

The Renovated Sea Ranch Lodge Is a Must-Visit Stop in Northern California's Iconic Coastal Community

The reborn public space has brought fine dining, classes, exhibits, and live events to this secluded stretch of Sonoma coastline—with 17 newly redesigned guest rooms coming in summer 2023.



The Sea Ranch Lodge recently reopened after an extensive three-year revitalization project. Photo by Carlos Chavarría/The Sea Ranch Lodge

Driving along California's Highway 1, some 100 miles north of San Francisco, you can't miss the bright white supergraphic ram's head that signals you have entered the legendary **Sea Ranch**. Founded in the mid-1960s, this coastal community has developed into a collection of 2,200 homes nestled into the wild cliffs, grassy meadows, and forested hills of northern Sonoma County.

The **early vision** for the Sea Ranch was one of shared ideals and beautifully designed modernist homes, all built with unpainted cedar and redwood exteriors that could blend seamlessly into their natural surroundings. The Sea Ranch ethos was squarely about being in harmony with nature and living lightly on the land.



Visitors can sip coffee or cocktails in the Sea Ranch Lodge solarium and fireside lounge. Courtesy of the Sea Ranch Lodge

Last fall, the **Sea Ranch Lodge** reopened after an extensive three-year renovation, offering Sea Ranchers and visitors a gathering place once again. Set on dramatic coastal bluffs, the lodge now houses a restaurant, café, bar, lounge, general store, and post office all within the original 10,000 square-foot rustic structure, which has been thoughtfully revamped in a way that preserves the original modern vernacular design aesthetic.

The restoration of the Sea Ranch Lodge, one of the oldest buildings at the Ranch, intentionally honors the vision of the original Sea Ranch planners, including developer Al Boeke, landscape mastermind Lawrence Halprin, and the design firm Moore Lyndon Turnbull Whitaker, according to Kristina Jetton, general manager of the Sea Ranch Lodge. She recently showed me around the reopened lodge.



Supergraphic art frames the Sea Ranch Lodge bar. Courtesy of Sea Ranch Lodge

During my July visit, it became clear just how inviting and informative the new public space can be for all those who pass through. My family and I found ourselves returning to the lodge multiple times during our weekend visit. One morning, we grabbed cappuccinos and cold brew along with a breakfast sandwich, frittata, and strawberry shortcake (the latter being the runaway hit) in the café and sat in the solarium with sweeping ocean views before heading off to one of the community pools. We also popped into the general store more than once for drinks and snacks to bring with us to the beach and to buy some tasteful Sea Ranch memorabilia for ourselves and friends. And we explored the history of Sea Ranch through the *Sea Ranch Beginnings* exhibit currently on display on the “great wall” of the lodge (near the café) through the end of 2022.

In the evening, we headed back for well-executed cocktails (a “Wildberry Close” with bourbon and blackberry purée, and “The Fly Cloud,” a refreshing combination of gin, cucumber, lime, and elderflower liqueur) that we sipped from the comfort of the fireside lounge. [The Dining Room](#) serves dinner on Thursdays through Mondays, and the menu focuses on locally sourced ingredients (think chicken with pommes frites and wild salmon with greens). We dined there with our young kids and while the food and service are elevated, it was relaxed enough that we didn’t feel self-conscious being there with a toddler.

At the lodge, visitors can also peruse the [event calendar](#) for happenings here and at the northern end of the Sea Ranch at The Links, a golf course that also has a casual eatery and store. Other events hosted by the lodge include live music performances, Saturday morning yoga, guided hikes, writers workshops, knitting classes, and winetastings.

For now, visiting the Sea Ranch requires booking one of the homes that is available as a vacation rental property. AFAR staff favorites include [Siren Song](#), the [Esherick Mini-Mod](#), [Sweet Sea Ranch](#), and [Moore Condo #9](#). By summer of 2023, visitors will be able to stay in one of the 17 newly redesigned rooms at the Sea Ranch Lodge. This past spring, the lodge also launched a glamping program together with Shelter Co. that allows groups to book luxury tent accommodations complete with beds and portable restrooms that can be set up on the lodge’s oceanfront property to host weddings, reunions, and retreats.



Sea Ranch Lodge sits on 53 acres of striking oceanfront property. Courtesy of Sea Ranch Lodge

While the Sea Ranch is very much about finding peace and harmony with nature, the new lodge offers a warm and welcoming option to interrupt the solitude with some appealing food, socializing, music, and art.

As for the supergraphic ram's head on the lodge sign, the unmistakable Sea Ranch logo was designed by Barbara Stauffacher Solomon and is, **in her words**, "two simplified seashells, back-to-back and connected into a ram's head, in memory of the sheep that used to live on this land." In the past decade, sheep have been brought back to help naturally graze the ranch. Highly recommended is a scenic walk from the lodge, across the meadow and past the sheep to explore the property's historic barn, and along the Bluff Trail—a vivid reminder of how this wonderful vision of a place all began.