the power of music to heal the soul. And so she built her home, a place where she could escape the cares of the world and find peace.

The music held sway, and the beauty of the house reflected that. From the moment you entered, you knew you were in somewhere special. The walls were lined with paintings, and the air was filled with the sound of music.

It was a place of dreams, and Mrs. Demuth knew that. She named it after her daughter, Ethel, who had been born in this very room.

The house was more than just a place; it was a statement, a symbol of what could be achieved with hard work and determination. And so she built it, brick by brick, until it was complete.

And now, as we stand here, we can see the beauty of what was created. The house stands tall, a testament to what can be achieved when you believe in your dreams.

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PALOS VERDES

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Harry Benedict, long-time friend and associate of Mr. Vanderlip, recalled the first time he visited the original Vanderlip cottage.
We took along his bride, the late Mrs. Benedict.
"We'd just arrived from the East," he said. "We rented an old model Ford in San Pedro and bumped over dirt trails for hours. There was no coast road then. And that cottage had neither gas nor electricity. Isolation seemed complete. But Mr. Vanderlip set out to build a new world on the peninsula. Here he would one day build the 'villa of his dreams.'"

Because he admired Italian art and architecture, all buildings were to be Italian Renaissance in design. He planned an Italian village for the hill above the lighthouse. Artists were to be imported from Italy to live there, so that Old World skills could fashion his New World dream.

Meanwhile, the most immediate need was to house the horses, the key to life on the peninsula in Indian times.

Villette Built

(Today there are more horses for pleasure riding on the Palos Verdes Peninsula than in any comparable area in the country.)

By 1926 Mr. Vanderlip had built the handsome Villette, a miniature of his dream villa. For years he had imported statuary, columns and objets d'art to be used indoors and out.

Priceless Della Robbias were included. These were painstakingly installed high on the exterior walls of the Villette. Even the farmstead has a Della Robbia mounted on its feeding tower.

Over the years the Vanderlip plan for landscaping the rolling countryside took shape. Trees by the thousand were planted across the hills — there had been none before.

Mrs. Vanderlip, whose home is now in Searscusher, N.Y., directed the huge planting projects. One year she brought Italian cypress seedlings from the Mediterranean in a suitcase.

Today they are stream-lined stairways marking in classic precision 268 steps which lead straight from the Villette garden to a marble colonnade atop the hill.

Wild peacocks sedately cross the stairway and call companions perched in the trees. The peacocks, everywhere on the peninsula, were once part of a Vanderlip aviary of 500 birds brought from over the world.

When Mr. Vanderlip died in 1937, his legendary villa was still a dream. But a way of life had come permanently to the peninsula.

Today everyone roams the picturesque hills — usually on a horse. Preschoolers learn to ride. Social activities center in riding groups and competitions for young and old.

These range from gymkhanas, informal competitions held by the children, to the annual Portuguese Bend National Horse Show, which benefits Children's Hospital.

There is the riding group, Caballeros del Rancho Palos Verdes, founded a few years ago by Roland G. Swafford, "the squire of Rolling Hills." Thanks to the caballeros and the Vanderlip family, hundreds of miles of trails have been improved for all who love to ride.

Today some 500 acres remain officially in the Vanderlip Estate. But everywhere on the Palos Verdes Peninsula one sees the influence of the "new world" he first envisioned.

The future? Where peacocks climb a stairway to the sky, there is no limit.

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