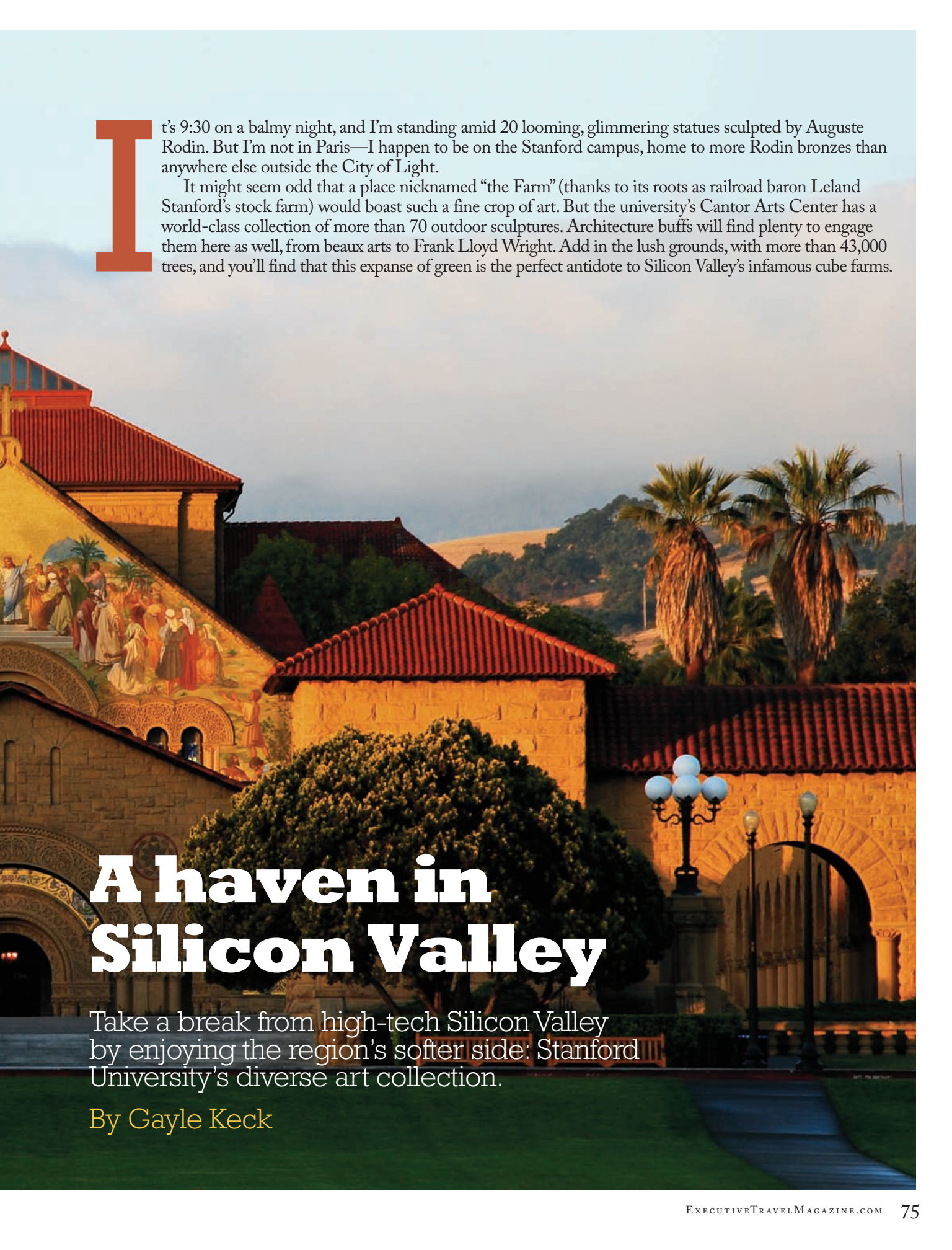


Stanford Memorial Church, known to students as MemChu, is adorned with mosaics begun in 1900 and completed five years later.

Stanford:



It's 9:30 on a balmy night, and I'm standing amid 20 looming, glimmering statues sculpted by Auguste Rodin. But I'm not in Paris—I happen to be on the Stanford campus, home to more Rodin bronzes than anywhere else outside the City of Light.

It might seem odd that a place nicknamed “the Farm” (thanks to its roots as railroad baron Leland Stanford’s stock farm) would boast such a fine crop of art. But the university’s Cantor Arts Center has a world-class collection of more than 70 outdoor sculptures. Architecture buffs will find plenty to engage them here as well, from beaux arts to Frank Lloyd Wright. Add in the lush grounds, with more than 43,000 trees, and you’ll find that this expanse of green is the perfect antidote to Silicon Valley’s infamous cube farms.

A haven in Silicon Valley

Take a break from high-tech Silicon Valley by enjoying the region’s softer side: Stanford University’s diverse art collection.

By Gayle Keck

Where to stay

Four Seasons Hotel Silicon Valley

2050 University Ave., East Palo Alto
650-566-1200
fourseasons.com

Continue your artful day with a podcast tour of this hotel's impressive international collection, including Mirós and Dalís. About three miles from campus, this high-tech, 200-room property offers a Stanford hotline and complimentary rides to campus in a hybrid SUV. Given the free Wi-Fi and rooftop pool, though, you may not want to leave.



Rosewood Sand Hill

2825 Sand Hill Rd., Menlo Park
650-561-1500
rosewoodsandhill.com

Slightly farther from campus, this serene new resort features balconies or terraces in each room. An arrangement lets guests play the famed Stanford Golf Course. Plus a business center, if you must.

Stanford Park Hotel

100 El Camino Real, Menlo Park
650-322-1234
stanfordparkhotel.com

Located near Sand Hill Road, this gracious 163-room property has a relaxed feel but provides amenities like free Wi-Fi, a business center, 24-hour room service and a courtesy shuttle to Stanford.

Westin Palo Alto

675 El Camino Real, Palo Alto
650-321-4422
starwoodhotels.com

Opt for a King Tower Suite at this boutique-size Westin right across from campus, and you'll get a separate office with a printer.



The graceful, arched arcades of the university's original, late-19th-century buildings are crafted from yellow sandstone in a Romanesque-meets-California Mission style.



Earlier in the day, I'd visited the Cantor's newly expanded indoor Rodin galleries, which are spacious enough to enable the display of the university's 200-plus Rodin works en masse (and there's plenty of mass!) for the first time. The monumental *Thinker* dominates a soaring circular space, while smaller figures, busts, astonishingly expressive disembodied hands and studies for larger pieces demonstrate the breadth of the sculptor's genius.

During a lively tour, docent Gayle Brugler revealed that Rodin preferred to exhibit his statues by candlelight. So now I've come back to see how these outdoor works look at night, illuminated much as they were in the artist's studio (or, in this case, by a special in-ground lighting system). "Rodin was always thinking in lumps and holes," Brugler said, "reflecting light and not reflecting light in his sculptures." The dramatic setting illustrates her point. It seems strangely akin to the binary ones and zeroes being sculpted all across campus in buildings named for Hewlett, Packard and Gates.

I started my Stanford visit with a bird's-eye glimpse of campus from the 250-foot-high viewing platform on art deco Hoover Tower. Stanford's older buildings are a sea of red-tiled roofs, with the waters of the bay shimmering in the distance. A student guide pointed out the new nanotechnology lab that's under construction and a recently completed "green" building funded by alum and Yahoo! co-founder Jerry Yang. (Building nomenclature isn't all about the big-ticket alumni, though—there's also a pair of modular structures dubbed *Bambi* and *Godzilla*.)

Back on the ground, I strolled the graceful, arched arcades of the original, late-19th-century buildings crafted from yellow sandstone in a Romanesque-meets-California Mission style. Stanford's layout feels verdant and harmonious, perhaps due to planning by Frederick Law Olmsted, the same landscape architect who created New York's Central Park.

Armed with a map, I searched for sculptures by Calder, Miró, Moore and Maya Lin, scattered around campus like treasures. My favorite was a sinuous, 128-ton stone wall

The Cantor Arts Center displays the university's 200-plus Rodin works en masse.



The 8,180-acre expanse of Stanford is so vast—the largest contiguous university campus in the U.S., sprawling over two zip codes—that it's a challenge to see everything on foot.

Where to dine

Kaygetsu

325 Sharon Park Dr.
(at Sand Hill Rd.), Menlo Park
650-234-1084
kaygetsu.com

Don't be put off by the strip-mall surroundings: This Japanese standout serves an exquisite five-course kaiseki tasting menu, as well as an à la carte menu, including sashimi and hard-to-find dishes, like savory custard chawan mushi.

Tamarine

546 University Ave., Palo Alto
650-325-8500
tamarinerestaurant.com

Reserve well in advance for this chic modern Vietnamese restaurant and gallery, where the movers and shakers are outnumbered only by orders for the Shaking Beef.

The Village Pub

2967 Woodside Rd., Woodside
650-851-9888
thevillagepub.net

A bit farther afield, this stylish restaurant serves contemporary California cuisine, including housemade charcuterie, local cheeses and heirloom produce from a dedicated five-acre farm.

Cool Café at the Cantor Arts Center

328 Lomita Dr., Stanford
650-723-4177
museum.stanford.edu/visit/cafe.html

Dine on the outdoor terrace overlooking the Rodin sculpture garden. The café specializes in organic, sustainable gourmet sandwiches, salads and burgers from chef Jesse Cool.



by Andy Goldsworthy. Lurking in a trench, it evokes a slumbering dragon.

Along the way, I traveled shaded paths edged by vivid blue agapanthus and fuchsia oleanders, but the most spectacular display of color I encountered was in the mosaics of Memorial Church, facing the main quad. Italian artists used 20,000 shades of tile to create interior and exterior murals, including 34 hues of pink in the cheeks of the four angels who guard the church's dome.

The 8,180-acre expanse of Stanford is so vast—the largest contiguous university campus in the U.S., sprawling over two zip codes—that it's a challenge to see everything on foot. But you can always hop a golf-cart tour (reserve in advance) to discover the more far-flung sights. The tour is customized, so you might opt to visit the Papua New Guinea Sculpture Garden, with 40 mystical works carved onsite by the artists, or Leland Stanford's Red Barn and Stock Farm, where Eadweard Muybridge made his pioneering photographs of horses in motion.

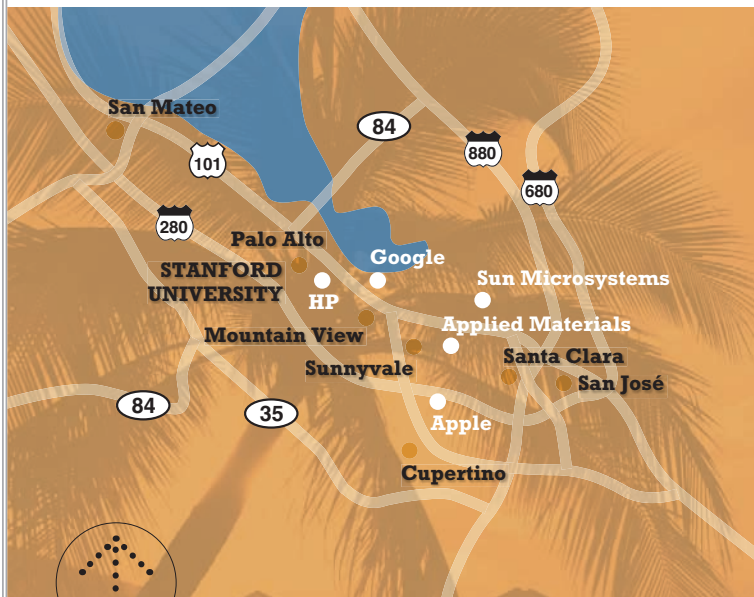
But I was more interested in one of Stanford's hidden delights, a 1937 Frank Lloyd Wright-designed home built for the family of a professor who later deeded it to the university. Reopened this fall after

several months of renovations, Hanna House (nicknamed the Honeycomb House) was a seminal structure for Wright. He adopted a hexagonal pattern as his motif, leaving no 90-degree corners. "It made the carpenters crazy," confided my guide, Julie Cain.

The architect designed around the ancient valley oaks embracing the hilltop home. "You feel this emotional connection to the environment, and you don't know why—but Wright knows why," Cain said, pointing out how the exterior flows into the interior through intricate walls of windows.

From the pattern in the floor to a towering skylight in the kitchen (or the "laboratory," as Wright called it) to custom-designed furniture, the architect's "honeycombs" are everywhere. But the temperamental talent didn't always get his way—two fireplaces were added in an extensive Wright-designed 1957 remodel, against Wright's original wishes. A determined Jean Hanna hopped in her car and drove alone to Arizona, convincing Wright to give her what she wanted.

After my long day of exploring, what I wanted was a relaxing dinner. Continuing with the art and architecture theme, I headed down spectacular Palm Drive, flanked with 166 Canary Island date palms, and dropped by a



building designed by one of Wright's contemporaries, Julia Morgan, who also created Hearst Castle.

The current home of MacArthur Park—a favorite dining spot for visiting Stanford parents, with an airy white interior that features an open, peaked ceiling and double fireplaces—once provided hospitality for World War I soldiers. Much like at Hanna House, something about the space just feels good for the soul.

Fortified with grilled baby artichokes and barbecued ribs, I headed back to commune with the Rodins. As I stood alone, contemplating his masterwork, *The Gates of Hell*, eerie in the evening's shadowy stillness, a dozen inline skaters glided past on nearby Roth Way. My frisson of fear transformed into a smile. Were the sculptor alive today, I don't doubt that he'd add a crouched, muscled skater to his remarkable oeuvre. **ET**

GAYLE KECK is a Lowell Thomas Award-winning travel writer who lives in San Francisco.

The road less taken

Stanford University is an easy diversion when calling on Silicon Valley company headquarters:

Apple
14.8 miles

Sun Microsystems
16.11 miles

HP
3 miles

Google
7.35 miles

Applied Materials
14.04 miles

Getting there

The Stanford campus is about 24 miles from San Francisco International Airport and about 18 miles from San José International Airport.

San José International Airport

(*sjc.org*) is in the midst of a major, multiyear construction project that includes a new rental car center, a parking garage, demolition of Terminal C, improvements to Terminal A and construction of the new Terminal B. The new concourse is partially completed (Southwest Airlines will be the only carrier using it until next June, but check-in and baggage claim will still be at Terminal A, so plan on extra time to get to your gate). Terminal A's gates were all renumbered in August—so it's a little hectic over here. But on the bright side, the airport's security checkpoint has been expanded and new food options have been added, including a Gordon Biersch restaurant and Peet's Coffee & Tea, with more to come.

At **San Francisco International Airport** (*flysfo.com*), renovation of Terminal 2 (the old, unused

international terminal) is scheduled to begin in mid-2010, with an opening date in early 2011. Virgin America and American Airlines will then be moved to the new concourse, which will also have a new gourmet market, a wine bar and dining options with a Slow Food focus. Until Terminal 2 is completed, two domestic carriers, Virgin America and JetBlue, are located in the new International Terminal.

San Francisco Airport Museums (*sfoarts.org*) curates a wonderful, eclectic mix of rotating exhibits, including art, anthropology, design, sports, animation and transportation. Past shows have ranged from the art of the martini to Native American baskets. The most extensive displays are in the International Terminal and Terminal 3.

Stanford campus

Cantor Arts Center

328 Lomita Dr., Stanford
650-723-4177, museum.stanford.edu

Open Wed.–Sun. Rodin sculpture garden open daily and lighted until midnight.

Hanna House

650-725-8352, lbre.stanford.edu/architect/hanna_house

More art

Allied Arts Guild

75 Arbor Rd., Menlo Park
650-322-2405, alliedartsguild.org

A collection of artists' studios and shops set in a lovely series of gardens.

First Friday Art Walks

Pacific Art League of Palo Alto
668 Ramona St., Palo Alto
650-321-3891, paloaltoartwalk.com

The PAL's gallery shop and a number of other galleries are open on the first Friday of each month from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.; many offer live music, entertainment and refreshments.

Stanford Theatre

221 University Ave., Palo Alto
650-324-3700, stanfordtheatre.org

A lavish, restored movie palace showing classic films, preceded by live organ music on the "Mighty Wurlitzer."