

= Copia ( museum ) =

Copia : The American Center for Wine , Food & the Arts was a non @-@ profit museum and educational center in downtown Napa , California , dedicated to wine , food and the arts of American culture . The center , planned and largely funded by vintners Robert and Margrit Mondavi , was open from 2001 to 2008 . The museum had galleries , two theaters , classrooms , a demonstration kitchen , a restaurant , a rare book library , and a 3 @. @ 5 @-@ acre ( 1 @. @ 4 ha ) vegetable and herb garden ; there it hosted wine and food tasting programs , exhibitions , films , and concerts . The main and permanent exhibition of the museum , " Forks in the Road " , explained the origins of cooking through to modern advances . The museum 's establishment benefited the city of Napa and the development and gentrification of its downtown .

Copia hosted its opening celebration on November 18 , 2001 . Among other notable people , Julia Child helped fund the venture , which established a restaurant named Julia 's Kitchen . Copia struggled to achieve its anticipated admissions , and had difficulty in repaying its debts . Proceeds from ticket sales , membership and donations attempted to support Copia 's payoff of debt , educational programs and exhibitions , but eventually were not sufficient . After numerous changes to the museum to increase revenue , Copia closed on November 21 , 2008 . Its library was donated to Napa Valley College and its Julia Child cookware was sent to the National Museum of American History . The 12 @-@ acre ( 4 @. @ 9 ha ) property had been for sale since its closure ; the Culinary Institute of America purchased the northern portion of the property in October 2015 . The college intends to open a campus , the Culinary Institute of America at Copia , which will house the CIA 's new Food Business School .

= = History = =

= = = Name = = =

The museum was named after Copia , the Roman goddess of wealth and plenty . According to Joseph Spence in Polymetis ( 1755 ) , Copia is a name used to describe the goddess Abundantia in poetry , and was referred to as Bona Copia in Ovid 's Metamorphoses .

= = = Background = = =

The city of Napa has historically not received as many wine country tourists as the cities north of it . A \$ 300 million flood management project around the turn of the 21st century to widen the Napa River and raise bridges prompted building developments . In the early 2000s , a large development was completed in the downtown area , as well as several hotels . Copia and the nearby Oxbow Public Market were two large developments also constructed around that time to increase tourist and media focus on the city of Napa .

The museum opened in 2001 , two months after the September 11 attacks . The museum 's visitor attendance was much lower than what was projected ; the museum partially attributed that to the depressed tourist economy stemming from the attacks .

= = = Conception and construction = = =

In 1988 , vintner Robert Mondavi , his wife Margrit Mondavi , and other members of the wine industry began to look into establishing an institution in Napa County to educate , promote , and celebrate American excellence and achievements in the culinary arts , visual arts , and winemaking . Three organizations supported the museum : the University of California at Davis , the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration , and the American Institute of Wine & Food . In 1993 , Robert Mondavi bought and donated the land for Copia for \$ 1 @. @ 2 million ( \$ 1 @. @ 97 million today ) , followed by a lead gift of \$ 20 million ( \$ 32 @. @ 8 million today ) . Mondavi chose the

downtown Napa location with urging from his wife , who raised her children there . James Polshek was hired by the foundation as the architect for the building in October 1994 . Subsequently , the " Founding Seventy " , supporters from Napa Valley and the surrounding Bay Area , made substantial donations . Initial financing for Copia was \$ 55 million ( \$ 66 @. @ 8 million today ) , along with a \$ 78 million ( \$ 104 million today ) bond prior to opening in 2001 .

When the organization purchased the property , it was an empty lot next to a tire store . Steve Carlin , founder of the Oxbow Public Market , believed that Copia 's establishment helped expand Napa , its downtown area , and the Oxbow District . Construction of the facility triggered a significant growth in development of a gourmet marketplace , hotels and restaurants in downtown Napa . The museum began construction in 1999 and hosted opening celebrations on November 18 , 2001 . In 2005 , Copia sold 3 @. @ 5 acres ( 1 @. @ 4 ha ) to Intrawest for construction of a Westin hotel .

= = = Decline and bankruptcy = = =

Although the facility did attract visitors , local residents ' support failed to reach the numbers expected by the founders . Original projections of 300 @, @ 000 admissions per year were never met . In October 2006 , the museum announced plans to turn galleries into conference rooms , remove most of the museum 's focus on art , and lay off 28 of its 85 employees ( most of whom were security guards for the art gallery ) . At the time , Copia had \$ 68 million ( \$ 74 @. @ 7 million today ) in debt . That year the museum also lowered its original adult admission fee of \$ 12 @. @ 50 to \$ 5 . For three months in 2006 , the museum admitted guests free of charge , and attendance and revenue increased . The museum also began hosting weddings and renting its space more frequently in order to raise revenue . In 2007 , the museum altered its theme significantly by removing its focus on food and art , and instead focusing solely on wine . It replaced some of its gardens with vineyards , changed its displays to focus more on the history and aspects of wine and viticulture , and decreased the restaurant 's and programs ' focus on food .

In September 2008 , Garry McGuire announced that 24 of 80 employees were being laid off and the days of operation would be reduced from 7 to 3 per week . Attendance figures had never reached either original or updated projections , causing the facility to operate annually in the red since its opening . In November , he announced that the property would be sold due to unsustainable debt . The museum closed on Friday , November 21 , 2008 . The closure was without warning ; visitors who had arrived for scheduled events found a paper notice at the entrance that the center was temporarily closed . The next days ' events involving chef Andrew Carmellini and singer Joni Morris were also abruptly cancelled ; the museum later stated that it would reopen on December 1 . On that day , the organization ( with \$ 80 million ( \$ 87 @. @ 9 million today ) in debt ) filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection . The federal bankruptcy court blocked a \$ 2 million ( \$ 2 @. @ 2 million today ) emergency loan with priority in security , leaving Copia with no funds to resume operations .

Writing about the failure of the project , The New York Times and other newspapers suggested that Copia had failed to clearly define its focus . Potential tourists were left feeling unsure whether they were visiting a museum , a cooking school , or a promotional center for wine .

= = = Aftermath = = =

Following the 2008 closing of Copia , a group of investors , developers , advocates , and vintners named the Coalition to Preserve Copia was formed to explore a plan to preserve the building and grounds . Part of the group 's plan included forming a Mello @-@ Roos district with participation of local hotel properties to finance bonds to purchase the property , but their effort failed . In May 2009 local developer George Altamura spoke about his interest in purchasing the property . Other developers including the Culinary Institute of America also expressed an interest in acquiring the property . Copia 's bond holder , ACA Financial Guaranty Corporation , listed the property for sale in October 2009 . Napa Valley College 's upper valley campus became the home of the center 's library of around 1 @, @ 000 cookbooks . By late 2010 , local chefs had revived the center 's garden and the parking lot had become the location of a weekly farmer 's market . In 2011 , the museum

was reported to still maintain its original furnishings , with the gift store fully stocked and the restaurant still furnished . In an April 2012 auction , most of the center 's fixtures , furniture , equipment , wine collection ( around 3 @,@ 500 bottles ) , dinnerware , displays , artistic items , and antiques were sold .

Since Copia 's closure , the building has been used for a few meetings and events , including the Napa Valley Film Festival and BottleRock Napa Valley . Triad Development arranged to buy the entire site in 2015 and planned mixed use with housing and retail . The company planned to build up to 187 housing units , 30 @,@ 000 square feet of retail space , and underground parking for 500 cars . The plan had later altered to only include purchase of the southern portion of the property . In 2015 , the Culinary Institute of America ( CIA ) put in motion plans to purchase a separate portion of Copia . The college intends to open a campus , the Culinary Institute of America at Copia , which will house the CIA 's new Food Business School . The school , which was outgrowing its St. Helena campus , purchased the northern portion of the property for \$ 12 @.@ 5 million in October 2015 ( it was assessed for \$ 21 @.@ 3 million around 2013 ) . Among the CIA 's first events there was 2016 's Flavor ! Napa Valley , a food and wine festival sponsored by local organizations . The campus is expected to open in late 2016 , with its Chuck Williams Culinary Arts Museum opening in 2017 . The museum will house about 4 @,@ 000 items of Chuck Williams , including cookbooks , cookware , and appliances .

= = Facilities = =

Copia is located on First Street in downtown Napa , adjacent to the Oxbow Public Market . The 12 @-@ acre ( 4 @.@ 9 ha ) property is surrounded by an oxbow of the Napa River . The two @-@ story building is 78 @,@ 632 square feet ( 7 @,@ 305 @.@ 2 m2 ) in size , and is primarily built from polished concrete , metal , and glass . The city 's farmers ' market has been located in Copia 's parking lot since 2004 .

It had a 13 @,@ 000 @-@ square @-@ foot ( 1 @,@ 200 m2 ) gallery for art , history , and science exhibits . It also had a 280 @-@ seat indoor theater , a 500 @-@ seat outdoor theater , classrooms , an 80 @-@ seat demonstration kitchen , a rare book library , a wine @-@ tasting area , a café ( named American Market Cafe ) , gift shop ( named Cornucopia ) , and 3 @.@ 5 acres ( 1 @.@ 4 ha ) of landscaped edible gardens . The building 's architect was Polshek Partnership Architects . Julia 's Kitchen was a restaurant inside the Copia building that focused on seasonal dishes and was named for honorary trustee Julia Child , who loaned part of her kitchen to the restaurant , a wall of 49 pans , pots , fish molds , and other tools and objects . Within a year of the center 's closing , the items were sent to the Smithsonian Institution 's National Museum of American History , where they are included in the Julia Child 's kitchen exhibit , which up until that point was only missing that portion . The restaurant had a 1 @,@ 700 @-@ square @-@ foot ( 160 m2 ) dining room ( for 180 seats ) , an outdoor seating area ( 4 @,@ 300 square feet ( 400 m2 ) ) and a 2 @,@ 500 @-@ square @-@ foot ( 230 m2 ) kitchen . The gardens had fruit orchards , a pavilion with a kitchen and large dining table , and a small vineyard with 60 vines and 30 different grape varieties . The restaurant and café were both operated by local caterer Seasoned Elements , and later Patina Restaurant Group .

The main and permanent exhibition of the museum , called " Forks in the Road : Food , Wine and the American Table " , had displays explaining the origins of cooking through to modern advances , and included a significant portion about the history of American winemaking . The museum 's opening art exhibition was called " Active Ingredients " , and had new works related to food by eight notable artists . Copia also had an annual exhibit and event called " Canstruction " , which began in 2005 . The event involved teams of architects , students , and designers creating sculptures from cans of food , which would later be donated to the Napa Valley Food Bank . The first year 's donation consisted of 42 @,@ 000 pounds of canned food .

= = Employees and visitor admissions = =

The founding director , Peggy Loar , left Copia in March 2005 , and was replaced by Arthur Jacobus that July ; in 2008 Jacobus was replaced by Chairman Garry McGuire Jr . , who resigned on December 5 , 2008 . The wine curator , Peter Marks , left around 2008 and was replaced with dean of wine studies Andrea Robinson . Around 2008 , McGuire hired celebrity chef Tyler Florence as dean of culinary studies . Florence oversaw the museum 's food programs and Julia 's Kitchen .

Museum attendance was initially forecast at 300 @, @ 000 ; to compare , the county had 4 @. @ 5 million tourists in 2001 . 205 @, @ 000 visitors attended in 2001 , 220 @, @ 000 visitors attended in 2002 , and 160 @, @ 000 attended in 2003 . 150 @, @ 000 visitors attended in 2007 .