

# Petaluma's Hollywood Tour

Ever since the early days, commercial and feature film producers have loved to capture Petaluma's charm and style on film. Some sources suggest this Victorian Riverfront Town was a feature film site as early as 1911.

A little more recently, in 1973 to be exact, the American film classic "**American Graffiti**" was being filmed on Petaluma's Historic Downtown streets. Fans will recognize many of the scenes from the film on Petaluma's main street.

Films that include "**Basic Instinct**" and "**Peggy Sue Got Married**" were also shot in this charming city, 32 miles north of San Francisco, with its historic Iron Front buildings and immaculate Victorian mansions. Petaluma's downtown is one of the best preserved in California and features many buildings that survived the 1906 earthquake. The town is surrounded by acres of lush open space, farmland, rolling hills, and rugged coast close to redwood groves and winery villas, making it a filmmaker's location paradise.

"**Mumford**", a Disney/Touchstone film starring Ted Danson, featured Petaluma in a romantic comedy about a man pretending to be a psychologist in a small town

Also filmed in the area were "**Phenomenon**", starring John Travolta, "**The Horse Whisperer**" with Robert Redford, and a remake of "**Lolita**" with Jeremy Irons, as well as Clint Eastwood's "**True Crime.**"

Petaluma also served as the pilot location for "**Hollywood On Location**" starring Tab Hunter in a special showcasing popular locales for Hollywood films.

Commercials for Banc One, Goodyear Tire, Liquid Plummer as well as for Levi's®, Pillsbury, Orville Redenbacher and many other companies have all been filmed at Petaluma locations. In addition, Petaluma has been the site of numerous independent and student films and more than one television show. Last year, "Bay Area Backroads" filmed an entire half-hour program about the wonderful things to see, do and eat in Petaluma.

Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone, who starred in "**Basic Instinct**" and Kathleen Turner and Nicholas Cage, stars of "**Peggy Sue Got Married**" have strolled through Historic Downtown Petaluma.

Other famous faces started here. Petaluma High School produced star basketball player and actor Lloyd Bridges and actress Winona Ryder. Actor and occasional screenwriter Myron Healey was born in Petaluma in 1923. According to one source, Healey has appeared in more than 100 feature films and about 150 television shows since the 1940s. Noted film critic Pauline Kael was also born in Petaluma.

## PETALUMA FILM TOUR

Visitors can take a short jaunt around the town and get a tour of some notable film locations. It's easy to go by bicycle or car, or to park in the city garage at the corner of Keller Street and Western Avenue and walk around the town that is "anywhere" and "somewhere" USA in many feature films and commercials.

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- **Iron Front buildings on Western Avenue** between Kentucky Street and Petaluma Boulevard are frequently the backdrops for film sets. This area was used in Francis

Ford Coppola's "**Peggy Sue Got Married**" as well as for "**Basic Instinct**" and "**Heroes**." Set designers for "**Lolita**" transformed the area at the corner of Petaluma Blvd. So. and "D" St. with 1940's-era traffic signals and vehicles.

- **The Riverfront** at the foot of Western Avenue was where the police car splashed into the water in "**Howard the Duck**."
- **120 Petaluma Blvd. North** (Bluestone Main Building) was the site of Bodell's Appliances in "**Peggy Sue Got Married**."
- **The Mystic Theater**, 23 Petaluma Blvd. No., near "B" St., was transformed into the State Movie Theater in "**American Graffiti**." In the film, the marquee on the movie theater read "**Dementia 13**," which was one of George Lucas' first films. Lucas also inserted another reference to one of his earlier movies by having the license plate on one of the main hot rods read "**THX1138**."
- **Petaluma Blvd.** from "D" Street to Washington was used for the cruising scenes in "**American Graffiti**." The parking lot next to the McNear Building was used in the scene when the police car was chained to a light pole.
- **5<sup>th</sup> and "B" streets** were used in the 1997 Disney production, "**Flubber**" starring Robin Williams.
- **The end of "H" Street** at the Petaluma River was Lovers Lane for Peggy Sue and her boyfriend. And 600 Petaluma Blvd. South at "H" St. was transformed into the Donut Hole Cafe, where Peggy Sue cuddled with her boyfriend then roared off on his motorcycle.
- **920 "D" St.** - The upstairs bedroom was used in "**Explorers**," and a 20-foot tree was imported from Los Angeles for the boyfriend to climb to the girl's bedroom. Brown Court off "D" Street has a look that is a favorite with commercial producers, including those for Orville Redenbacher.
- **St. Vincent's Church** and the surrounding neighborhood near Howard and Liberty streets were used for the TV remake of "**Shadow of a Doubt**" with Mark Harmon as well as "**Basic Instinct**" with Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone. The big white house on the east side of Liberty Street near Washington street (226 Liberty St.) was Peggy Sue's house in "**Peggy Sue Got Married**."
- **Petaluma Turning Basin** and docks near Cavanagh Park were also used in "**Explorers**" as the site of a space ship landing.
- **Corona Road** and the hills east of town were used in the 1983 thriller "**Cujo**" by Stephen King.