Northern California Mysteries

Mysteries set in Northern California

The Beryllium Murder
Series Title: Gloria Lamerino series
by Minichino, Camile

When her colleague suddenly dies from a case of beryllium poisoning while working in his physics laboratory in California, Gloria Lamerino, a fellow physicist and proven amateur detective, questions the findings and begins to research the case herself.

Beyond Bingo
by Miller, Joan Drummond

Several "little old ladies" in Pacific Grove encourage one another to grasp life anew and act a bit outrageous. They begin by finding and supplying marijuana (for medicinal purposes) to a rich friend suffering from cancer. When the friend dies and leaves them cars and money, the ladies branch out: they still provide "medicinal" brownies but catch the attention of the law and suspicious others when they discover a dismembered corpse in a disused freezer.

Copy Kat
Series Title: Kat Colorado series
by Kijewski, Karen

Hired to investigate the death of a young woman in a Colorado resort town, Kat probes the life of the victim and finds clues that cast doubt on the parking lot robbery/murder theory.

Emma Chizzit and the Mother Lode Marauder
Series Title: Emma Chizzit series
by Hall, Mary Bowen

Emma Chizzit must investigate a series of murderous threats in an old gold town along California's Highway 49, about to become a tourist trap.

Firestorm
Series Title: Anna Pigeon series
by Barr, Nevada

Park ranger Anna Pigeon and her companions discover a slain firefighter in a Northern California park, sending them on a search for a murderer in the midst of a winter firestorm.

Fool's Puzzle
Series Title: Benni Harper series
by Fowler, Earlene

Thirty-four-year-old widow Benni Harper takes a job as curator of the San Celina folk art museum only to find herself embroiled in the murder of an artist and small-town intrigues that shed new light on her own late husband's death.

Hardwired
by Chapman, Sally

Julie Blake and her partner-cum-lover Vic Paoli get hired by NASA to find a hacker intent on sabotaging a space-shuttle mission. The idea of working among astronauts-in-training at the Johnson Space Center in Houston sounds great, except that the woman who hired Julie is Vic's old girlfriend. Soon, rekindled romance is the least of Julie's problems, as astronauts start dropping dead under mysterious circumstances. Vic and Julie learn that the last shuttle crew experienced a "close encounter," during which the computers went dead, but their monitors displayed a mysterious pattern of numbers--the same numbers now appearing on computer screens throughout the center. Is an alien being the ultimate hacker?

Kindred Crimes
Series Title: Jeri Howard series
by Dawson, Janet

Faced with the case of Renee Foster, a beautiful blonde reported missing, P.I. Jeri Howard discovers that Renee is actually Elizabeth Willis, the older sister in a sensational parent-murdering case that sent her younger brother to prison.

Murder, My Deer
Series Title: Kate Jasper series
by Girdner, Jaqueline

Newly married Kate Jasper is forced to put her honeymoon on hold when she finds herself targeted by a radical group of deer supporters and must track down a killer before it is too late.

Sleeping Doll
Series Title: Kathryn Dance series
by Deaver, Jeffrey

California Bureau of Investigation interrogator and body language expert Kathryn Dance works to recapture a dangerous escaped killer with the help of three victims from his former cult and the lone survivor from a family he slaughtered.

Tahoe Blowup
Series Title: Owen McKenna series
by Borg, Todd

Tahoe Blowup is a thrilling mystery about an arsonist who is lighting deadly forest fires at Lake Tahoe. When the firestarter kidnaps Detective Owen McKenna's girlfriend, McKenna and his Great Dane Spot have just hours before the killer burns her in a fire so big that firefighters call it a Blowup.

Until Proven Guilty
Series Title: Kathryn Mackay series

by McGuire, Christine

Struggling to cope with the demands of single motherhood and the pressures of her job as assistant district attorney, Kathryn Mackay finds herself working side by side with former lover Dave Granz to track a serial killer.

Vampire Bytes
Series Title: Catherine Sayler series
by Grant, Linda

When private investigator Catherine Sayler is hired to investigate the death of a young computer game developer from a bizarre Silicon Valley subculture, she matches wits with a minister looking to wreak vengeance on what he believes to be a satanic cult.

San Francisco

The 13th Juror
Series Title: Dismas Hardy series
by Lescroart, John T.

Jennifer Witt, accused of murdering her husband, their young son, and her first husband, gainsays evidence her spouses abused her, frustrating Dismas Hardy's attempts to mount a convincing defense.

All That Glitters
Series Title: Nick Polo series
by Kennealy, Jerry

Searching for an ancient artifact seems like a pretty simple case, but private eye Nick Polo soon finds himself immersed in a world of massage parlor prostitutes, military intelligence, an international dating service, and murder.

City of Dragons: A San Francisco Mystery
by Stanley, Kelli

Set in 1940s San Francisco, PI Miranda Corbie witnesses a murder during a Chinese New Year celebration. Described as Chinatown Noir at its best, this book gives a realistic look at San Francisco's Chinatown during a time when relations between the Chinese and Japanese communities are tense.

Cons, Scams & Grifts
Series Title: DKA file series
by Gores, Joe

The private detectives of Dan Kearny Associates become involved in a series of cases as they search for a gypsy princess framed for murder, look for a unique treasure stolen by an L.A. oil tycoon, and test the defenses of the oil tycoon's mountain fortress.

Dead Midnight
Series Title: Sharon McCone series
by Muller, Marcia

Sharon McCone takes on a wrongful-death case in which a grieving family is suing a company for the suicide of a young employee, but as her investigation progresses, she discovers that there may have been more to the death than meets the eye.

Death Goes on Retreat
Series Title: Sister Mary Helen series
by O'Marie, Carol Anne

Two nuns arrive at a California retreat center only to find a group of hard-drinking priests occupying the center, and a dead body on the grounds.

Dying to Sing
Series Title: Charlie Plato series
by Chittenden, Margaret

When an earthquake reveals a skeleton in the backyard of Chaps, California's hottest country-western bar, lively divorcee Charlie Plato, who lives upstairs, turns sleuth with the help of her business partner Zack Hunter to find out which of her Bellamy Park neighbors is hiding a deadly secret.

Ellipsis
Series Title: John Marshall Tanner series
by Greenleaf, Stephen

San Francisco private detective John Marshall Tanner takes on the job as bodyguard for an alluring, world-famous author who has been receiving threatening letters, but when a car bomb comes too close for comfort, Tanner discovers a host of suspects out to eliminate his client.

Face Value
Series Title: Laura Di Palma series
by Matera, Lia

San Francisco attorney Laura Di Palma takes on her most dangerous case when she investigates a northern California guru who has been accused of distributing pornographic videotapes of his followers.

Fire and Fog
Series Title: Fremont Jones series
by Day, Dianne

Awakening to find herself in the middle of the Great San Francisco Earthquake, Miss Fremont Jones struggles to escape the ensuing chaos while learning how to drive, avoiding ardent suitors, and investigating two murderous smugglers.

Flash Point
Series Title: Susan Kim Delancey series
by Jacobs, Nancy Baker

A San Francisco arsonist murders new mothers in their homes, after apparently kidnapping their babies. California's new arson czar, Susan Kim Delancey, takes on this baffling case that covers

several counties, and soon finds herself warring on several fronts. With the help of her small staff, she must catch the elusive killer, fight anti-Asian bias, territorial local officials, the hostile news media, and Sacramento political foes who want her fired. But the biggest battle of all turns out to be one that threatens Susan's own life and that of her teenage son.

A Grave Talent
Series Title: Kate Martinelli series
by King, Laurie R.

Assigned, along with her new partner, to the murders of three little girls, homicide detective Casey Martinelli closes in on a colony of mismatched people living in the wooded hills near the city.

If Cooks Could Kill
Series Title: Angie Amalfi series
by Pence, Joanne

When her matchmaking efforts on the part of her best friend Connie Rogers end in disaster -- with the disappearance of the would-be boyfriend and a brutal robbery/homicide -- chef-turned-sleuth Angie Amalfi races against time to find the real killer, before Connie is arrested for the crime.

The Maltese Falcon
by Hammet, Dashiell

One of the true classics of noir fiction, this novel follows private eye Sam Spade as he investigates the murder of his partner, confronts the advances of a gorgeous femme fatale and searches for a priceless gold statue.

The Samurai's Daughter
Series Title: Rei Shimura series
by Massey, Sugata

Investigating Japanese decorative arts in San Francisco, antiques dealer Rei Shimura becomes involved in her lawyer boyfriend's class action lawsuit on behalf of Asian nationals forced to perform slave labor during World War II, an effort that results in a murder and reveals suspicious facts about Rei's family.

Trick of Light
Series Title: Kay Farrow series
by Hunt, David

Kay Farrow, a colorblind photographer, roams San Francisco in search of clues to the death of her mentor, a photojournalist who mysteriously wandered into a netherworld of decadence.

Witness for the Defense
Series Title: Kali O'Brien series
by Jacobs, Jonnie

Lawyer Kali O'Brien's seemingly routine adoption case takes a disturbing turn when her clients, the Harpers, adopt a baby from a young teenage girl, and controversial radio host, Bram Weaver, claims

he is the father of the baby and sues the Harpers for custody. As a bitter battle ensues, Bram is murdered, and Kali must race against time to catch a killer.

Santa Cruz

Backyard Bones
by Jarvis, Nancy Lynn

Realtor Regan McHenry finds that one of her clients is a prime suspect in the murder of a pregnant teenager. This is the second Regan McHenry mystery.

The death contingency
Series Title: Regan McHenry real estate mystery
by Jarvis, Nancy Lynn

Regan McHenry is a Realtor who works in Santa Cruz County. She is aided in her sleuthing by her husband, Tom, a computer programmer turned real estate broker, and by her friend Dave, a cop confined to desk duty after losing an eye in a shootout. When a seller disappears before signing a grant deed and then turns up dead, Regan and company step up to unravel the secrets of his past and figure out if really was an accidental death or a murder.

Fetish
by Hart, Jeanne

In a small, upscale town near San Francisco, three middle-aged women, two widows and a divorcee, agree in a moment of inebriated good humor to place an ad in the personals for a weekend lover they could all share. It seems they have hit the jackpot when attractive, charming Paul Shapiro answers their ad and agrees to meet them one at a time.

Hayburner
Series Title: Gail McCarthy veterinarian series
by Crum, Laura

In the wake of a series of barn fires, equine veterinarian Gail McCarthy discovers that her friends and clients may not be who they appear to be and finds her own life threatened by encounters with the arsonist.

The Jewel Box: a Capitola Mystery
by Moonfree, Mysty W.

Karin Blake, a suspect in her fiance's murder, travels to Capitola at the behest of her boss, in order to cater an event for Adrian Ferrante, village jeweler. At the event, one of Adrian's groupies-of-a-certain-age-with-loads-of-money is killed. A yappy dog, some undeveloped film, a yacht, lots of gorgeous jewelry, a congressman and a couple of cameos by actual [but disguised] Capitola residents fill out the story of this local novel.

Murder, Honey
by Hansen, Vinnie

Baker/sleuth Carol Sabala probes into the death of Chef Jean Alcee Fortier at the swanky restaurant Archibald's. As a great womanizer, Fortier has left a trail of possible suspects, from his young lover Delores Medina to the lesbian feminist Patsy.

The Santa Cruz Guru Murders
by Darrow, Marc

Slocum Happler, a grad student currently between relationships, is enticed out of his academic world into a realm of intuition, dreams and karma, as he investigates the motivations of a murderer.