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Intoxicating Ojai: Springtime in Bloom

Hotel deals, farm and garden tours, and festivals await!

Ojai, CA – Springtime in Ojai is a time when the senses are awakened. From fragrant orange blossoms that fill the air to the towering Topa Topa Mountains that peak high in the distance, travelers will find great offerings, activities and seasonal tours. Wildflowers are expected to be especially abundant and colorful this year on the hills and back country in Ojai, providing a great opportunity for hiking, trail rides and even jeep tours. Ojai's spring events such as the new WordFest in late March, and the annual Storytelling Festival and Spring Garden Tour in early May provide more enticing reasons to visit.

One of Ojai's most popular springtime attractions is the harvest of the delicious Pixie Tangerines, and the friendly family and staff of **Friend's Ranch** offer orchard tours, Pixie sampling, and the chance to pick your own bag to take home! Travelers can get an inside view of how farmers grow the popular Pixies while learning about Ojai's farming history. The cost is \$12 for adults and \$8 for children 10 years and under. Pixies are also available throughout the Ojai Valley at farm stands, and on Sunday mornings at the Ojai Certified Farmers Market in downtown Ojai.

Spring is the best time to take in the beauty of the Ojai Valley in bloom and enjoy an off-road sightseeing adventure with **Cloud Climbers Jeep & Wine Tours**. Door-to-door service is provided from area hotels for a fun day aboard an open-air jeep that winds through the country roads, secret gardens and exclusive sites. The jeep tour itinerary showcases the history, flavors and scenic beauty of Ojai, and offers passengers the chance sample locally made olive oil and wines.

Ojai welcomes a brand new event, **Ojai Wordfest**, from March 19-27. The new festival is a culmination of words, ideas and stories bringing readers and writers of all genres, skill level and ages together for a series of reading and writing events. Among the highlights, WordFest will showcase international, best-selling Ojai authors Byron Katie, Founder of *The Work*, productivity guru David Allen and mystery novelist, Jacqueline Winspear. The event also features an eclectic mix of other screenwriters, playwrights, poets, songwriters, novelists, performers, teachers and "word" artists. Events will take place throughout the city with such fun activities as an outdoor Book Fair, "Breakfast with Books," featuring book readings with local authors & celebrities, cooking classes with local cookbook authors, children's hour, theatrical performances and so much more. One of the highlights of the literary festival includes *Lit Crawl*, designed similar to an art walk and providing an opportunity for participants to engage with the performing authors, poets and artists.

In May, the **Ojai Storytelling Festival**, May 5-8, features seven of the nation's best storytellers. Visitors can hear tales of suspense, humor adventure, traditional folktales and other creations at this fun annual event. That Saturday, May 7, is also a chance to tour exquisite private gardens throughout the valley during the **17th Annual Ojai Valley Garden Tour**. Five beautiful gardens will be showcased and visitors can take the self-guided tour which will highlight unique plantings, water conserving irrigation techniques & green water management. Master gardeners will be on hand to provide information and offer gardening tips.

Pirates invade the Ojai Valley May 22-23 during the **22nd Annual Ojai Renaissance & Pirate Faire**. Scenic Lake Casitas transforms into a 16th century European village. And, for those who love art and the chance to chat with talented artists, the **34th Annual Art in the Park** takes place May 28-29. The outdoor juried art show draws artists throughout the state and beyond to Libbey Park in downtown Ojai.

Turn a great day into a great getaway with spring specials and discounts offered by Ojai's most popular inns and resorts. Highlighting Ojai's Pixie Tangerine season, the luxurious **Ojai Valley Inn & Spa** is offering a *Pixie Package* consisting of a one night stay, Pixie turndown service, breakfast for two and evening cocktails. The cost is \$340 for two people. For the adventurous traveler, the Inn also offers a *Hike & Bike Package* including a guided hike or bike trip, breakfast and lunch for two, and takeaway gift. The cost is \$365 on the weekdays and \$415 on weekends.

Su Nido Inn and **Casa Ojai Inn** are both offering special spring savings of 25% off through April 30, 2011. Nestled in the Ojai Village just steps from downtown, Su Nido is a boutique property offering a 'home away from home' experience. Casa Ojai is just down the road and provides a comfortable stay located directly across from the scenic Soule Park Golf Course.

To tempt the taste buds, the **Ojai Culinary Cooking School** at the historic **Lavender Inn** has quite the lineup this spring with classes ranging from 'Raw-Mance,' featuring a wide range of raw recipes to 'Creole Sunday', highlighting favorites from New Orleans. Other classes throughout the spring include 'Fish Cookery,' 'Fusion Indian Cooking,' and the 'Lavender Gourmet.' Class participants can opt to stay overnight at The Lavender Inn, and enjoy its intimate guestrooms, onsite spa and lavish homemade breakfast.

The enchanting **Emerald Iguana Inn** and sister property, the **Blue Iguana Inn** offer a *Spring Wine Tasting Package* featuring the wines of Casa Barranca, the first certified organic winery in the Santa Barbara region. At check in, guests receive a welcome bottle of Casa Barranca wine, souvenir Iguana wine glasses and signature Iguana Inn gourmet chocolates. The weekend features a "Chief's Peak" top end wine flight tasting at the Casa Barranca wine tasting room including a 20% discount on wine and merchandise plus a keepsake wine opener. On top of that, guests will receive a \$50 dining certificate to award-winning Azu Restaurant. The *Spring Wine Tasting Package* can be added to any overnight stay for an additional \$100. Or for \$275 additional, guests will receive the wine package plus two one hour in-room full body massages.

Through mid-May, **The Oaks at Ojai**, the destination spa with a focus on healthy weight loss and well-being, offers a *Mother-Daughter Package* with a 40% discount off of the regular program rates for each daughter (or son) who share a room with mom. Rates start at \$117.

For more information on Ojai and hotel specials above, visit www.ojaivisitors.com or call the Ojai Visitors Bureau at **1-888-OJAI NOW**. Ojai is an easy 90-minute drive north of Los Angeles and 50 minutes south of Santa Barbara. The closest airports are in Santa Barbara (45 miles), Burbank (70 miles), and Los Angeles (85 miles). Ample, free parking is available throughout the city.

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