

COASTAL LIVING[®]

Design
Secrets
for Coastal Homes

CREATIVE
CENTERPIECES
FOR YOUR TABLE

At home
with novelist
James Patterson
p.74

NOVEMBER 2012

FABULOUS VILLA VACATIONS

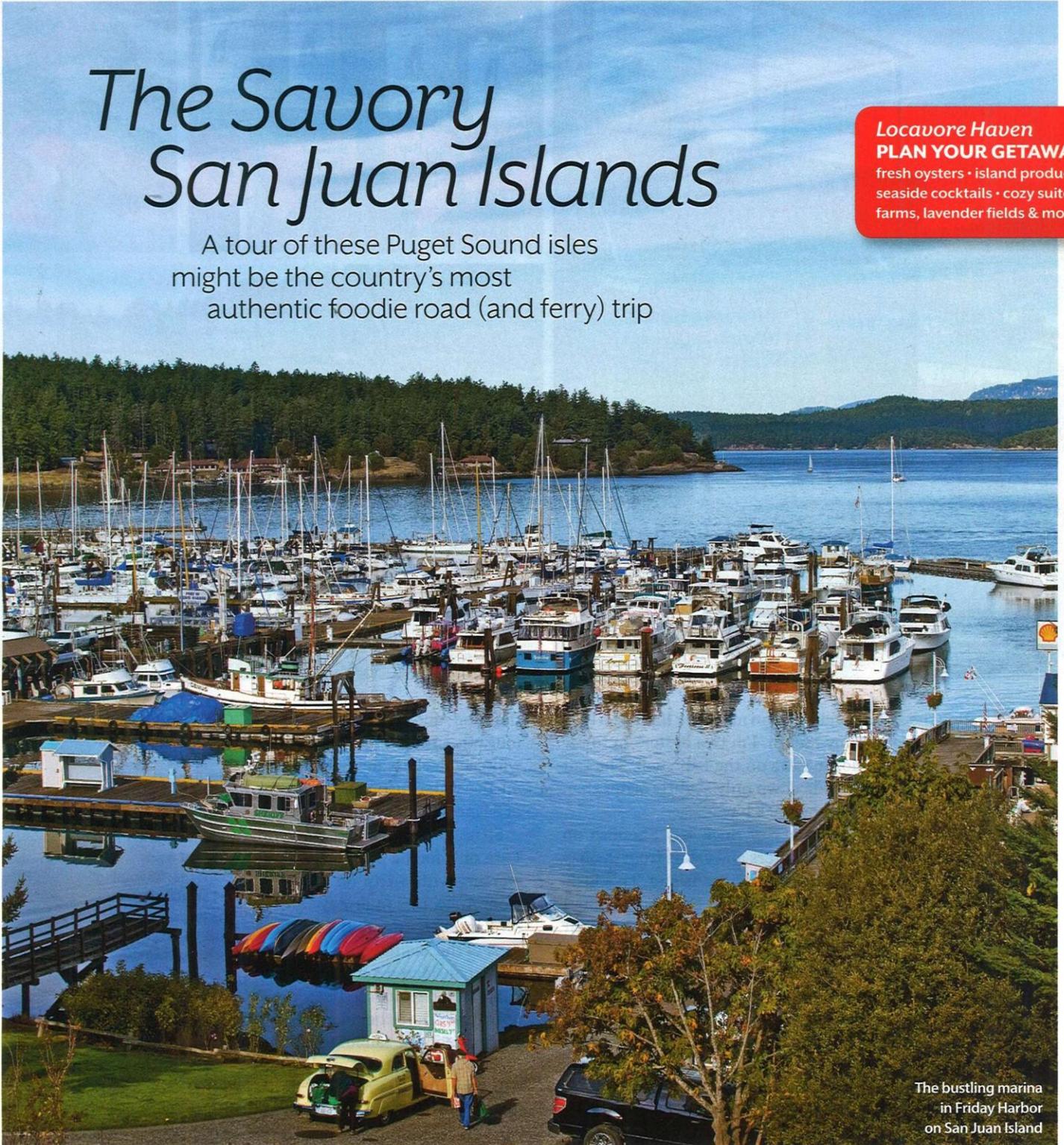
COASTAL TRAVEL

DREAM * DISCOVER * ESCAPE

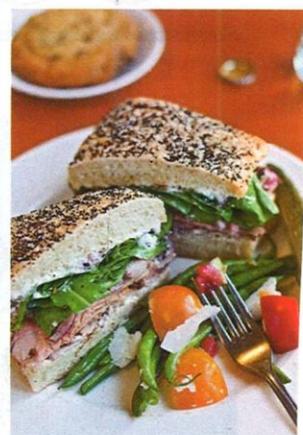
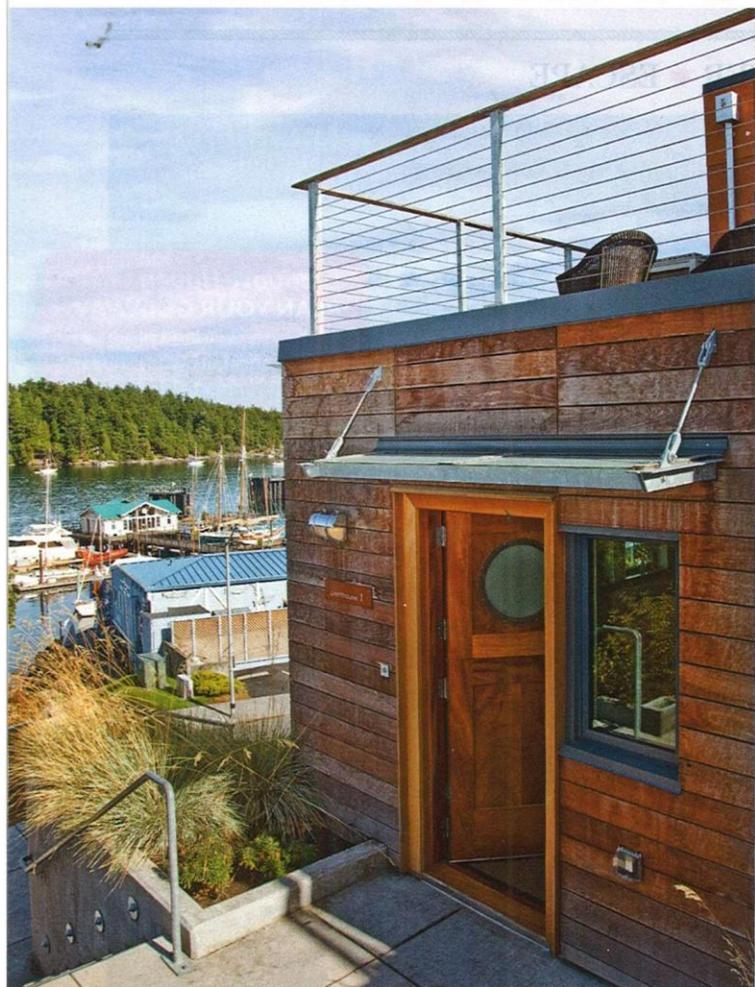
The Savory San Juan Islands

A tour of these Puget Sound isles
might be the country's most
authentic foodie road (and ferry) trip

Locavore Haven
PLAN YOUR GETAWAY
fresh oysters • island produce •
seaside cocktails • cozy suites •
farms, lavender fields & more



The bustling marina
in Friday Harbor
on San Juan Island



Resting the salty-rough shell on my lower lip, I tip a but-
tery bivalve into my mouth. I'm two oysters in to my
second round of a dozen raws on the half shell. The salt
water and the oyster slide down only slightly faster than
the tide flooding into nearby Buck Bay.

Toni Hermansen, the owner of Buck Bay Shellfish on
Orcas Island, is feeding me oysters and clams from the bay
on the south side of Washington's Orcas Island. This little
education in the journey from farm to taste buds (about
200 yards, in this case) is the logical conclusion to our
eat-our-way-through-the-islands adventure, which began
four days ago on Washington's beautiful San Juan Island.
Here the locavore lifestyle, a philosophy devoted to locally
grown ingredients, is alive and thriving. In fact, this cluster
of glacially carved green isles has always been ahead of the
curve, thanks to the island isolation factor, greenhouse-
like climate, and abundant farmland.

I've heard you can walk through lavender fields and then
drink the fragrant herb in a gin that was distilled just down

the road, and that there are resta-
urants running the gamut from
white-tablecloth fancy to cabin-
on-the-water rustic serving plates
of island-fresh flavors.

So my girlfriend, Christine, and
I are on a foodie pilgrimage here,
starting with a trip on the ferry
from Anacortes to Friday Harbor
on San Juan Island, the farthest
west of the islands.

It's considered a metropolis by
some island residents, but it's still
quiet enough in the middle of town to hear bells chime on
harbor-moored sailboats. About 50 yards from the ferry
dock, our hotel, the new Island Inn at 123 West, awaits. The
seven penthouses have kitchens, living rooms, and baths
with steam showers. Steep outdoor stairs from our front
door lead to a private rooftop terrace overlooking the harbor.

Clockwise from left:
The new Island Inn in
Friday Harbor; San Juan
Distillery gin; a roast
beef sandwich at The
Market Chef; Pelindaba
Lavender Farm's vibrant,
fragrant fields
Opposite: "Glamping"
at Lakedale Resort
has its perks: a cozy
queen bed and a grill
for preparing meals
by moonlight.



STAYING IN THE SAN JUANS

Island Inn at 123 West, San Juan Island

Choose from the new set of 350- and 490-square-foot "Sweets," the 920- to 1,495-square-foot penthouses, and 195- to 350-square-foot studio rooms. Rates start at \$199; 360/378-4400 or 123west.com.

Lakedale Resort at Three Lakes, San Juan Island

The campground includes cozy canvas-wall tents, lodge rooms, and log cabins. Rates start at \$32 (campsites), \$149 (lodge rooms), \$179 (canvas tents), and \$249 (log cabins); 360/378-2350 or lakedale.com.

Rosario Resort and Spa, Orcas Island

All rooms overlook Cascade Bay. But for the best room in the house, reserve the 1913 Roundhouse Suite overlooking the water. Rates start at \$89; 360/376-2222 or rosarioresort.com.

From there, we can see our first dining destination, The Bluff Restaurant Bar and Terrace, one of the islands' best purveyors of local fare. Chef and Innkeeper Kyle Nicholson greets us with a bowl of clams in a salty broth of roasted bullwhip kelp that he hand-picked early this morning. Our next plate, a Pacific snapper, is garnished with a slightly tart local thimbleberry jam and crisp sea beans.

"Come back in the spring for my wild nettle pesto," he says. Wild nettles may sting like hell when you pinch them, but they taste so good on a local lamb burger.

The next morning, we pick up sandwiches at The Market Chef in Friday Harbor and head to the island's southern tip to American Camp—a former army base overlooking Griffin Bay. Here, easy walking trails weave through golden meadows of waist-high grass on the way to the shore.

We dine on a small peninsula of rock near Grandma's Cove. The water of Puget Sound makes a wrinkled cobalt carpet, while a light wind from the south stirs up whitecaps, and an occasional whale reveals itself in the distance with

geyser exhalation. After scarfing down our sandwiches, the fresh bread's salt crystals complementing the salt spray, we comb for sea glass on the tiny, rocky beach nearby.

On the ride back to Friday Harbor, we watch splashes of violet appear as we approach Pelindaba Lavender Farm, a piece of purple Provence dropped onto the rolling hills. A tour of owner Steven Robins's shop is almost a three-credit course in lavender history and its culinary, medicinal, and household uses. We walk out nibbling lavender-infused chocolate (and toting some all-purpose cleaner, too).

Just as I'd heard, Steven recommends that we follow some of his lavender to San Juan Island Distillery, so we travel to the north end of the island to find Hawk and Suzy Pingree concocting a potent brew in their barn. The retired journalism professors moved here from Wisconsin seven years ago and met professional cider maker Richard Anderson, who taught them how to make apple cider (sourced from their apple orchard). Now they also use their skills to make gin and brandy. ➔

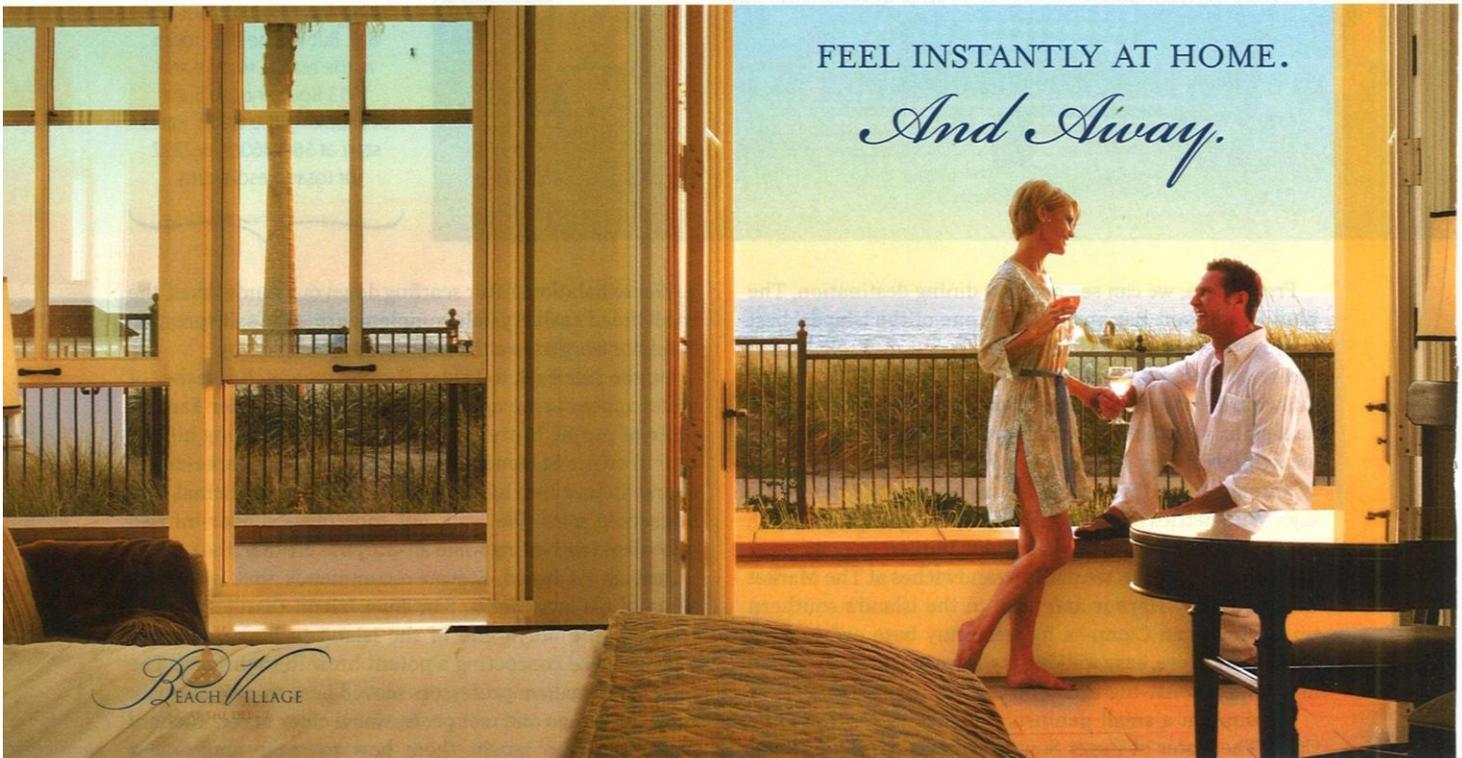
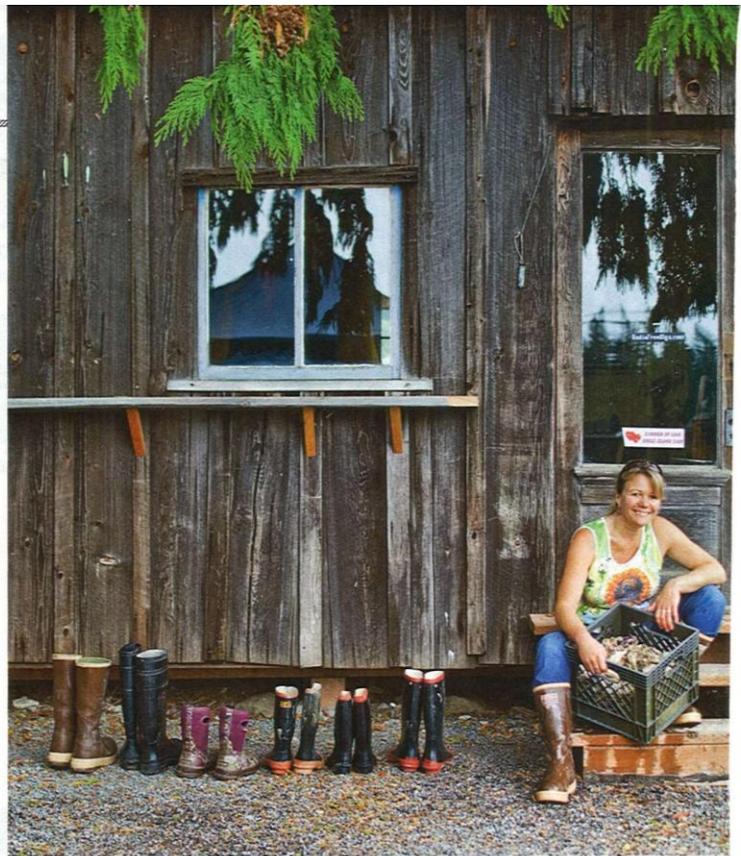
COASTAL TRAVEL

Sampling the Apple Eau de Vie and the lavender gin, the latter a crisp, liquid jolt of the aromatic herb that had brushed across our legs a few hours earlier, creates a perfect mini cocktail hour just before our final night on San Juan at the revamped Lakedale Resort at Three Lakes, where we “glamp” in a rustic canvas tent, à la fancy African safaris. The lodge staff tote our dinner to our site’s grill, where we cook up wild salmon fillets, corn, and veggie kebabs under the stars—our own harvest feast.

The next morning Christine and I pack up for the trip to Orcas Island. Orcas sits U-shaped in Puget Sound’s dark waters and is defined by Mt. Constitution, the camel back-like high point of the San Juans.

After a short ferry hop, we drive northeast to Doe Bay Resort and Retreat for breakfast. At the sprawling, campy spot, simple cabins, yurts, and domes tuck into the woods around the resort’s waterside general store and Doe Bay Café, where the menu is almost completely organic. The poached duck egg, sourced from Orcas, is cooked perfectly and paired with greens and creamy grits.

Toni Hermansen,
owner of Buck Bay
Shellfish on Orcas Island
(right); breakfast at Doe
Bay Café (opposite)



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As tempting as it is to stay, we peel ourselves away to check in at the newly renovated Rosario Resort and Spa. Completed in 1909, the grand old mansion is now a restaurant, spa, and museum of sorts overlooking Cascade Bay. Rosario's general manager, Christopher Peacock, plays the 1913 Aeolian organ and the 1900 Steinway as guests and visitors mingle by the balcony of the elegant wood-paneled, chapel-like room in the glow of a massive Tiffany stained-glass light fixture.

Christopher introduces us to Dan Koommoo, the new chef from Atlanta who's revitalized the resort's kitchen with a seasonal, locally inspired menu. Dan stops at our table with a dozen oysters on the half shell, sourced from Buck Bay Shellfish Farm. A delicate medley of chopped melons joins the small, sweet oysters in their shells.

Christopher says we can visit the oyster farm, a few miles away. Just turn right at the sign: "Love longer, eat oysters."

So that's how we ended up with Toni, whose sole mission on Earth seems to be to feed people the oysters and clams she cultivates and harvests from her own front yard. And it's a fitting finale for our Pacific Northwest locavore tour: an oyster snack plucked out of the sea, shared under the sun—straight from the source. 🌊

WE COOK
UP WILD
SALMON
FILLETS, CORN,
AND VEGGIE
KEBABS
UNDER THE
STARS—
OUR OWN
HARVEST
FEAST

Stay Awhile



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