

Amazing Underground Sights and Wonders



FORESTIERE patterned his underground world after the ancient catacombs of his native land. The Roman arches dominate the underground landscape while the stonework provides stability and beauty. But unlike the dark catacombs that protected the remnants of the lifeless, Forestiere designed well-lit courtyards and grottos to bring forth the radiance and vitality of life. This network of rooms, grottos, and passageways once honeycombed almost 10 acres, and numbered nearly 100.

FORESTIERE preferred his cool underground lifestyle to that lived by most people of his time—above ground in hot, wooden, “sweat boxes.” His unique home included a parlor with fireplace, a summer and a winter bedroom, a courtyard with a bath and a fish pond, and a kitchen with all the conveniences of his era. This earthen home was his friend and protector from all types of inclement weather.



IT HAS been said that “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.” Every twist and turn throughout this delightful underground maze brings a new beauty to behold. The stonework, the scallop-shaped seats carved into the walls and passageways, and the lush greenery of trees and grapevines growing beneath the ground proclaim Forestiere’s love for life, nature, and the divine Creator of it all.



ESCAPING the intense Fresno heat is as easy as descending a flight of stairs. Step down into the cool, welcoming arms of nature-shaded rooms and courtyards. Amazingly, the underground climates here (micro-climates) change depending on the location. Temperatures can range anywhere from 10 to 30 degrees lower than above ground, or just a couple of degrees from one spot to another. This photo shows a citrus tree (once bearing 7 varieties of citrus) growing at a second underground level (about 22 feet down). The different levels also affect the timing of tree blossom appearance and protect them from frost.

"To make something with lots of money, that is easy. But to make something out of nothing --that now, is something!"

Baldassare Forestiere