

# COSMOPOLITAN CHRONICLE

True tales from the annals of history, archaeology, construction, and restoration of the Casa de Bandini and Cosmopolitan Hotel.  
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## Mystery of the Acorn Pendant

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During recent excavations at the Casa de Bandini/Cosmopolitan Hotel, a single acorn pendant was unearthed. Probably worn on a necklace, or attached to an earring, this small pendant is only a few centimeters long with an ivory body and metal eyelet for hanging. Why an acorn? Who wore it? Where did it come from? In the preliminary analysis phase, these are just a few questions asked, all of which could possibly remain a mystery.

There are a variety of reasons jewelry was modeled after the fruit of the oak tree. In some cultures, acorns once constituted a dietary staple, rich in protein, carbohydrates, and fats. Local California Indians worked day and night from September through November in higher altitudes to gather and preserve acorns. The meat from cracked and hulled acorns was stored in granaries, and some of the meat

was immediately leached and ground into flour with a stone mortar and pestle. Acorns were also a popular theme during the Victorian Era because they were associated with immortality. "In Britain, one old tradition has it that if a woman carries an acorn on her person, it will delay the aging process and keep her forever young." (<http://www.answers.com/topic/acorn>). The acorn also symbolizes potential and strength, and has been associated with fertility and youth.

Who wore the pendant, and where it came from are the real mysteries. The Casa de Bandini/Cosmopolitan Hotel has been frequented by a number of visitors throughout the years. To give an idea of the cultural diversity present, the local community itself was established by Spaniards, Mexicans, *Mestizos*, Indians and *Californios*. Completed in 1829 by Don Juan Bandini, it became a social hub. Guests included political figures, presidio officers, friends, and family. In 1869, Albert Seeley purchased the building and converted it into the Cosmopolitan Hotel, which was visited by hundreds of guests over the years. The

building later served as a boarding house, an olive packing plant, and a residence.

Thousands of visitors have passed through this building, danced on its earthen and wooden floors, meandered through its courtyard, and provided the necessary labor to keep this building alive. Any one of these visitors could have brought with them the mysterious acorn pendant. The Governor's wife could have lost the pendant while dancing at one of Don Juan Bandini's famous *fandangos*. Perhaps it was one of a pair of earrings that Albert Seeley gave to his wife on their anniversary. Another mystery...

