

# JACK LONDON PARK PARTNERS

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## **Jack London State Historic Park offers inviting locations for plein air painters**

Glen Ellen, CA - In addition to its combination of history and nature, [Jack London State Historic Park](#) offers a variety of locations that are ideal for plein air painting (literally painting in the “open air”). Artists will find scenes that may change throughout the day and throughout the year but always offer a satisfying creative experience.

The park is one of many local venues welcoming artists selected for the annual [Sonoma Plein Air Festival](#) each September. Art lovers can enjoy – and purchase - their splendid work at the Art Show and Sale on Sonoma Plaza (this year on Sept. 11, 2021).

Famed author Jack London and his wife Charmian were so enchanted by the land that became their home, they called it “Beauty Ranch.” Today, the park’s scenic beauty – including groves of oak and eucalyptus trees, towering redwoods, rolling vineyards and several historic structures - continues to attract visitors from all over the world.

Hikers are drawn to the park’s 1,400 acres but artists need not carry their supplies far from their vehicles to find perfect places to paint. Here are a few favorites of local plein air artists.

[The Cottage](#) – This wood-framed cottage, built in the 1860s, was purchased by London in 1911. It was enlarged in 1913 until it included some 3,000 square feet of living space. Jack London wrote many of his later stories and novels in this house.

[Ranch Buildings](#) – The stone buildings near the cottage were built for a variety of purposes and at different times. The sherry barn, the stallion barn, and the distillery, as well as the ruins of the winery all offer distinctive styles and textures, irresistible to painters. The nearby [Pig Palace](#) has a unique look and story: Jack London designed this circular hog barn so that one person could tend 200 hogs, saving labor and providing a healthier environment for the pigs.

The Vineyard – In the middle of the park are the historic single vineyards of Beauty Ranch, growing Cabernet, Merlot, Syrah and Zinfandel grapes for wines that have been exclusively produced by

[Kenwood Vineyards](#) since 1976. The property is privately owned and operated, but it is in full view for park visitors to enjoy during their visit.

[The House of Happy Walls](#) – After Jack London’s death in 1916, Architect Harry P. Merritt designed the House of Happy Walls to be Charmian’s home and ultimately, a museum. She lived in the house from 1935 until 1952. This Arts and Crafts-style house has Spanish-style roof tiles and fieldstone walls.

"The light can be dramatic as it moves across open vineyards, along hills and plays with the trees, structures and ruins at different times of the year," said Sonoma artist Pat Meier-Johnson.

Painters who don’t mind a walk will find a nearly unlimited number of settings and vistas to paint along the park’s 29 miles of trails.

Less than a mile from the parking lot are the ruins of [Wolf House](#), the massive stone estate that was Jack London’s dream house. It tragically burned down shortly before it was completed. What remains of the structure today is still impressive and inspiring to artists.

"As a child visiting the park, I was always drawn to the mysterious glow of the afternoon sun through the remains of Wolf House and now am lucky to get to paint it," Meier-Johnson said.

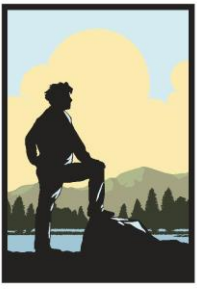
A longer walk, about three miles from the parking lot, leads to an historic orchard. Rows of gnarled, once forgotten fruit trees have been revived so successfully that the produce is distributed to food banks and other organizations by the non-profit [Farm to Pantry](#).

Jack London State Historic Park is open daily (except Christmas) from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The entry fee is \$10 per vehicle (up to nine people). Annual passes and group rates are available. Handicap accessible restrooms are located in the Museum parking lot, in the Ranch parking lot, and on the trail to the Wolf House ruins. Be sure to pack a picnic (there is no food service in the park, though there are drinking fountains) and bring an umbrella as the park gets plenty of California sunshine, especially in summer.

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### **About Jack London State Historic Park**

Jack London State Historic Park, in the heart of the Sonoma Valley, is operated and funded by Jack London Park Partners, one of the first non-profit organizations to be entrusted with management of a



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state park on behalf of the people of California. Funding to keep the park going strong is generated from visitors, annual passholders and generous donors. Learn more about the park at <https://jacklondonpark.com/> and on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).