

Ghosts At The Historic Sierra Sky Ranch

The historic Sierra Sky Ranch is home to several residents who have checked in and never checked out! They don't pay for their rooms, refuse to obey any rules, and play tricks on guests and staff. They consider everyone else (everyone living, that is) as intruders.

There are many stories told over the years of paranormal experiences by guests and employees of Sierra Sky Ranch. You may come to the ranch as a "skeptic," but may very well leave the ranch a believer... many have, and return often hoping to experience more of their "ghostly" encounters.

"Everything they do is very playful," owner Ted Roach explains to one of the paranormal groups who frequently check in to investigate the property. "Like when guests tell me they've really enjoyed their stay, but the people staying in the upstairs room were really loud"—Roach tells them there *are* no rooms upstairs. Or, when they feel something touched them, or saw a woman waving from a corner who isn't really there. Ted Roach delights in all the stories from the guests. Water that turns on by itself in the bathrooms, smells of Lily of the Valley perfume in different areas of the main house and library, smells of fried chicken in the motel hallway that lasts for only a few minutes, doors that lock and unlock themselves, lights going on and off by themselves, and even a kiss on the cheek felt by one of the female bartenders in the restaurant when nobody was around. Footsteps heard coming down from stairs at the loft area, a scowling man ghost walking back and forth out on the veranda. These are just a few of examples of the stories Ted hears on a daily basis.

Sierra Sky Ranch is thought to be haunted by at least five separate souls, whose emotions range from curiosity, frustration, contentment, fear, panic, and even anger. Jackie Meador of CCPI (Central California Paranormal Investigations) says that there is an enormous amount of energy surrounding the inside of the ranch's main house. What that energy emanates from or why it chooses to manifest itself here is as of yet inconclusive. Jackie believes that by the physical evidence alone there is proof of paranormal activity that takes place at the ranch, and that the Sierra Sky Ranch is one of the most haunted hotels in Central California. She and her group of investigators and students that she teaches a Paranormal 101 class in Fresno, continue to investigate the property several times a year.

A previous owner in the 1980's tells this story:

One morning as she walked across the parking lot, coming to work, she looked up into the library windows at the end of the hall. She saw there a small woman dressed in a high neck, long sleeved black dress of the early 1900's. She had her hands folded in front of her and was watching the owner approach the building. The owner realized that the hotel had been empty the night before and wondered who this person was. She quickly ran into the nearest door and up the stairs into the library. No one was there, yet only seconds before there was! Another time this owner stepped into the hallway from her office and looked down towards the library. She stopped in her tracks as she noticed a military officer about the reach the far end of the hall. He was dressed in an officer's uniform but, it was not a modern day uniform. As he reached the end of the hall and was about to turn right... he stopped and looked back at the owner. They both stood still, staring at each other for a few seconds. Then the officer turned and walked out of sight. When the owner quickly followed him to the end of the hall, he had disappeared. The Sierra Sky Ranch had been used as a military

recuperation hospital after World War II for a period of time. We figure that is the time period in which this officer was here.

Our chef here at the Sierra Sky Ranch restaurant, the Branding Iron, was a total non-believer in ghosts when he joined our staff. He was told by several employees that his mind would be changed eventually to that of a total believer. After a few months he had to admit that they were right. On one occasion the chef spent the night here at the ranch in room 16, Sarah's room. He had taken all the loose change out of his pockets and dumped it all on the table by the bed. He turned out the lights and went to sleep. When he awoke he found that all his change had been stacked in neat little piles and placed in a straight line. Another time as the chef walked through the main lounge he stopped to straighten all the leather pillows on one of the couches. A few minutes later he walked back through that room and every one of the pillows was lying face down on the couch in a perfectly straight row. Other times our chef has been known to lock a door and find that only minutes later the door is unlocked again and no one else is around!

There are many instances of strange things happening at the ranch. We hear about them all the time from guests and employees alike. One night two of our front desk clerks walked into the restaurant when it was closed and only one small light at the other end of the room behind the bar was lit. They decided to ask out loud and see if Albert (another long time resident ghost) was in the room with them. They asked Albert to let them know if he was there by making the little light behind the bar become very, very bright. After the second request the small wattage bulb went blindingly pure white and the brightest they had ever seen. It held the intensity for about five seconds and then went back instantly to its normal glow. It was amazing they said, and so they decided to try it

one more time. Speaking out loud they explained into the darkness that to make sure it was not some kind of power surge, would he please do it one more time. Again, after the second request for it, the light went blindingly white from one end of the bar to the other! Then, like the first time, after five seconds or so it instantly went back to normal. They could not believe their eyes and so explained once more that if “he” would do it just one more time they would never bother him again and would know beyond a shadow of a doubt that “he” Albert was here with them. A third time upon their request, the bright light appeared. You can’t tell these gals there are no ghosts here at the Sierra Sky Ranch! One more note about Albert. He was a cowboy here at the ranch in the very early days and passed away in 1875 the psychics have reported. One night during an investigation a medium came to the front desk with a message for the front desk clerk on duty that night. She told the desk clerk that Albert was standing right in the doorway to the office and he wanted her to tell the gal at the desk that he would prefer that all female employees refer to him as “Albie,” but, all the male employees are to call him “Albert”. !

ELMER

In the late 1920s hard times fell on Mr. Batterson, the owner of the ranch. Mr. Batterson sold off quite a lot of the land and by 1934 the ranch was down to a few hundred acres. Elmer was a hard working and loyal ranch hand. When the ranch was sold to the state in the early 1930’s to become a tuberculosis sanitarium, Elmer was so depressed about the sale of the ranch that he committed suicide by cutting himself and bleeding to death outside behind the kitchen area. There have been reports of people seeing a cowboy on the grounds of the ranch. One of the paranormal investigators believe Elmer to still be around and said, “The last time we were here, our group leader and I walked into the kitchen

and when we got to the middle of it the burners on the fryers and stove all turned on and created a fireball. Everything had been shut down and double checked two hours earlier when the restaurant portion of the ranch had closed.” Tables that are set and ready for the next day have been found with coffee cups all lined up in a row. There are also sightings of Elmer walking along outside on the veranda peering and scowling into the windows of the living area. He is not believed to be a very happy soul, or it may be his personality was just as lacking in life. Also in the kitchen are two chefs that do not seem to get along with each other. One is at the stove and the other at the prep table. The paranormals say the chef at the stove is constantly complaining...”This is my stuff, they are using MY STUFF” referring to the cooking utensils. He doesn’t seem to realize that all the equipment has been replaced many times over since “he” worked here.

SARAH

Sarah was the 50 year old nurse who took her job very seriously. When the state bought the ranch to be a tuberculosis sanitarium, Sarah became the resident head nurse here. Most of the patients were very ill with advance stages of the disease. Sarah had taken a special interest in two of her charges, child patients, who were critically ill. It is said that these two children died in -----Sarah’s room, and shortly after their deaths Sarah succumbed to the disease. People report seeing the eerie figure of a nurse walking near the bridge over Lewis Creek, which borders the SSR property. Others say they have captured the vague image of a woman in their photos in the form of a swirling mist. Ask the housekeepers at the ranch, Sarah does not like the blinds in her room closed during the day. She is said to stand vigil at the window of her room, as if looking out for the children. Sarah has even “gone past” one of the housekeepers in her room while being cleaned, in the form of a

shadow. Her presence is very strong and always close by. Several people have reported seeing Sarah standing in her bedroom and sometimes bathroom window looking out at them. One such dinner guest was a psychic herself and told the front desk clerk she saw Sarah looking out at her as she walked on the lawn. The guest said she raised her hand and waved at Sarah. Sarah in turn slowly raised her right hand and moved it back and forth, then turned around and floated out of sight!

CHILDREN

The children seem to be the most elusive of the souls here, but there have been reports of the sounds of children playing, giggling and whispering in the main living area and media room. When Halloween decorations are pulled down mysteriously, and the note “C” played on the piano late at night, could it be these two children? We just don’t know. If only one of our resident cats, Fisher, could talk. She seems to spot things going on in the main living area at times when no one is in there and when “whatever it is” wants to play, Fisher has no problem whatsoever with that! Another resident kitty...”Moo Kitty”... will never fail to first check down the main hallway before he crosses to go out the glass doors to the breezeway. Occasionally he will stop, sit and stare intently as he pokes his head around the corner into the hallway... What does he see that we can’t? He sits here just mesmerized but, we can’t see a thing. The psychic investigators seem to feel the children (one boy and one girl) are about six to eight years old. The boy is said to always want someone to play ball with him. They love to play on the stairs going up to the loft area, and it is usually one of the hot spots of activity here at the ranch.

MAN IN LOFT AREA

Although not much has been said, there is believed to be a man's presence in the loft area above the living room. He has been felt by the CCPI investigators as well as others brave enough to venture to that area. One of the investigators gets a "queasy" feeling at the bottom of the stairs leading to the loft, and will not venture past the landing.

According to the Central California Paranormal Investigators, out of seven scientific indicators used, there are six that have been validated here at the ranch. This has led the group to label the ranch as one of the 10 most haunted locations in the Central California area. In the investigator's opinions there are no demonic, malevolent or evil "forces" present here. They are simply lost souls who for reasons of their own have decided to make the Sierra Sky Ranch their home. We here at the ranch feel a kind of "kindred spirit" to the souls that chose to remain here. You may wonder how we "deal" with working in this environment day after day. It is actually very easy. We acknowledge their presence here and by doing so we all get along.