



Timber Cove Inn

Background on Benny Bufano and the Obelisk At Timber Cove Inn

The obelisk that rises some 72 feet above the rocks behind Timber Cove Inn was completed in 1969 by the late Beniamino Bufano after seven years of labor and many incidents; some tragic, some hilarious, none anticipated. We are frequently asked to explain the significance of the monument, which is Bufano's largest work. He chose to call it "The Expanding Universe." His wish was that it be dedicated to the United Nations and to world peace. Pat Brown, when he was Governor, promised to perform the dedication, then reneged.



The Madonna, children and hands were for Bufano all symbols of the peace which appeared frequently in his work. To us, the statue has another significance--perhaps less of a one than peace among men, but which for Timber Cove has relevance: For Benny, the word "can't" didn't exist. If he could imagine something, he could do it, and more often than not, he did. "Practical" men were hypocrites in his eyes because they denied the possible. Therefore they denied themselves.

The Governor wasn't alone in breaking his word to Benny; hundreds of other did. But he knew the value of "practical" men's words and gave them little heed, as he ignored all conventions that were inconsistent with his objectives.

He lived a near monastic life, except for a few coins in his pocket, he did not handle money and he had no orthodox sense of its value. (The torso in the pool is a casting of a piece for which he sued and won \$50,000 because the City of San Francisco did not display it properly. Ours was a gift because he liked the setting.)

He was myopic and persistent in the pursuit of his work. And he was not above duplicity to in dealing with people who values he didn't respect. Those qualities helped him to be one of the most prolific artists of his time. They also contributed to considerable controversy.

At Timber Cove, we too have had our share of dealing with those who would tell us "It couldn't be done." So for us, the stature has a special meaning. It is a monument symbolizing perseverance in beliefs and convictions which conflict with popular advice. Thus it commemorates the pursuit of any objective in the face of odds...including world peace.

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