



EXPERIENCE SAUSALITO'S THE INN ABOVE TIDE

| BY TRACY BEARD

The city of Sausalito, California, is a charming bayside community situated 10 miles from San Francisco on the north side of the Golden Gate Bridge. Sausalito's luxury hotel, The Inn Above Tide, makes the perfect base-camp for exploring the Bay Area. Every room faces the waterfront offering guests stunning views San Francisco. Come visit Sausalito and spend the day near the hotel perusing the local shops and stop in at Copita, a popular local eatery, for a cocktail or dinner. Book a few reservations before leaving home and venture north to the Napa Valley to taste exquisite wines at Rombauer Vineyards, or head south into San Francisco for a special dinner at Gary Danko, one of San Francisco's Michelin-star restaurants.

The Founder's suite spans over 1,000 square feet and boasts its own private entry. When de-

signers Antonio Martin and Sausalito-based art consultant Julie Coyle created the concept for the suites, the idea was to bring the outdoors inside. For the Founder's suite, they chose a color scheme and design with grey silk-printed wallpaper featuring a school of fish swimming into the room from the sea. The suite features one and a half bathrooms, an open dining and living room, full kitchen and a rainwater shower. The dining table seats eight but can accommodate 12 to 14 people easily transforming it into a meeting room or small event space.

The City Lights Suite is adjacent to the Founder's Suite. The two rooms can be connected to create the perfect space for larger groups or families traveling together. Guests will enjoy The City Lights Suite's indoor/outdoor glass fireplace, a luxurious bathroom with a soaking tub and rainwater shower.

The Vista Suite received a refresh during the remodel with a new private entrance, a romantic dining table for two and an elegant four-poster king bed. The room is painted in beautiful shades of blue to reflect the waters outside and is located upstairs from the previous suites.

All guests at The Inn Above Tide can enjoy the delicious continental breakfast offered each morning in the drawing room or in the privacy of their own room or suite. Every evening the hotel hosts a wine and cheese reception. Guests can use the hotel's bicycles, enjoy high-speed Internet, and even book a private in-room massage during their stay. The hotel staff is eager to recommend places to eat or to assist in booking local trips and activities.

Throughout the year The Inn Above Tide offers various package deals. Guests can book accommodations at the hotel and take advantage of



opportunities to explore the local waters in a private water taxi, rent a stand-up paddleboard or kayak or experience the area from the seat of a sea plane.

Recently my friend, Judy, and I spent a long weekend at The Inn Above Tide. Each morning we savored coffee and croissants on our balcony where we sat in the sunshine watching the local seals and sea lions frolic in the water below.

One evening we walked across the street to Copita, a lively neighborhood eatery serving modern Mexican cuisine. The dining room and outdoor patio is popular with both the locals and visitors. The menu, created by Executive Chef Daniel Tellez and Chef/Co-Owner Joanne Weir, boasts dishes made with local California produce and organic handmade tortillas. The restaurant offers over 100 tequilas and mezcals and is open for both lunch and dinner.

Judy and I began dinner with killer margaritas, chips, salsa and guacamole. We ordered roasted Spanish octopus with marble potatoes, garlic and guajillo, and 24-hour carnitas, braised pork with a tomatillo and habanero salsa, pickled vegetables and tasty handmade tortillas. We finished dinner with a decadent plate of vanilla buñuelos with sugar and Oaxacan chocolate sauce.

The following day we wandered the local shops and drove down to see the famous floating homes community. It was fun to see all the different colored houses on the water laid out like a typical neighborhood. We returned to

our suite in the afternoon for some pampering. We met with two professional masseuses that set up tables in our room.

After a fabulous one-hour massage, we were both completely relaxed and regenerated for the evening.

Wine lovers must make the one-hour trip to Napa Valley for the day. Plan to make stops at one or two wineries, but be sure to put Rombauer Vineyards at the top of your list. Koerner and Joan Rombauer founded Rombauer Vineyards in 1980. They had a passion for food and wine, and this passion was passed down to their children and grandchildren that still own the winery today almost forty years later.

I love the older-style, buttery Chardonnays, and Rombauer still produces a few. I became acquainted with KR Rombauer, the founder's son, at the Classic Wines Auction in Portland, Oregon, earlier in the year. Because Sausalito was already on my destination list, I decided to spend an afternoon at Rombauer with KR. Over the course of four hours, I sampled numerous delicious wines designed and produced in different styles. Rombauer Vineyards is an ideal place for tasting a variety of wines and having a picnic. Take some time to meander the pathways weaving about the terraced grounds. KR's grandmother was quite the gardener, and she selected and tended most of the trees and foliage on the property.

Dinner at Gary Danko in San Francisco is a delightful experience. Judy and I arrived to find

the dimly lit restaurant filled to the brim with diners. We ordered cocktails to sip in the bar before we were seated in an elegantly designed booth. When dining in a Michelin-star restaurant I like to give the chef and sommeliers the lead affording them the opportunity to send their best creations and pairings. I admit it is a gamble but I have yet to be disappointed. Judy and I ordered the Chef's Tasting Menu with five courses.

We began with the creamy risotto teeming with delicate rock shrimp, clumps of Dungeness crab, summer vegetables and Beech mushrooms. The light and fluffy buckwheat blini topped with smoked salmon and salted with caviar followed the risotto. Next, the horseradish-crusted salmon medallion with dilled cucumber and mustard sauce came paired with a superb 2015 Roussanne from Eden Valley, Barossa in South Australia. The seared filet of beef with Yukon potatoes, Swiss chard, blue cheese butter and cassis-shallot marmalade was prepared to perfection. When the cheese course was presented on an enormous board filled with more than a dozen farmhouse and artisanal cheeses, we each selected five different ones to try. We completed this tasty meal with lemon soufflé cake, crème fraîche panna cotta and raspberry sorbet. The light cake went well with the rich panna cotta, and the raspberry sorbet added a scrumptious tang to the dish.

Visit Sausalito for a fabulous vacation. Enjoy the amazing views while relaxing in your room at The Inn Above Tide and explore some of the incredible things to do, see and eat in the surrounding Bay Area. ♦