

INSIDE THE ICON

Salk Institute

La Jolla's acclaimed research institute has been a major contributor to scientific history, but the building itself has its own story to tell.

By Archana Ram

THE CRUCIBLE

Polio vaccine developer Dr. Jonas Salk established the Institute in the 1960s to serve as a "crucible for creativity" that would dig into questions about basic life principles.

27 ACRES

The City of San Diego donated 27 acres of land to Salk, and the March of Dimes contributed \$20 million to develop the institution.

ON LOCATION

Dr. Salk hadn't initially considered San Diego, but mayor (and polio survivor) Charles Dail encouraged the scientist to come to La Jolla.

MULTILEVEL

Famed American architect Louis Kahn designed the six-story building with three working lab levels and three interstitial levels for electric lines, pipes, and ducts. This framework allows for more open lab spaces.

MAJOR MILESTONE

Salk scientists Robert Holley and Renato Dulbecco made significant advances in understanding how human cancer develops and attacks the body.

STAR SCIENTIST

E.R. and *Jurassic Park* scribe Michael Crichton was a postdoctoral fellow at the Salk in 1970.

LEAF IT BE

Kahn wanted to incorporate a Zen garden, but followed the advice of landscape architect Luis Barragan, who said: "Don't put one leaf nor plant, not one flower, not dirt. Absolutely nothing. A plaza will unite the two buildings and at the end you will see the line of the sea."



SIGN OFF

Jonas Salk intentionally decided against posting signs in labs and offices, to encourage interaction among staff in different departments.

SURF'S UP

As it's perched 350 feet above Black's Beach, many Salk scientists hit the waves before and after work.

KAHN-CRETE STRUCTURE

To make the building as resilient as possible with minimal maintenance, Kahn used concrete, teak, lead glass, and a high-strength, low-alloy structural steel.

SEEING SALK

On average, 6,000 visitors take the Salk Institute architectural tour every year.



PAUL BODY

GET INSIDE THE ICON

Salk Institute for Biological Studies, 10010 North Torrey Pines Road, La Jolla. Tours weekdays at 11:45 a.m. Reservations required.