

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

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By Erin Rottman



Eco-conscious on the Sonoma Coast

Black and white Plymouth Rock hens and Rhode Island Reds are some of the new residents at **The Sea Ranch Lodge** (thesearanchlodge.com, from \$500) on the Sonoma Coast. The lodge orders chicks from Idaho for its adjacent 160-acre farm, and they arrive in a box of 50. “Getting the chickens in the box is an absolute highlight here,” says general manager Kristina Jetton. “We all run because we have to go get them and put them in the warmth (of heating pads).”

Guests can take tours of the vegetable gardens, bees, chickens, and cows. “People love interacting with the animals,” Jetton says. Plans for this summer include group gardening sessions, during which guests will harvest vegetables that will be served for lunch.

The farm is part of the lodge’s plan for reducing waste and operating sustainably. Kitchen scraps (anything but chicken) are fed to the chickens, who work some of them into the ground for compost while eating them. Vegetables, including oyster mushrooms cultivated on hay, straw, and coffee grounds, end up on the dining room menu. Cows eat on a rotational grazing program so they don’t overwork the land. By this summer, there should be enough hens to supply all the eggs for the lodge, according to Jetton.

The business’ environmental goals echo those of the original developers of the Sea Ranch community, which was conceived in the early 1960s as a residential area with recreational facilities, a hotel, and a restaurant—all aiming to minimize disruption of the existing environment. It was intended to be a community where people spent time together and immersed themselves in nature.

Today the decor of the lodge’s 17 renovated rooms speaks to that ethic. Wood accent walls and ceilings have been restored, terra cottas and blues evoke the earth and ocean, and art pieces woven from natural fibers hang on the walls. TVs are absent, but fireplaces, hiking guides, and binoculars are at the ready. Cushioned window benches compel gazing at the views. “A lot of people come here with lots of plans,” Jetton says, “but once they get here, they’re magically drawn in by this peaceful and beautiful environment.” >



Seeking sustainability by the sea (clockwise from top, left): The Sea Ranch Lodge is perched atop ocean bluffs in Sonoma County. Wood-grain walls carry the natural tones of the lodge decor to a courtyard outside. A guest room features a wood-burning fireplace and expansive window seating with an ocean view. Guests can tour the lodge’s eco-minded farm to see cattle, vegetable gardens, and chickens.