



# A stroll through time at the Taos museums

Text by Steve Fuhendorf

## BACKGROUND FOR YOUR TOUR

The history of the Taos Valley can be interpreted through artifacts left by the many diverse cultures that have called it home. Strong evidence suggests that as far back as 9,000 years, the ancestors of today's Pueblo Indians, known as the Anasazi, or ancient ones, lived here. The Town of Taos itself is more than 400 years old, reaching back to the Spanish exploration and settlement of New Mexico. Taos is considered by many to be the ending point of El Camino Real (The Royal Road). More recently, the many ethnic groups that have populated the rest of the United States have also gained a foothold in North Central New Mexico, adding to the rich cultural heritage represented in the Taos museums. Step back into the past as you tour these museums and experience the daily lives, history, art and culture of local residents ranging from nearly forgotten civilizations to recent arrivals. For more information on hours of operation and special events taking place at the museums go to [www.taoschamber.com](http://www.taoschamber.com).

### 1. MILLICENT ROGERS MUSEUM

1504 MILLICENT ROGERS ROAD

The Millicent Rogers Museum is a great place to begin your stroll through time. Named for art patron Millicent Rogers, who settled in Taos in 1947, this museum contains the core of one of America's foremost Southwestern arts and design

collections. It has grown to include traditional and contemporary Hispanic

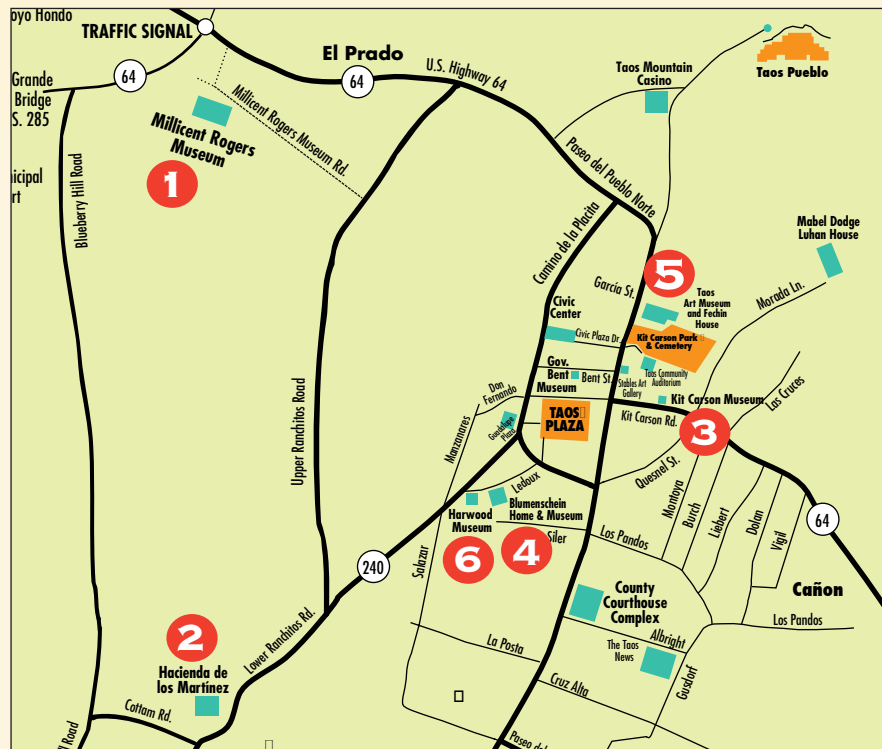
religious and domestic arts, pottery, paintings, photography and graphics, plus a wide range of arts and crafts from the many cultures of northern New Mexico. (One hour)

Information: 505-758-2462 or [www.millicentrogers.org](http://www.millicentrogers.org)

### 2. LA HACIENDA DE LOS MARTÍNEZ

LOWER RANCHITOS ROAD

La Hacienda de los Martínez is one of the few late Spanish Colonial "Great Houses" in the northern New Mexico



style left in the American Southwest. Built in 1804, many believe this trading center was the end of El Camino Real (The Royal Road) from Mexico. Today the hacienda's 21 rooms, surrounding two courtyards, provide the visitor with a rare glimpse of the rugged frontier life of the early 1800's. (One hour)

Information: 505-758-0505 or [www.taohistoricmuseums.com](http://www.taohistoricmuseums.com)

### 3. KIT CARSON HOME AND MUSEUM

113 KIT CARSON ROAD

Jumping forward about 40 years, the Kit Carson Home and Museum contains a portion of Carson's original home. In 1843, he purchased the large adobe house as a wedding present for his bride, Maria Josefa Jaramillo, a member of a very prominent Taos family. The museum features interpretive tours with reenactments by ancestors of Kit himself. Artifacts and exhibits illustrate Carson's life story and tell about his family and the character of frontier life. Other historical exhibits depict the Native American and Hispanic cultures of Northern New Mexico. (Two hours)

Information: 505-758-4945 or [www.kitcarsonhome.com](http://www.kitcarsonhome.com)

Watch traditional crafting at the annual Folk Life Festival at the Millicent Rogers Museum.

### 4. THE BLUMENSCHHEIN HOME AND MUSEUM

222 LEDOUX STREET

The Blumenschein Home and Museum brings us to the early 20th century in our stroll through Taos history. In the autumn of 1898, a fortuitous accident resulted in Taos becoming a great American art colony. Two young American artists, just returned from studying in Paris, were traveling from Denver to northern Mexico on a sketching trip when their surrey wheel broke on a mountainous road north of Taos. During the ensuing delay, Ernest L. Blumenschein and Bert G. Phillips fell in love with the spectacular landscape, radiant light and remarkable cultures of Taos. Blumenschein and Phillips were later instrumental in establishing the famous Taos Society of Artists. The museum is maintained much as it was when the

artist and his family were alive. It beautifully illustrates the lifestyle of Taos artists in the first half of the 20th century. (One hour)

Information: 505-758-0505 or [www.taohistoricmuseums.com](http://www.taohistoricmuseums.com)

### 5. THE TAOS ART MUSEUM AND FECHIN HOUSE

227 PASEO DEL PUEBLO NORTE

Between 1927 and 1933, Russian artist Nicolai Fechin built the Fechin House, which now houses a museum that is unique, even for Taos. Fechin filled the home with his own woodcarvings; crafting furniture, doors, windows and corbels. The Taos Art Museum has beautifully renovated the property, retaining and incorporating the many detailed architectural features. Regular exhibitions are hosted in the house by the Taos Art Museum. (One hour)

Information: 505-758-2690 or [www.taosartmuseum.org](http://www.taosartmuseum.org)

### 6. HARWOOD MUSEUM OF ART

238 LEDOUX STREET

Winding up our stroll through Taos history, we visit the second oldest art museum in the state, the University of New Mexico's Harwood Museum of Art. It was founded in 1923 and has been operated by UNM since 1936. Its many galleries span the spectrum of arts in Taos. They range from the Hispanic Traditions Gallery, with its remarkable collection of retablos (paintings on wood), to the works of the Taos Moderns and notable 20th century artists. A room is devoted to the works of the late contemporary abstract Agnes Martin, who made her home in Taos. Pieces by Larry Bell and Ken Price bring us to the present. Lectures and docent tours supplement the museum's changing exhibits. (One hour)

Information: 505-758-9826 or [www.harwoodmuseum.org](http://www.harwoodmuseum.org)

FOR SUMMER/FALL EVENTS GO TO [www.taoschamber.com](http://www.taoschamber.com)

