

THE SEABROOK Spoke

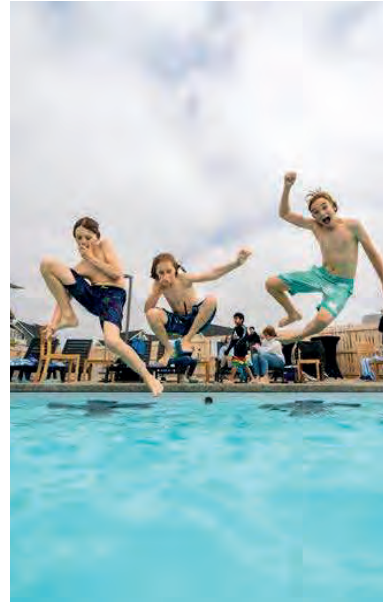
2024

JUST GETTING STARTED

Seabrook celebrates 20 years
with an eye to the future



10 Must-Try Dishes
Our Own Blue Zone
Activities for the Year



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WASHINGTON



THE SEABROOK Spoke

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Editor's note



The nature of an annual issue means that it may be February when you read this, or June, or September. But as I'm writing, it's mid-December—the darkest, drizzliest time of year, when the Washington coast is moody and biting cold. My family is tucked into a two-story rental, waiting out a storm and attempting to soften the blow of the season's most punishing virus with frequent hot tub soaks and mugs of hot tea. We're sick and sulky, and this visit is, by conventional measures, not our best.

And yet...

Seabrook still comes through for us, as magical as ever. Cough and congestion be damned, we eat well, shop enthusiastically and explore with abandon. The town twinkles with a million little lights and the magic of the holidays. And something rekindles in me that I've known since my first visit here more than a decade ago: this place is something special.

This year marks Seabrook's 20th anniversary, and this issue of *Spoke* is a celebration not only of the town as it exists now, but what we've come from and where we're going. On page 22, we shout out our favorite tastes of Seabrook, including my personal must-visit spot, Vista Bakeshop. We talk past and future with town founder Casey Roloff on page 12 and learn about the exciting developments coming in the next 10 years. We give you keys to outdoor adventuring (page 40) and seasonal celebrations (page 6). And perhaps most suitably given my lingering cough, we hear about Seabrook's approach to wellness on page 30.

The throughline here is that what makes Seabrook so special is not only its design and the intention of its development but the warmth and authenticity of its community. Its position—surrounded by ocean and rainforest, sand and sky—doesn't hurt either. And that's true in any season and for any reason.

May you find yourself at the beach, in more ways than one.

Chelsea Lin
Editor ■



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It's all about understated excellence when it comes to the most delectable dishes in Seabrook—here we shout out the town's 10 essential bites, from home-made razor clam risotto to the best burger you can buy.

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Becca and Ryan Porter and their two young children are among a growing tide of young families making the move to Seabrook full time.

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Take a look at the town's impressive network (and plans for further expansion) of hiking and biking trails, perfect for embracing the natural wonderland of Washington's majestic Olympic Peninsula.





A Year at the Beach

SEABROOK'S CALENDAR OF
EVENTS OFFERS A LITTLE
SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE.

Spring

Highlight: Savor Seabrook

May 18, 2024: 12-5 p.m.

Must be 21 or older

More than 20 Washington wineries will be pouring tastes for this Market Street event, which will also include bites of delicious seafood dishes from some of the coast's best restaurants. Live music, lawn games, and more will round out what's sure to be a great time.

Additional events:

- Glass float find (March-April)
- Shamrock 5k and 10k (March)
- Easter Bunny photos (March)
- Kite festival (April)
- Clamchella (April) ►



Summer

Highlight: Experts in Residence

July 1-Aug. 31, 2024: 10-11:30 a.m.

All ages

Seabrook is obviously a magical place through the summer, but this experts-in-residence program makes it an educational one as well. For four days each week, a different expert—think yoga instructors, scientists, authors, comedians, designers, and more—present interactive, fun, and engaging experiences.

Additional events:

- Dad's Dash and Car Show (June)
- Saturday markets (June-Sept)
- Pickleball (June-Sept)
- Yoga (June-Sept)
- Summer concert series (June-Sept)
- 20th anniversary Founder's Day (July 20)
- Gnome and fairy festival (August) ►





Fall

Highlight: Bigfoot Brewfest

Sept. 28, 2024: 2-6 p.m.

Must be 21 or older

One of the coast's biggest beer festivals, this town center event features more than 25 regional breweries, cideries, and distilleries, plus tastes from local food vendors to keep you going. Keep an eye out for Bigfoot himself and snap a selfie!

Additional events:

- Sandcastle competition (September)
- Beachside Author series (September-March)
- Halloweekend (October)

Winter

Highlight: Jolly Days

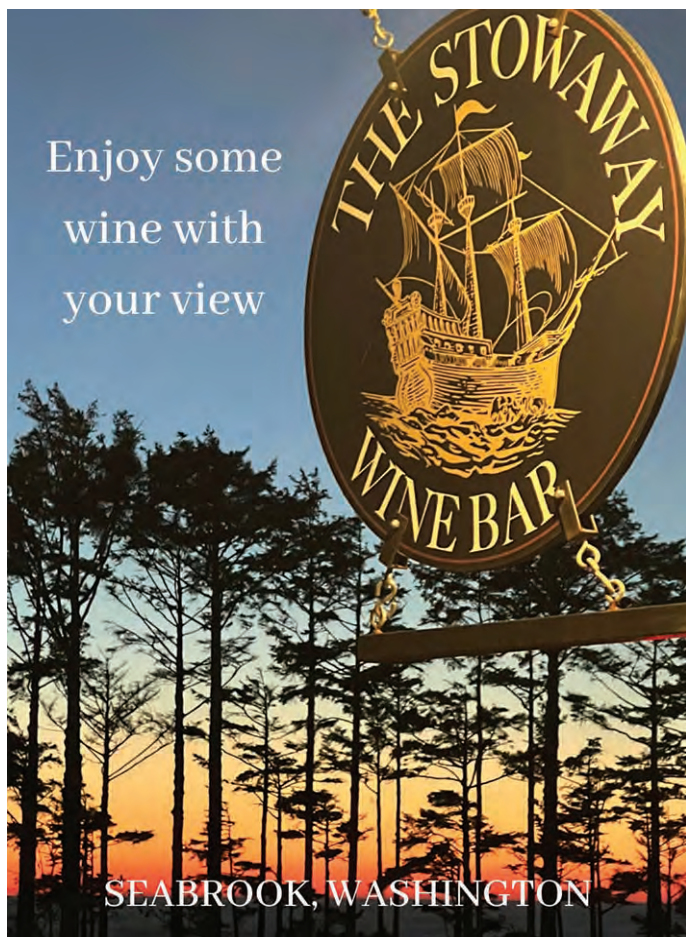
Nov. 29-Dec. 14, 2024

Seabrook's annual celebration of the holidays starts with the tree lighting in Meriweather Square the day after Thanksgiving and continues with Saturday events designed to bring the family together to enjoy the season, from Santa visits to snow drops (yes, snow at the beach!) to a hot chocolate bar open through New Year's Day.

Additional events:

- Turkey Trot (November)
- Glass float find (November-December)
- Small business holiday bazaar (December)
- Holiday parade (December)
- Winter wellness month (Jan) ■





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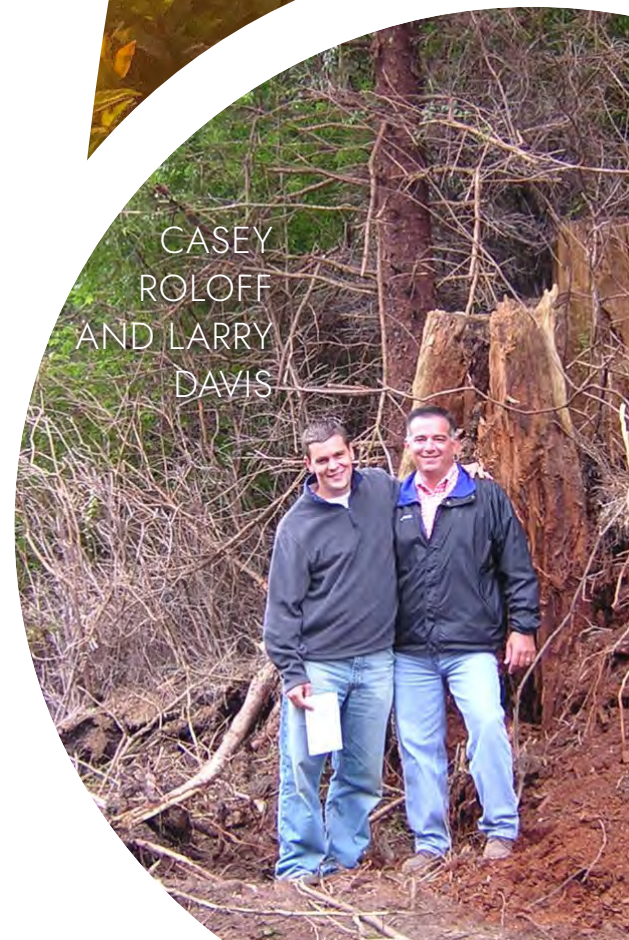
Just Getting Started

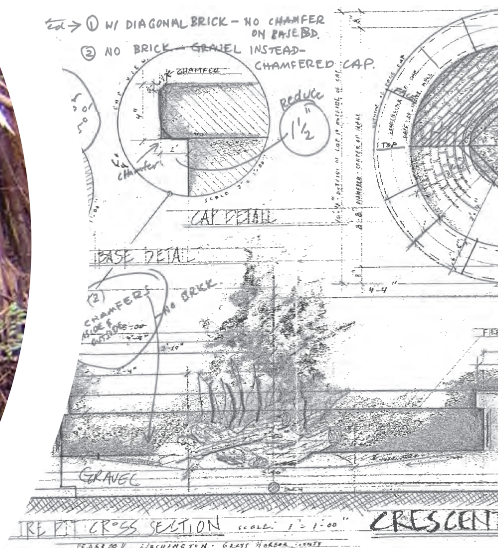
SEABROOK CELEBRATES 20 YEARS NOT WITH NOSTALGIA OF THE PAST, BUT WITH AN EYE TO THE FUTURE.

When you consider the history of Washington's coastline, 20 years is nothing. Much of the beauty—from the cedars to the shore—hasn't changed in millennia. But in 2004, when the ground broke on Seabrook's first home, the town was nothing more than a dream, a set of sketches, and 34 acres of beach-front real estate. Now, there's a bustling town center, hundreds of homes, miles of trails, and an infectious enthusiasm for what is possible. For Seabrook, 20 years has been everything. And we're just getting started.

In the early 2000s, Casey and Laura Roloff were hot off their accomplishment building a village community called Bella Beach in Oregon, when they set their sights on the Olympic Peninsula (Seabrook Town Planner Laurence Qamar helped Laura with her start at Bella Beach). They sought to further promote the design principles of new urbanism—creating a beautiful, sustainable, environmentally conscious community that prized walkability and human relationships—that they'd seen people fall in love with in Seaside, Florida. Like with any ►

CASEY
ROLOFF
AND LARRY
DAVIS





STEPHEN POULAKOS
AND LAURENCE QAMAR



start-up, that early success is mainly about igniting your passion in others.

“We asked a lot of people to put a lot of faith in us,” says Stephen Poulakos, one of the Roloffs’ early adopters and Seabrook’s vice president of town planning and design. For him, it was an easy sell: He vacationed near Seaside Florida in 1981 and grew up playing on that village’s beaches. The idea of creating something similar, but closer to major cities and with a national park in its backyard, was a no-brainer.



CASEY AND
LAURA ROLOFF

“The first 20 years have been really exciting, establishing ourselves as a destination for people to vacation with their friends and family,” says Casey Roloff. “There were only a few true pioneers who just moved out here and wanted to be here from the beginning. But the next five years are going to be the most exciting: We’re going to mature beyond this great vacation destination into somewhere where folks can say, ‘Wow, we get to live here.’”

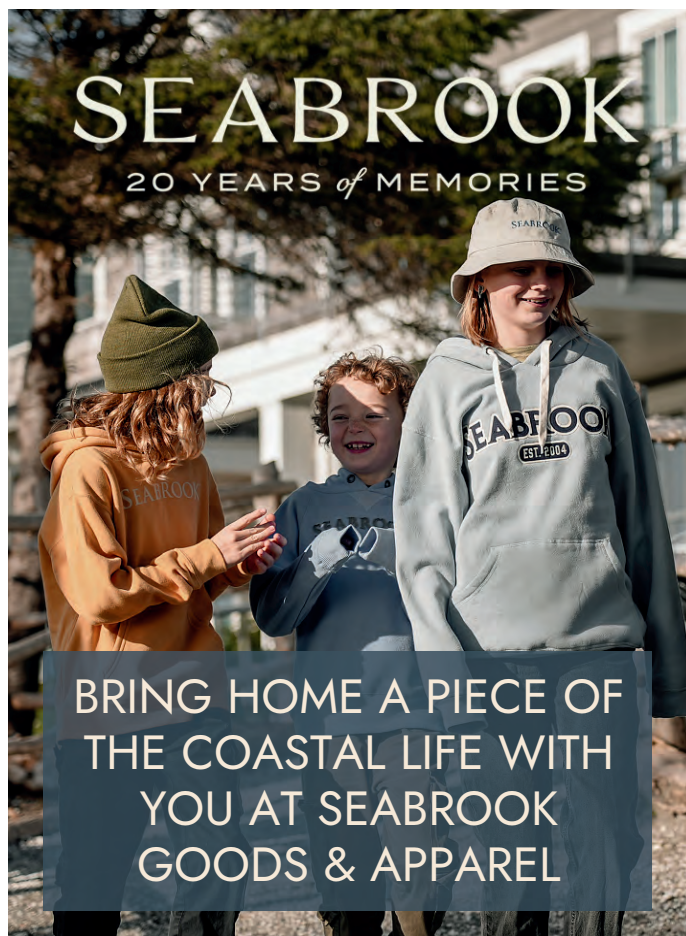
Of course, there have long been folks who have lived on and cared for these lands, and Poulakos mentions the importance of Seabrook’s ongoing relationship with the Quinault Indian Nation as the original stewards of this breathtaking natural place. To best understand the history and culture, Poulakos says in those early days that tribal members shared stories and passed down information regarding the importance of the beach, the lifecycle of the local salmon, the native plants, and much more. ►

From those first rows of houses—including the Roloffs—along Crescent and Bella streets, Seabrook bloomed into a hidden gem vacation spot. As the years passed and the layout and vibe of the town began to truly reflect the key attributes of new urbanism, it's grown exponentially in popularity. The current transition that Roloff mentions, from weekend getaway to desirable home turf, has been largely facilitated by some key components that promise to make full-time living at Seabrook more comfortable and accessible. These game changing developments, as Roloff calls them—the finalization of the town center, with Pacific Landing and the northwest block, scheduled to double the retail real estate; the building of a k-6 school and adjacent community center a mile up the road; a medical center with urgent care; and an 80-acre regenerative farm that will allow greater food independence—will dramatically change the landscape of the town.

But these amenities aren't the end of Seabrook's planned development. The next phase, which has already broken ground about a quarter mile north, will be a village called Makers, where the emphasis will be on what Roloff explains as "experiential retail." He says, "People want handcrafted items, but they also want the experience with the owner and the artist who's making them. Makers will attract more of an industrial vibe, more youthful and creative class. We've always wanted Seabrook to be designed and built for everyone, not just a certain demographic."

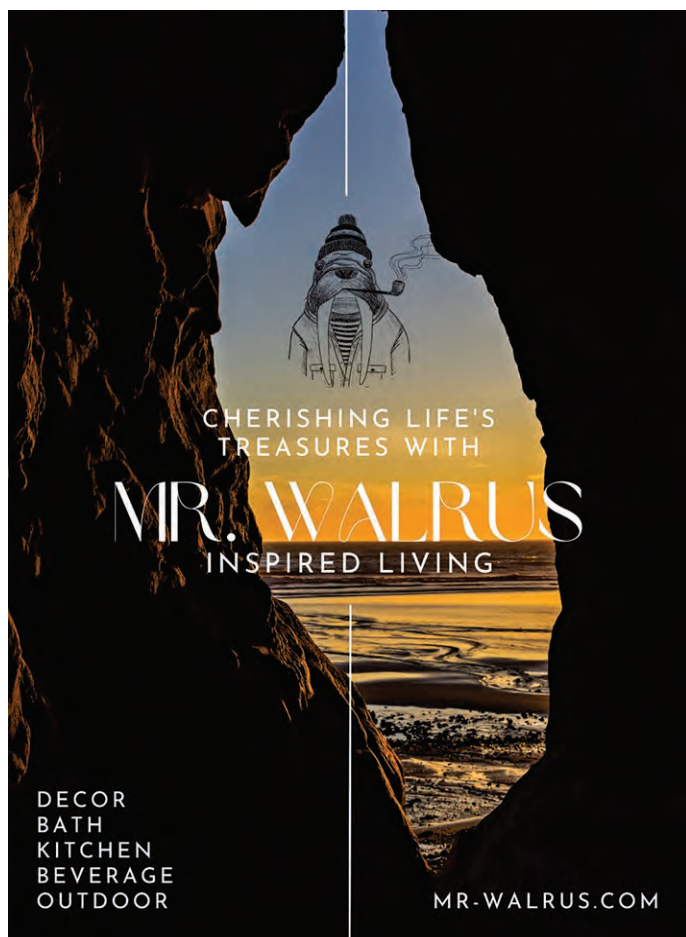
What this means is not only live/work space for creatives, but more attainable housing in general, including 4- and 6-plexes, accessory dwelling units, and multi-generational housing, which Roloff says is a big part of Seabrook's future. There's even a plan for a 7-bedroom assisted living facility with onsite nursing, but with walkability that allows people the independence to age in place.

After Makers to the north, Seabrook will expand south with a village tentatively referred to as Pacific Bluff. Think high-end properties with a view, plus Seabrook's first hotel—a luxury wellness retreat that Roloff compared to Leavenworth's Post Hotel, but at the beach. Currently in the design phase, Pacific Bluff is perhaps three years out. Roloff says they're in no rush—"we just want to do it right." ►



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Doing it right is, after all, what Seabrook has always been about. The town planning may be the physical embodiment of that principle, but there's a less tangible, though equally important element when it comes to overall happiness of guests and residents alike: hospitality.

Nadine Huck is Seabrook's director of guest services. She and her team have the ambitious goal of making Seabrook the number one vacation destination in the west by 2031; when asked what that looks like here, she says "unreasonable hospitality" without missing a beat. She's referring to the bestselling book of the same name, written by Will Guidara of New York's most illustrious restaurant Eleven Madison Park, who touts the importance of fostering meaningful connections with guests, not only meeting their needs but exceeding them, giving customers an extraordinary experience beyond their imagination.



STEPHEN POULAKOS

To do that, Huck and her team use a combination of data, tech, and good old fashioned human-to-human relationship building to go above and beyond guests' expectations, whether that's leaving a welcome basket full of s'mores fixings and puzzles for a family or helping execute the perfect engagement (see sidebar on concierge services page 18). Recently, Seabrook swapped out the Covid-era remote-only check-in for a hybrid check-in model, where guests are invited into the main office at 301 Front St. for happy hour—mainly so they know there's a person there to help them throughout their stay with anything they may need.

"It's like the character Joy in *Inside Out*," Huck says. "We really want to build those core memories on a visit to Seabrook, whether that's helping guests create the perfect event or just making sure they feel welcome and heard and have everything they need." ■

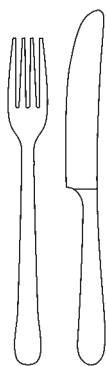




JEFF WILSON

At Your Service

JEFF WILSON IS, ABOVE ALL ELSE, A PROBLEM SOLVER.



Need rose petals strewn for the ideal romantic getaway? A catered dinner and birthday cake for Grandma's 90th? Tee time at the local golf course? He's your guy.

Wilson is Seabrook's concierge, and he's been deeply embedded in building Seabrook's unparalleled hospitality for more than a decade (page 31). As concierge, he wants guests—and residents—to know that he's at their disposal. Since this is a relatively new service, Wilson says the hardest part has just been making sure folks know what's available, ideally in advance to allow for planning time.

Here are a few of Wilson's most popular requests:

Don't worry about cooking. Wilson's got a team of caterers he works with to bring chef-level cuisine into your home regardless of party size. Ideally, let him know two weeks in advance, but he's been known to pull off some last-minute miracles.

Stock your fridge. Send Wilson your grocery list and he'll have the fridge and pantry full before you arrive, so you spend your time at the beach rather than the store.


Forage and fish. The land around Seabrook is abundant—take advantage and have Wilson set you up with an expedition to forage for mushrooms along the forest floor, fish the surrounding bodies of water, or participate in a guided razor clam dig (page 25).

Golf in Ocean Shores. Wilson says the local course offers two-for-one green fees when you book through him, plus free Callaway club rentals.





Bonfire at the beach. If you crave a bigger blaze than the fire pit, have Wilson's team set you up with a beach bonfire, complete with Adirondacks and a Solo stove—they'll even light the fire for you.

Get a ride. Twice daily shuttle service between Seattle and Seabrook launched in 2023; in 2024, they're adding complimentary in-town rides via a golf cart.

Get your car detailed. Seabrook is so walkable you won't need a car anyway—leave it with Wilson and he'll bring it by the house when it's ready. ■



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Seabrook's Best Bites

YOU HAVEN'T FULLY EXPERIENCED SEABROOK
UNLESS YOU'VE WORKED YOUR WAY
THROUGH THESE TOP 10 DELICIOUS DISHES.

There are many reasons folks have gravitated to Seabrook over the past 20 years: The expansive beach and rich forest, the promise of rest and relaxation, the vibrant community. World-class dining hasn't always been among the reasons. But as Seabrook has grown, so too has its restaurant offerings which, combined with the existing ability to make masterful meals in your own kitchens, has made this little piece of the coast a gourmand's paradise.

Here are our favorite bites, whether purchased or prepared, in Seabrook—collect them all and consider yourself a local. ►



Sourdough loaf at Vista Bakeshop

202 Meriweather St.

You may be tempted by the perfectly lacquered croissants, the massive burnished cinnamon roll, even the simple perfection of the coffee cake—and you should definitely start your journey at Vista Bakeshop there. But this bakery, a relatively new addition to the town center from owners who formerly cooked at Canlis, also puts out the best bread this side of Seattle; it's a contender for the best in all the state, to be sure. Score a whole loaf if you're lucky (they tend to sell out, particularly in busy summer months), or try slices sandwiching the excellent BLT or dunked in tomato soup.

See sidebar on page 27 for more info on just how this loaf makes it to your table.



Fried chicken at Fresh Foods Market

224 Market St.

It's fairly common knowledge that some of the nation's best fried chicken can be found in grocery stores (and even convenience stores)—Seabrook is no exception. The impressive new market that anchors Main Street has a hot case full of everything from corn dogs to fried rice, but you shouldn't miss the flavorful, crispy fried chicken, which makes for the perfect picnic food. Eat it right away on a blanket at the beach and take home the leftovers for a cold piece from the fridge late at night with a glass of champagne.



Cauliflower tacos at Koko's Restaurant and Tequila Bar

5 W Myrtle Lane

Not everyone would automatically gravitate to cauliflower tacos on a Mexican menu full of tried-and-true favorites like carnitas and asada, but we're here to tell you: Do it. The combo of roasted cauliflower with the crunch of cabbage and a duo of sauces—sweet-tangy mango and tamarind plus smoky chipotle—makes this an unexpected delight from Koko's (especially paired with a jalapeno margarita). And if you find yourself in Seattle craving Koko's, keep your eyes out for a Capitol Hill location coming soon. ►





Truffle Bianca pizza at Frontager's Pizza Company

21 Seabrook Ave.

That old adage about there being no such thing as bad pizza is still true, but there is such a thing as great pizza, and the truffle bianca pizza from Frontager's qualifies in spades. This Neapolitan-style white pie is topped with truffle oil, an assortment of mushrooms and cheeses, and fresh herbs. It's best eaten fresh from the oven if you can score a table, but one of the great things about a town so small is that takeout is still hot by the time you get home.

Smash burger and fries at Rising Tide Tavern

223 Market St.

In a town as all-American as Seabrook, having access to a good burger is essential. Here, a pillow-soft bun encases this classic cheeseburger, accompanied by some of Washington state's best (though not most traditional) fries. Honestly, every dish at Rising Tide Tavern—on a menu crafted by chef and co-owner Kameron Kurashima (also of Vista Bakeshop), whose cooking chops were refined in Seattle's storied Canlis kitchen—is a knockout.



Tinned fish at the Stowaway Wine Bar

203 Market St.

Want to feel like you're on the Mediterranean, even if just for a happy hour? Head to the wine bar's prime piece of real estate, grab a window seat with ocean views, and order some of the Spanish tinned fish: mussels in escabeche, octopus in olive oil, or sardines in tomato sauce, all served with bread, olives, and pickles to round out the spread. ¡Salud!



Green Machine at Blue

217 Front St.

This new addition to Front Street (from the owners of Koko's down the block) adds a much-needed fresh and healthy option to offset other indulgences. It's easy to get your five-a-day in among the menu of smoothies and salads, but we love the raw juice bar most, particularly the Green Machine: a ►

vibrant concoction of kale, spinach, celery, cucumber, apple, lemon, and ginger co-owner Gibran Moreno drinks to get him through busy days, though we've found it's just as effective for boosting your immunity on lazy ones.

Chocolate chip ice cream sandwich from the Sweet Life

215 S Meriweather St.

Let's be real—can you go wrong with anything in a waffle cone? Obviously the answer is no. So consider any scoop of Olympic Mountain Ice Cream from Sweet Life a real treat. But if we're talking best, you've got to pick up one of the house-made ice cream sandwiches—featuring Vista Bakeshop cookies—like the kid-favorite chocolate chip ice cream sandwich with mint chip ice cream.

Razor clams

You could, of course, find razor clams on a menu while they're in season (generally late fall through spring), but you'd be doing yourself a disservice if you didn't try digging for them yourself on Mocrocks beach (the stretch of sand immediately "below" Seabrook). Borrow the gear from a friend or book a guided dig with the concierge (see page 18); regardless, there's nothing more satisfying than pulling your dinner ingredients out of the earth and turning it into something tasty.

See sidebar on page 28 with a recipe for one of our favorite dishes.

S'mores

This one's a no-brainer, but we couldn't leave it off: You simply must eat a s'more around a firepit while you're here. Whether you like your marshmallow incinerated or merely bronzed, whether you prefer high-quality chocolate or the old Hershey's standby, the key to success here is up to you. (Bonus points if you share this infectious joy with a kid and really make their day.) If this isn't the perfect celebration of life's simple pleasures, we don't know what is. ■

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Lifecycle of a Loaf

At Vista Bakeshop, bread isn't so much a product as a way of life. At the deft hands of master baker Grace McPherron (not to be confused with co-owner Grace Bryan), simple ingredients and time come together to form something far better than the sum of their parts: a crusty-edged, tender-middled, complexly flavorful sourdough loaf to rival any we've had, anywhere in the world. But its excellence is no accident. Here's how that loaf goes from a slurry of whole grain and water to the star of your meal:

Day 1: Bakers build the levain using their sourdough starter (from Seattle's Sea Wolf Bakers) and feed it morning and night.

Day 2: The remaining ingredients get added to the levain, weighed out to the gram, and go through a bulk fermentation at 80 degrees Fahrenheit. The dough goes through a series of folds over the next five hours. Then, the loaves are shaped and proofed for about two hours before going into the walk-in overnight for a long, slow cold proof—a technique they've found maximizes crumb volume and flavor development.

Day 3: Bread bakers show up at 5 a.m. to bake off that day's loaves—upward of 50 per day—at 437 degrees F in a steam-injected deck oven so they're ready to go when the shop opens at 7 a.m. And then it's time to get the mixing started for the next day's loaves. ■





Razor Clam Risotto

Ingredients:

- 6 cups chicken stock
- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 1 ½ cups Arborio rice
- ½ cup white wine
- 15 razor clam bodies (without diggers)
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper, as needed

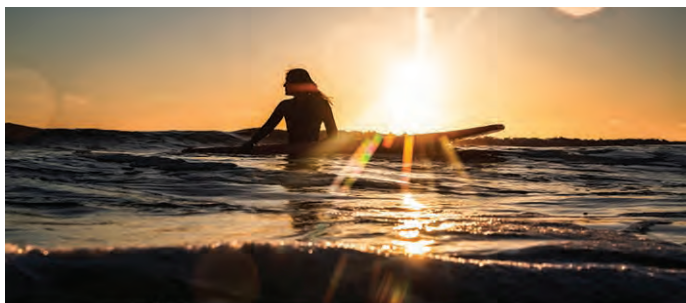
Heat the stock and leave it over low heat as you cook.

In a separate pan, melt 4 tablespoons of butter over medium-low heat, then add the onion and cook until it's just translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the rice and saute for a minute before adding the white wine.

Add a ladleful (about ½ cup—no need to be exact) of the stock to the rice, stirring a few times and waiting until it is absorbed. Repeat with more ladles until the rice is fully cooked (about 40 minutes). You might not use quite all the stock, but better to have too much than too little. At the end, it won't be able to absorb any more liquid and the rice will be soft.

Stir in the clams and cheese, the remaining tablespoon of butter, and then salt and pepper to taste. By the time the stirred-in butter has melted, the clams will be cooked (it's just a few seconds, really), and you're ready to eat.

This recipe is from Seattle-based food writer Naomi Tomky's excellent book The Pacific Northwest Seafood Cookbook. She recommends cooking the clam's feet and body separately, as they have different textures and do best when given the opportunity to shine on their own. For the clam diggers (or feet) you don't use in this recipe, crust in panko and pan fry as an appetizer while your risotto is cooking. ■



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WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE TO
CHASE THE BEST VERSION OF
YOURSELF—BODY, MIND, AND
SOUL—AT WASHINGTON'S
OWN BLUE ZONE.





Diana Wilson exudes a level of tranquility and joy that most of us can only aspire to. But it wasn't always that way.

In 2012, Wilson and her husband, Jeff (see page 18), chased a series of what ifs and found themselves in Seabrook. At first, as Jeff was using his background in hospitality to help owners Casey and Laura Roloff develop Seabrook as a wedding destination, Wilson mostly stayed behind in their West Seattle home, with two young children and a massage therapy business to maintain. But as Jeff fell in love with Seabrook, so too did Wilson. "I started looking around and thought, 'Wow, this town is really going to become something,'" she says. "It was really ground floor level at the time, but I ►



DIANA WILSON



thought, ‘What will this be like in 10 years?’”

They gave up Seattle in favor of Seabrook full-time. A deeply intuitive person, Wilson knew she wanted to run the town’s spa offerings, something she achieved in 2014 with the opening of Spa Elizabeth. From its second floor Front Street home, the spa hosts guests searching for respite in the form of deep tissue massage, sea salt scrubs, and hydrafacials with an ocean view. In 2019, she added a boutique downstairs, where she curates a delightful assortment of beauty and skincare products, plus some travel essentials for guests.

Now, 10 years since she opened Spa Elizabeth, Wilson has seen the town grow and mature, and also become something much more profound: a place of healing. “People are coming to Seabrook for all different reasons: They’re out here to write that book; to decide if they’re going to get that divorce; to reconnect with an old friend; to say goodbye to that loved one,” she says. “People

are coming out here for love and joy and loss and grief, and what I find is we get an array of those guests coming in [to the spa] because they’re here to work through that, work on that emotional and spiritual health. It’s not just about getting a massage. People come out to the ocean to find God, to find the answers the universe provides—to find something within themselves.”

In fact, it was never just about the massage. Seabrook’s embrace of holistic health has been baked into the town’s plan from the beginning—wellness is as much a part of its DNA as it is Wilson’s. As headlines around the world have increasingly touted the benefits of living in Blue Zones, geographic areas where people live longer than average, it’s become clear that Seabrook very organically meets the basic lifestyle checklist that researchers have identified as key to the world’s healthiest populations: moving naturally, downshifting to destress, eating well, having sense of purpose, and embedding yourself in your community.

“Wellness is everything we already do,” says Casey Roloff. “Blue Zones feature things you don’t even think about—it’s not just working out and eating your vegetables. It’s community, walkability, having connections to your neighbors. It’s having multiple generations living together. The whole fabric of the town is made up of ways to interact with others, which is really hard to find in the world. It’s a really promising future, evolving quickly.”

The future will also bring an expanded footprint for Spa Elizabeth, though when and where is still up in the air. Wilson says one of the things she’s prioritizing in the new location will be a hydrotherapy circuit, where guests can reap the benefits of cold plunges and heat therapy, which has been shown to improve everything from energy levels to immune function to circulation. “Through history, we’ve seen proven results for wellness of the body through hydrotherapy—that contrast, of going from the hot to the cool, is really important to the human body,” Wilson says. “Plus, it’s an experience people can have with the people they came here to spend time with, whether that’s a group or a family or a couple.” ■



Get Well Soon



Ditch the fads and unsustainable habits—real wellness starts with these five principles you can easily incorporate into your life:

Reconnect with nature. Call it forest bathing or hiking (see page 40) or simply going for a walk, but immersing yourself in the moss-laden wonderland of the Olympic Peninsula is a relatively immediate mood lifter. Science has shown that spending time in the forest—and we mean really spending time, putting away your phone and using all your senses—lowers blood pressure, heart rate, and those pesky stress hormones.

Walk. Everywhere. It needn't be in the forest even—walking's health benefits are proven, and in a place like Seabrook, it's the best way to get around.

Have a glass of wine. Blue Zone researchers have found that folks who drink a glass or two of wine a day—with good food and friends—outlive those who don't. May we recommend a beach view table at the Stowaway (see page 24)?

Eat more plants. Michael Pollan got it right when he said, "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants." In Blue Zones, it's more common to focus a diet around plants (we suggest the cauliflower tacos at Koko's, page 23) and eating only to 80 percent full.

Put your loved ones first. Self-care is important, but so too is feeling deeply connected to your circle of friends, your family, and your community at large. Roloff says since his mother-in-law moved in near his family, "my kids' lives are so much more full, so much richer. It has grounded the kids and made them more, it sounds cheesy, but wholesome."

Find your place. Studies show that people who live the longest belong to some sort of faith-based community—this needn't be religious, but something that gives a sense of place and purpose. ■

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The Write Place

CALLING ALL WRITERS: THIS AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR FOUND INSPIRATION IN SEABROOK—YOU COULD, TOO.

By **Martha Brockenbrough**

The first time my family visited Seabrook nearly a decade ago, we weren't supposed to be going there at all. My daughters had recommended another coastal beach community as a destination for celebrating Father's Day.

I researched That Other Place, but it didn't set my heart aglow. I thought I'd compare it to Seabrook, which I'd been reading about for years. What would be more fun? More memorable? More beautiful?

The choice was easy, and from the first moment we drove up to Seabrook, with our daughters and our aging golden retrievers on board, we were smitten. This was back before the days of Koko's (home of the world's most delicious burrito), and the restaurant at the time had a ►

Photo courtesy of Martha Brockenbrough

menu for dogs. It was that little touch that slayed me. Our dogs mattered, and this town understands that so well.

As an author of books for young readers, I understand keenly how heartfelt details create a setting, and Seabrook is full of them. Some are in the design of the town itself—the way alleys curve like a plot, inviting you to read onward. Some are in the wit of the owners. I do love a pun, and this town is so full of them that when I wrote *To Catch a Thief*, a novel for elementary school readers set at a slightly decrepit version of Seabrook, I wove that wordplay into the book, along with Seabrook's gnomes, enormous Sasquatch statue, and staircase to the beach.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Before I wrote that novel, we became Seabrook. It took a big leap and a lot of frenetic financing to buy our place, but we knew we could make it work if, in addition to being part of the rental pool, I were to use the space to host writing retreats. And that's exactly what I've done for the past six years, teaching small groups of writers how to become better storytellers. A good bit of my business comes from repeat customers who feel the same way about Seabrook that I do. It's a place you can come to set aside your day-to-day concerns and make something tangible of your dreams.

To Catch a Thief isn't the only book written here. Without violating the privacy of my guests, I can tell you that Seabrook is the cradle of New York Times bestsellers, major award-winners, and more than one debut novel. The ease and beauty of life here supports the hard work of storytelling like no other I've ever been. All of that ease and beauty is the product of really hard work by every team at Seabrook and it makes it, in the words of my husband, "the best thing we've ever done."

Place matters, in fiction and in real life. Whether you're creating a memorable getaway for family, friends, or just yourself—or maybe even someone's next beach read—Seabrook is a destination like no other. A fairytale, even. But this one happens to be for real.

Martha Brockenbrough is the author of 25 books for young readers, including To Catch a Thief, published by Scholastic. She's a winner of the Washington State Book Award and a finalist for the Kirkus Prize. Her next retreat, in April, is called the Stuff of Stars, put on with the novelist Andrea Hannah. For more information, please go to: <https://www.andreahannah.com/the-stuff-of-stars> ■





Home Sweet Home

THE PORTER FAMILY IS AMONG A GROWING TIDE OF YOUNG FAMILIES MAKING THE MOVE TO SEABROOK FULL TIME

It sounds like the makings of a Hallmark movie—or at least a sequel, after the meet-cute moments, after the boy gets the girl and they start a little family and decide that, well, city life just isn't quite right for them.

This story is about the Porters, a young family who made a big leap and bought a vacation home they ended up loving so much that they made it their permanent home. ►

Becca and Ryan first heard about Seabrook, as many folks do, through a friend. They were living just north of Seattle at the time, pregnant with their first child, and the couple decided to spend their babymoon in one of Seabrook's rentals.

For Becca, Seabrook served as a throwback to the summers spent in Long Beach she cherished as a kid. For Ryan, the town's new urbanist design was intriguing—he'd long been a fan of the planned community in Celebration, Florida, where he'd visited regularly and vacationed with Becca.

"We immediately fell in love with it," Becca says of that first Seabrook visit. "We spent the trip talking about how we wanted to always come out and spend time with our little one here."

The Porters bought a home in the Lily Walk neighborhood the next year, and started embedding themselves in the community with frequent visits, exploring the beach with their young daughter.

By 2019, just two years after their first visit, Ryan was ready to commit to Seabrook full time. "We began to realize that the city wasn't doing much for us," Ryan says. "We wanted to have more space and no commute." Becca took a little more convincing, they were pregnant with their second child, and she understandably wanted to be near her support network. Once they welcomed their son, they began to take the thought more seriously.

This was pre-pandemic—the chaos of 2020 really brought into focus their desire to be free of the constraints of city life. Becca longed to give her kids the kind of childhood she had growing up in Langley on Whidbey Island, where she rode her bike freely and knew all the shop owners by name. "We really wanted to give our kids that sense of community, where if you need anything you know who to go to," she says.

They made the move in late 2020, trading their Lily Walk home for one in the South Farm District, and selling their Seattle-area home in 2021. Neither of them have looked back. "Now,

instead of waking up and deciding whether to go to Starbucks or Target, I decide whether we should go ride our bikes or run on the beach," Becca says. She goes a week between needing the car, the family walks or bikes everywhere.

The Porter kids, Isabella, 7, and Jackson, nearly 4, are thriving. So, too, are their parents. Ryan has his own company, now headquartered in Pacific Beach, and says getting to be a part of the local community, not just in Seabrook but Ocean Shores and Pacific Beach, has been incredibly rewarding. He feels deeply invested in Seabrook's growth as well. "What we've gotten by moving here has been a lot more time for family and life," he says. "The biggest thing for me is that it's a startup of a community. I like startup businesses because you can influence it and have a role. If you want to have an impact on where you live, Seabrook absolutely offers that."

Becca, who stays home with the kids, encourages others considering a move like this to "just jump in and do it." The Seabrook community has really shown up for her family. "We have so many friends who own homes here, who may not live here but vacation on weekends," she says. "I joke with Ryan that we see our friends more here than we did in Seattle, because now we actually have time to make that happen." ■



Photos by Alicia Tisdale Photography



SEABROOK TRAIL MAP

HIKING & MIXED USE TRAILS

NORTH GLEN TRAIL

MODERATE TERRAIN • .31 MILES

DIPPER TRAIL

CHALLENGING TERRAIN • .4 MILES

GNOME TRAIL

EASY TERRAIN • .13 MILES

BEACH TRAIL

MODERATE TERRAIN • .26 MILES

FARM TRAIL

EASY TERRAIN • .14 MILES

TROLL TRAIL

CHALLENGING TERRAIN • .35 MILES

CEDAR RUN TRAIL

EASY TERRAIN • .35 MILES

MIXED USE HIKING & BIKING TRAILS

BORDER TRAIL

EASY TERRAIN • 2.3 MILES

NARNIA

EASY TERRAIN • .47 MILES

SIDNEY TRAIL

MODERATE TERRAIN • .42 MILES

CEDAR HOLLOW

EASY TERRAIN • .82 MILES

MOUNTAIN BIKING TRAILS

ZIPLINE

EASY TERRAIN • .23 MILES

WORMHOLE

MODERATE TERRAIN • .12 MILES

BUCK LAKE

EASY TERRAIN • 1.7 MILES

GET THE STINK OUT

EASY TERRAIN • .45 MILES

SUNBURNT

EASY TERRAIN • .34 MILES

HIGHWAY 1-o-FUN

EASY TERRAIN • .23 MILES

TSUNAMI

EASY TERRAIN • .21 MILES

POSEIDON

EASY TERRAIN • .29 MILES

MIKE-O-RAMA

MODERATE TERRAIN • .55 MILES

WHOA NELLIE

MODERATE TERRAIN • .66 MILES

RIPTIDE

MODERATE TERRAIN • .17 MILES

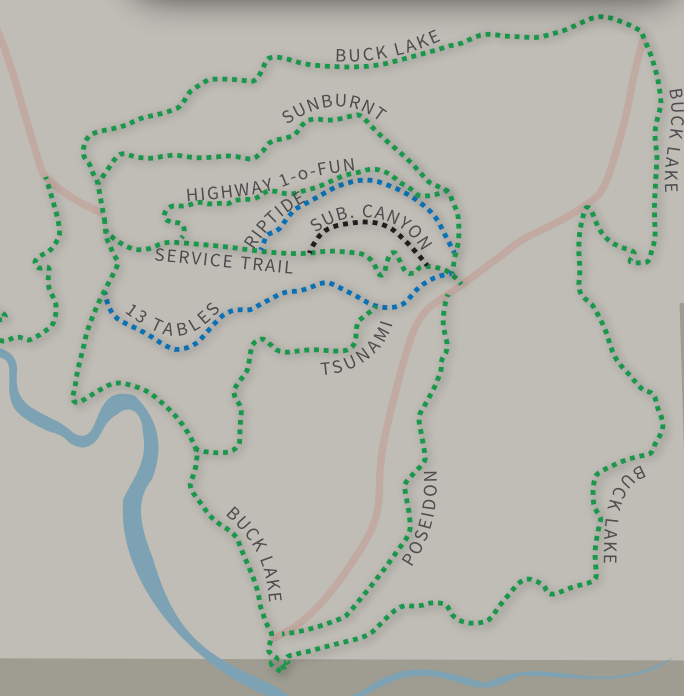
13 TABLES

MODERATE TERRAIN • .28 MILES

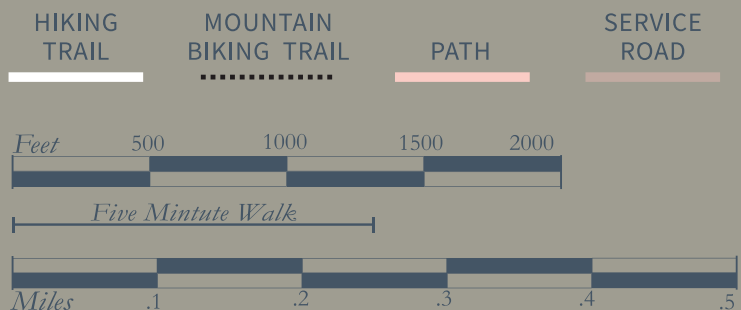
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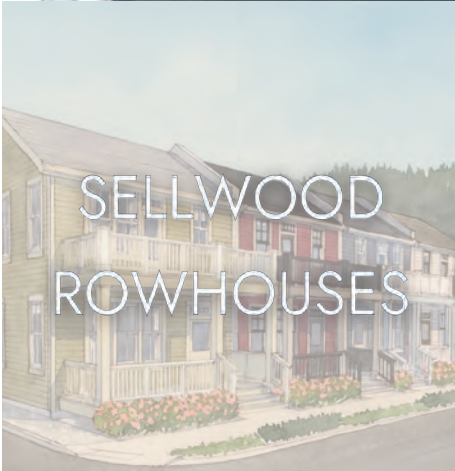
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