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Knight Foundry, the nation's last cast-iron foundry, is among the historic sites in Sutter Creek. PHOTO BY ALLEN PIERLEONI

Sutter Creek takes you back

'Jewel of the Mother Lode' still sparkles

Strolling Main Street in Sutter Creek, it's easy to see why the Gold Rush-era town of Victorian architecture calls itself "the Jewel of the Mother Lode." The Amador County hamlet – a 90-mile round trip from Sacramento – is an inviting respite that transports visitors to small-town America.

Make your first stop the **Visitors Center** (71 Main St.) for the gallery of vintage photos and a self-guided walking tour.

Eureka Street leads to the **Knight Foundry and Shops** (81 Eureka St.,
www.knightfoundry.com). Back in the
day, the gargantuan cast-iron foundry
(opened in 1873 and the last one in the U.S.)
hand-crafted the machinery that drove the
gold-mining and timber industries. Tours are
offered on second Saturdays; special group
tours are available. Call 209-560-6160.

The **Monteverde General Store & Museum** (3 Randolph St.) is a time capsule from 1898. The original ledgers show the first item sold was a gallon jug of red wine for 40 cents. The store closed in 1972, leaving thousands of original goods on the

shelves – castor oil, canned vanilla wafers, plaster-of-paris bandages. Tours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fridays; call 209-267-1344 to arrange other days and hours.

Ask owner Lisa Klosowski to play a tune on her hand-made Italian Porter Swan Elite II while you browse the **Music Box Company's** vast collection of musical boxes, figurines and clocks (64 Main St., www.themusicboxcompany.com).

The emphasis is on "from scratch and homemade" at **Sina's Backroads Café** (74 Main St., www.sinasbackroadscafe), as in soups, quiches and biscuits. The pork shoulder for the Cubano sandwich is smoked for 24 hours.

Can you really eat the super-tall and supergood Pub Burger at **Cavana's Pub & Grub** with only two hands? Uh, no, you need four (36 Main St., www.cavanaspubandgrub.com); bring a friend.

Unleash your inner home cook at **Sutter Creek Culinary** (54 Main St., on Facebook), a feast of cookware and artisanal specialties, many locally sourced. Don't overlook 100 exotic spices and seasonings.

Winemaker Gary Miller transformed the **Sutter Creek Cheese Shoppe** (33 Main St., www.suttercreekcheese.com) into a hybrid wine-tasting room and cheese emporium. Five-taste flights are \$10. Best match: 2014 Grenache with Capra Stanislaus goat cheese.

When do pastry and bread transcend the realm of baked goods? When they're from **Andrae's Bakery** in next-door

Amador City (14141 Old Highway 49, www.andraesbakery.com). Visit www. suttercreek.org for details on upcoming special events.

BY ALLEN PIERLEONI

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