

RANCHO CUCAMONGA



UPSCALE COMMUNITY located at the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, just above Ontario. School scores middling to high, crime rate low. One of the newest and most modern communities in the county. Population 127,743.

In 1950, Cucamonga was a wide spot in the road with fewer than 1,000 homes. It was known for quarrying rock, growing oranges, pressing grapes into wine and dishing up humor for radio and TV comedian Jack Benny and his voice whiz, Mel Blanc. He immortalized the town with his Southern Pacific conductor's call of "Anaheim, Azusa and Coooocamongaaaa."

The town drew its name from a Spanish land grant, Cucamonga Rancho, which had been inspired by the Indian name for sandy place, Cucamonga.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Rancho Cucamonga got a small burst of suburban growth when it built around 3,100 homes and apartments.

The real boom started in the 1970s when the city built around 11,000 residential units and roared into the 1980s with about 20,000 homes and apartments. In the 1990s, Rancho Cucamonga slowed down to 5,000 residential units.

This is a town that has constructed 60 percent of all its housing in the last 25 years and almost 88 percent of its housing in the last 35 years. A lot of the new!

About 1970, California broke out of its post-World War II housing designs. One-story homes gave way to two, three-bedroom units to four and five, two bathrooms to three and four, wood shingles to fire-retardant tile roofs. Lots got smaller, closets bigger, kitchens fancier, bathrooms glitzier and windows larger to let in more natural light. Townhouses and clustered homes became more popular. Rancho Cucamonga's boom coincided with this new era.

Developers and community planners figured out ways to buffer car traffic from residential streets. Almost all of Rancho Cucamonga's subdivisions have walls around them. They protect the homes from arterial traffic and discourage speeding on residential streets.

In 1977, residents voted to incorporate Rancho Cucamonga as a legal city and bring planning and development under local control. These days the city has a reputation for being picky about what it allows to be built.

The new city took in the hamlets of Etiwanda, on the east, Alta Loma, the north, in the hills, and Cucamonga, south toward the center. Among locals and