



In the Same Light

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How One Resident Chose The Covington

Some choices announce themselves quietly.

When Joan Trivett first stepped into her apartment at The Covington, the thing that stopped her wasn't the brand-new countertops or fresh finishes. It was the light.

Her house in Laguna Beach had faced the ocean. Though this apartment looked out on a hillside, it was oriented in almost the same direction. The afternoon light fell at the familiar angles. Even the living room, kitchen, and bedroom followed a layout that mirrored those she was leaving.

"It just looked like this is where I needed to be," she recalls.

A Decision She Refused to Rush

Joan's certainty didn't happen overnight. She had spent nearly three years quietly exploring senior living communities, always with one eye on a future she wasn't ready to meet. Even after the passing of her husband, she was determined to stay in Laguna Beach, holding onto her independence and the roots she'd put down over the past 30 years.

Joan loved her neighbors. She loved walking down to the beach and along the cliffs. She loved opening her door to the ocean breeze. Trading it all for an apartment, at least initially, felt more like a loss than a choice.

"I had never lived in [one]," Joan says. "I didn't think I wanted to."

So, more than once, Joan turned down apartments when they became available. She wasn't ready, and she knew it. Looking back, she's honest about why. Like many of us, Joan quietly assumed she'd have more time to live independently.

"I had the illusion," she says, "that I would sail through more years of aging without needing as much help."



Change Comes at You Fast

Her life changed in the span of one week.

First, Joan's doctor informed her that her glaucoma had progressed enough that she shouldn't drive. Then, her audiologist gave her the news that her hearing had deteriorated significantly. At 83, the future she was holding at arm's length was suddenly right there in the room with her.

She tried to manage, staying at home when she could and relying on ride services when she couldn't, but Joan knew it wasn't sustainable. "I had to let go of the idea that I could stay independent," Joan says.

The question was no longer when she might move. It was where.

What No Brochure Could Show

Thankfully, by the time Joan was ready to move, "where" had all but decided itself.

At The Covington, she participated in a resident roundtable where prospective residents could move from table to table, asking current residents candid questions about their lives.

One of those residents was a woman Joan knew and respected from her church in Laguna Beach. Another couple she knew had supported her late husband's work with people experiencing homelessness. Their presence mattered. Because Joan shared many of their same values, she trusted their judgment. And they had chosen The Covington.

She also looked closely at the mission behind the lifestyle. The Covington's nonprofit status was important to Joan because it suggested that their goals extended beyond financial return.

"The focus is on the community, the people, and the quality of life that we have here," she says.

Location, too, was crucial. Because The Covington is only about 20 minutes from her former home, Joan was able to remain close to the people and places she knew. The coastal climate felt familiar, and the setting offered something other communities she toured could not.

There were gardens, shaded places to sit, and a walking path winding through the grounds. Tucked behind a gate was a "secret garden" filled with flowers, bamboo and a koi pond. As a spiritual director drawn to a contemplative way of life,

Joan recognized that this was a place where she could find peace.

When it came to the apartment itself, however, Joan hesitated. Still unsure she wanted apartment living at all, she first gravitated toward a cottage, hoping to hold onto the feeling of a house. Instead of comfort, the empty rooms overwhelmed her.

"I realized, no, it's too big," she recalls. "I'd feel lonely there."

Then she entered the apartment she lives in today. Light poured across the floors, softening clean, modern lines into something that felt less like a unit and more like somewhere she could belong. As it turns out, her furniture agreed. After her husband passed away, Joan had refreshed her home and bought new pieces. Walking through the unfinished apartment, she could see exactly where each piece would go.

"People come in and think [the furniture] was chosen for here," she says. "But actually, I had already chosen it, and it fit perfectly."

The Support She Didn't Know She Needed

If leaving her home was hard, arriving was anything but. The Covington had coordinated a mover who visited her house, measured her furniture, and mapped out in advance exactly what would fit and where. She arrived confident everything would work, and it did.

Not long after settling in, Joan's knee — troublesome for years — gave out in the middle of the night. Around four in the morning, in pain and unable to walk, she did something she had never done in her life. She reached over and called for assistance.

Help arrived within minutes.

"That was exactly what I think I wanted, but I had never really envisioned how it would work," she says. "It was like being rescued. It was priceless."

Later, Joan needed knee surgery. The path to recovery took her from the hospital straight to The Covington Care Suites, then back to her own apartment. Physical therapists even came to her door and walked her to her sessions.

When Joan says, "I'm a big success story for The Covington," she means it.

Often, You Gain More Than You Lose

Joan had worried, understandably, about what she'd give up. She treasured the outdoors, the daily walks, the open access to beautiful places. Choosing The Covington meant not having to miss any of that.

The campus sits quietly on a hill in a residential area, free from traffic noise and beautifully landscaped, with a walking path she loops for exercise. In her first weeks, she watched grounds crews set thousands of new flowers into the beds.

And there was something she hadn't known to look for at all. Out in the world, she'd begun to feel a particular kind of loneliness. It's the kind that creeps up when you're surrounded by people who are too absorbed in their phones to know you're there. In her new community, Joan found the opposite.

"You cannot go out into the hall and be passed by someone who doesn't say hello," she says. "Everybody looks you in the eye. Everybody takes time." She pauses. "I call it a little bit of heaven."

The Biggest Surprise of All

On her journey from Laguna Beach to Aliso Viejo, that's the one thing that sticks out most to Joan. Not the amenities, level of care or even the light in her apartment. It's the **closeness**.

"I didn't expect that I would really feel close to people here," she says. When she moved into the Care Suites after a few months at The Covington, she assumed she'd lose touch with all the new friends she'd made. After all, she'd just had knee surgery and couldn't walk or visit them next door. Instead, neighbors kept track of her, welcomed her back, and asked how she was.

Nearly everyone she's spoken with tells her the same thing: **it gets even better over the years**.

Joan hadn't set out to be won over. All she wanted was to make the right decision for her future, in her time and on her terms. But somewhere between the light in her windows and the neighbors in the hall, her choice of senior living community became something more.

"I think The Covington is the best place in Southern California," Joan says. "I'm more than happy to champion it."

The Covington

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