El Presidio de Santa Bárbara State Historic Park
Happy 233rd Santa Barbara!

E l Presidio de Santa Bárbara State Historic Park was the place for romance, history, and fun last weekend when they hosted a series of Founding Day events celebrating Santa Barbara's 233rd birthday.

A Candlelight Dinner in the Historic Presidio Chapel on Friday evening was the first of several popular events. The unusual opulent setting was lit by scores of candles casting a golden glow. The event was attended by community leaders and Presidio patrons alike. After a courtyard reception all guests entered, and were announced then seated for a dinner, prepared by Chef Michael Blackwell and David Reardon. David Bolton was the Candlelight Dinner Chair.

The following morning the Founding Day Festival celebrated the Presidio Neighborhood and Santa Barbara's history. The free event began with a church service in the Presidio Chapel honoring the founding families, followed by an outdoor Founding Day program featuring Los Soldados del Real Presidio de Santa Bárbara, Early California dance and musical performances, and the presentation of Saint Barbara 2015 by the Native Daughters of the Golden West, Reina del Mar Parlor No. 126.

Following the ceremony, on-site educational activities focused on the history and culture of early California. Costumed demonstrators highlighted late-1700s heritage gardening, colonial cooking, and pottery making. There was also Chumash storytelling, archaeology, a Kids Draw Architecture program hosted by The Architectural Foundation of Santa Barbara, and reenactment crafts.

That evening the Rancho Roundup, a fundraising event for the Presidio, included several bands, including Double Wide Kings, Gene Evaro Jr. & The Family, Young Millions, The Caverns, and special guests. There was food by Georgi’s Smokehouse and locally made beer from Figueroa Mountain. A Patron Tequila VIP area, dancing, and more, rounded out the fun. Rancho Roundup was Co-Chaired by Keith Mautino and Debbie Acoces.