

# WWD WEEKEND

SEPTEMBER 2023

## Helena *Floats*

Helena Christensen,  
wearing the latest  
fall fashions, talks  
about life, “the girls”  
and staying mellow.



**The Ultimate  
Guide to  
Concept Shops**

**Brunello  
Cucinelli's  
7 Lessons**

**Judy Chicago  
Gets Her Due**

**Fall Beauty**



# The Sea Ranch Lodge Is the Architectural Equivalent of a Cleanse

The northern California coastal modernist destination gets an update. BY BOOTH MOORE



The Sea Ranch Lodge on the Sonoma Coast in Sea Ranch, California.

**There's a calm that washes over one** after driving up the foggy, somewhat treacherous Sonoma Coast and arriving at The Sea Ranch Lodge. All weathered wood and glass, with staggering views of sea bluffs and breaching whales in the Pacific Ocean below, the hub of the '60s utopian planned community feels like the architectural equivalent of a cleanse.

It's no wonder the hotel property, and the private residences on the 54 wild wooded acres surrounding it, are a haven for California tech executives and creatives.

"It feels so secret still, you go to the beach and you're the only one," says Anna Chiu, cofounder of San Francisco fashion label Kamperett. "It feels untouched. All the sea life is there, the culture feels progressive...it's a special place."

In the mid '60s, visionary developer Al Boeke of Oceanic Properties identified 10 miles of a former sheep ranch as the ideal place to create a planned community.

With the goal of creating harmony between humans and nature, he assembled a group of architects and design professionals to work on prototype buildings, including Lawrence Halprin and Joseph Esherick, who were guided by the concept of "living lightly on the land." The team used rough and simple materials to construct the distinctly '60s modernist barn structures that today are among the area's most prized dwellings, as well as the Lodge, which opened in 1964.

The Lodge's sign is still a beacon with its modernist logo – two seashells, back-to-back connected to a ram's head, referencing the sheep on the land – designed by San Francisco-based landscape architect Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, the supergraphics pioneer.

In July, the Lodge completed a multiyear revitalization project and unveiled 17 redesigned guest rooms in its North Building conceived by San Francisco design collective NicoleHollis.

The rooms exude a simple, organic luxury, with custom headboards, window benches and desks built by Santa Cruz Woodworks, midcentury Hans Wegner elbow chairs and armadillo loungers by Mut Design. Some have ladders to lofts with an additional bed.

Each room features a woven piece by Berkeley artist Jess Feury, ceramics by San Francisco-based artist Sasinun Kladpetch, a beach bag and walking stick. The views are



Supergraphic in the Bar at The Sea Ranch Lodge

postcard-idyllic and there are fireplaces for chilly nights.

The room refresh followed the launch of The Sea Ranch Living home rental program for those seeking larger accommodations, and a multiyear revamp of the Lodge's public spaces, including a new café with fresh roasted Sea Ranch coffee, smoothies and light breakfast and lunch treats on offer, and a fireside lounge used for programming, like jazz and trivia nights.

Architectural design firm Mithun improved the flow and sight lines in the building, removing walls and partitions, and Stauffacher Solomon, now 93, supervised the painting of a new "Land(e)scape" supergraphic in the bar.

"She had a friend of her daughter's come paint it, it took two weeks on a 12-foot ladder, and Barbara was in the painter's pocket the entire time on the phone," says



The Lodge room.



The Sea Ranch North Building.

general manager Kristina Jetton.

Featuring a locally sourced menu, the Lodge dining room is the place to be at sunset, when views of the coast are reflected in the glass – making for great photos. The General Store stocks art and architecture books; Sea Ranch sage, cypress and clove candles; logo hoodies; prints from Catherine Opie's time as the artist-in-residence, and more.

The Lodge is also the end point of the Bluff Trail, which is designer and Sea Rancher Trina Turk's favorite, stretching the length of The Sea Ranch, past acres of coast, meadows, flora and fauna, and a barn dating back to the 1870s. The resident sheep who graze the area for fire prevention can often be spotted there.

Throughout the buildings are photographs of Sea Ranch by local designer/artist Maynard Lyndon, the brother of one of the original architects, Donald Lyndon. Maynard's LyndonDesign art gallery just five minutes up the road, exhibits local artists. Also not to be missed is the non-denominational Sea Ranch Chapel, a sculpture in the landscape inspired by the shell of the sea snail, with groovy red wood benches and stained glass windows, and the on-property athletic clubs and swimming pools, which have their own supergraphics. Just a bit farther north, in Gualala, Surf Market has fresh oysters, local provisions, and specialty cheeses, deli sandwiches, wine tastings and much more.

Of course, one could also be forgiven for never leaving the Lodge, with its outdoor nooks and loungers readymade for reading a good book after a long hike.

After all, doing nothing is everything here.

**The Sea Ranch Lodge** 60 Sea Ranch Drive, Sea Ranch, California, [thesearanchlodge.com](http://thesearanchlodge.com). Rooms start at \$500.