

## Just in Time for Halloween, the Bay Area Cemeteries to See Before You Die

Ali DeFazio | October 3, 2017

**Thanks to Loren Rhoads and her new book *199 Cemeteries to See Before You Die*.**

Halloween is around the corner and with it, a ghoulish opportunity to roam until your dying breath. In her new book, *199 Cemeteries to See Before You Die*, (in stores October 3rd) author Loren Rhoads plans a spooky itinerary of graveyards, from pioneer graveyards to Buddhist temples and more—several of which are in California.



The eclectic collection reveals the beauty and history behind the graveyards, crematoriums, and columbariums.

A San Franciscan for over 30 years, Loren Rhoads sat down with San Francisco Magazine to give her favorite cemeteries in the Bay Area, ahead of a reading at Green Apple Books on October 3rd and at Borderlands Bookstore on October 7th.

### **For the historian: San Francisco Columbarium**

*1 Loraine Court, San Francisco, CA*

This four-story, copper-domed funeral home holds the ashes of famous San Franciscans and is the only non-denominational resting place in the city that still accepts remains. From the outside, its French, neo-classical architecture looks more fit to hold the remains of Waterloo soldiers, not San Francisco icons like Harvey Milk and Chet Helms. Inside the Columbarium are stunning stained glass windows that splash light onto the mosaic tiled floor below. While you're exploring, make sure to hop onto a guided tour. Rhoads said, "There's a caretaker there that gives tours and he's amazing. He knows everything. He's seen ghosts."

### **For the music-lover: Chapel of the Chimes**

*4499 Piedmont Avenue, Oakland, CA*

Don't get lost in this labyrinth of Gothic archways, tessellated stained glass windows, and Islamic-inspired blue tile work. Chapel of the Chimes is another columbarium, meaning only ashes, not buried bodies, are here. Take a seat in one of their many chambers and watch sun from the skylights above cast down on the luscious vegetation planted throughout. "They do a big concert on the solstice every year in the summer, where they have independent musicians in every nook and cranny," said Rhoads, "I mean like thirty different concerts going on. My husband's a musician, so I'm like, 'you should play that!'" This concert, the Garden of Memory, takes place every June 21st and features instruments from wine glasses to cellos.

**For the outdoorsy: Native Shell Mounds**

*555 Guadalupe Canyon Parkway, Brisbane, CA*

Thousands of years ago, members of the Ohlone tribe were laid to rest in the hills of San Bruno Mountain. Rhoads told us, "They buried their dead in these mounds. There's oyster shells and animal bones." Despite many of these sacred mounds being destroyed over time, San Bruno Mountain holds one that is still intact. Time and weather has aged the shellmound, so you might miss it at first. But what definitely won't be missed is the calm that descends on this holy site. Endangered plant life surrounds the shell mounds and the city of San Francisco is spread out just north.

**For the view-lover: Mountain View Cemetery**

*5000 Piedmont Avenue, Oakland, CA*

With arguably one of the best views in the Bay, this hilltop cemetery in Oakland packs some history, too. At the top of its tombstone-stacked hills is something nicknamed "Millionaire's Row." Rhoads explained, "It's all of these old families that made their money in the Bay Area. But they couldn't be buried in San Francisco because of the law [burials are now illegal in SF], so they have these expensive, amazing mausoleums on the hill." The founder of Ghirardelli chocolates is buried here, as well as railroad magnate Charles Crocker. The grounds are massive and tree-lined walkways are perfect for strolls. Wait for the sunset, spread out a blanket and twist open a bottle of wine for an evening with friends and loved ones. The lookout is absolutely to die for.