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The Lodge at Bodega Bay: Sonoma's Coastal Retreat

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Krishna Chhaganlal

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Perched at the edge of the Sonoma coast, The Lodge at Bodega Bay feels worlds away from the wine country crowds of Napa and Healdsburg. The pace here is slower, the luxury

quieter, with ocean views from every room and a connection to the land and sea that runs through everything from the menus to the morning air.



The Lodge's story began in 1972, when the Alden family purchased a modest inn with just ten rooms overlooking the bay. That small retreat became the first chapter of Woodside Hospitality Group, which now includes a collection of Northern California properties. Over time, the Lodge has grown into 83 guestrooms and suites, recently refreshed in celebration of its 50th anniversary. The new Captain's Quarters, a 1,200-square-foot suite with expansive decks and sweeping coastal views, reflects how far the property has come, while its fireplaces, balconies, and coastal setting preserve the spirit of the original lodge.

Coast-to-Kitchen

Dining at The Lodge at Bodega Bay is one of the pleasures that keeps the property humming from morning through night. At the signature restaurant, **Drakes Sonoma Coast**, Executive Chef **Brendalee Reiplinger** crafts menus that shift with the seasons and showcase the best of Sonoma's coast and farmland.

Starters like the *Shrimp & Artichoke Dip* arrive bubbling and rich, the cream cheese and parmesan brightened by esepette pepper and served with warm bread from Della Fattoria. Among entrées, the *Pan-Seared Black Cod* is the local gem, line-caught from nearby

waters, delicate and perfectly seared, plated with couscous, summer squash, red pepper coulis, and preserved lemon. For something more indulgent, the *Creekstone Farms Grilled Ribeye* delivers with duck fat potatoes, seared trumpet mushrooms, spinach purée, and a bright chimichurri. Together, the menu captures the Sonoma coast in every bite.



Various firepits at the Lodge Bodega Bay | © Travis Watts

The Fireside Lounge, both indoors and with its outdoor fire pits, is where one can get lost in the views or sit and chat for a while with a glass in hand as the fog folds over the bay. The wine list highlights Sonoma standouts like Freeman Pinot Noir and Flowers Chardonnay alongside Champagne and Napa classics. Cocktails lean inventive with drinks such as the *Shaolin Punch*, infused with lapsang souchong tea, a bright *Pica Fresa* laced with strawberry and chili, or the *Sleeping Lotus*, layered with gin, orgeat, and mint. And a small menu of curated bites, perfect for sharing, rounds out the experience.



Heated pool, infinity edge hot tub, and fitness area overlooking the ocean views | © Caitlin Atkinson

Life at the Lodge

The Lodge offers both quiet moments and small adventures. Mornings begin with guided meditation, Pilates, yoga, or a bird walk led by a naturalist along the bluffs. Later, guests might take the complimentary bicycles down to Doran Beach before returning for a visit to the spa, a swim in the heated pool, or sink into the infinity-edge hot tub overlooking the Pacific. As evening settles, firepits glow across the property and s'mores in the lobby invite guests to gather. Others pause for wine and cheese by the fire or a game of bocce. For private occasions, the event spaces transform into elegant venues that open to unobstructed ocean views.



A Taste of Sonoma's Coast

The Lodge at Bodega Bay also serves as a gateway to the Sonoma Coast's rich culinary heritage that's very much part of the hotel itself. Guests looking to explore the region in comfort can arrange private excursions through **Pure Luxury Transportation**, a locally owned company offering chauffeured wine tours and coastal drives throughout Sonoma, Napa, and beyond.

A short scenic drive away, **Hog Island Oyster Co.** has grown from a humble 10×6 shack with a five-acre lease into one of California's most celebrated oyster farms. Today, they cultivate over 10 million oysters in Tomales Bay, each reflecting the "merroir" of its waters, much like wine terroir, producing distinct flavors from grassy Pacifics to cucumber-kissed Atlantics. Visitors can learn about oyster farming, shuck their own, and enjoy them fresh from the bay at picnic tables overlooking Tomales Bay.



Hog Island Oyster Co. The Boat Oyster Bar | © Credit Remy Hale

Nearby, **Valley Ford Cheese & Creamery** carries forward a century of dairy tradition with Italian-inspired, Sonoma-made cheeses. Beyond their award-winning Estero Gold, the creamery is beloved for its nostalgic soft-serve ice cream. So good it once made its way onto the menu at Tesla's flagship Southern California restaurant. Visitors can stop in for lunch, sample cheese flights, or enjoy seasonal salads, grilled sandwiches, and cheese platters crafted from the creamery's own selections.

Tucked inland, guests can discover **Freeman Vineyard & Winery**, a woman-owned estate in the cool, fog-laced hills of Sebastopol. Founded by Akiko and Ken Freeman, the winery crafts small-lot Pinot Noir and Chardonnay that have graced tables at the White House. Tastings take place inside the estate's cave cellar, carved into the hillside and naturally kept at sixty degrees year-round.

Conclusion

At its heart, The Lodge at Bodega Bay is a reminder of why we travel, not only to rest, but to reconnect. Here, mornings begin with ocean mist curling over the bluffs, afternoons linger in pools of sun and salt air, and evenings close with firelight, wine, and conversation. It is a retreat where luxury means slowing down, where every detail, from the locally caught black cod to the curated cocktail list, from the fireplaces in every room to the infinity-edge hot tub with views stretching across the water, is designed with the traveler in mind.