

Spa-rry Eyed *in the san juan islands*

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AS THE FERRY PULLS AWAY FROM ANACORTES, Washington, take a look behind you. What you might see—standing forlornly and waving from the shore—are your worries and anxieties.

What may be your usual bedfellows will not be needed or missed when you escape to spend a few days in the San Juan Islands. Out here you will find refreshing outdoors activities; along with towns that progress has forgotten. A series of comforting hotels with adjoining spas are just the first excitements of your arrival.

Just over an hour away, San Juan is the island farthest from Anacortes. Without a single stoplight on the island, life remains at a chill pace.

Built in 1886, Haro Hotel still stands in its rustic splendor, albeit with eccentric floorboards that undulate as the building has settled over the years. With its welcoming fire and big red armchairs, the lobby quickly draws you in.

Downstairs is the Afterglow Spa, the ultimate epitome of tranquility. Afterglow's most popular treatment is the Afterglow Signature Body Experience, a 90-minute indulgence involving a mineral salt and eucalyptus scrub. Guests receive hydrotherapy in a luxurious tub surrounded by candles, along with a massage.

Couples' massage, couples' pedicure and the caviar facial are also very

popular. If you don't want to worry about booking everything separately, lodging-spa-dining packages are available for a smooth and convenient vacation schedule.

Enhancements can be added to any facial, such as antioxidant treatments. A variety of baths are also available, which offer therapeutic benefits such as helping with the detoxification of the body.

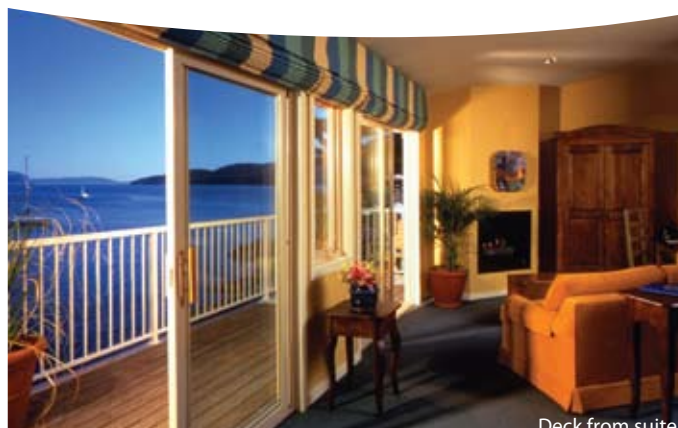
The next day you can hike at an English Camp for a short (but very steep) climb of about half an hour, leading you to terrific views of the surrounding islands, straits and mountains. Breathtaking views await hikers at the American Camp, which is much flatter as it runs along the shoreline.

On your way back into Friday Harbor you'll find the San Juan Vineyards, owned by Yvonne Swanberg. These Vineyards produce several unusual varietals, such as the unique Siegerrebe—a low-alcohol white wine with an aromatic floral nose, crisp citrus flavors and a hint of grapefruit. Madeleine Angevine, another white varietal, offers hints of pear and apricot with a bit of melon and peach on the palate. San

Juan Vineyards grows both whites and reds, which will please the tastes of any of wine connoisseur with favorites like Gewurztraminer, Riesling, Merlot, Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon.

The second hotel and spa option is Elements Hotel. A former motor lodge, Elements is a warm and funky hotel reminiscent of the time in which it was built. The rooms are decked out in dark browns, tinted with white and lime green, powder blue or autumnal reds and oranges. They're spread across a small area in true motor lodge style. Describing itself as a "hybrid between a resort hotel and classic motel," Elements boasts stylishly renovated rooms and plethora of outdoor activities. Tourists can go boating at night or explore the grounds, which are light with playfully tiny lights to guide one around.

And if the warming color scheme's



Deck from suite

of Elements interior doesn't hit you, the charm of owners Adam and Laura Saccio will. Expect to be greeted by the duo in the reception area, which glows with the orange of a sultry summer day.

When staying at Element, take a break from the outdoors to relax at Lavendera

see all of the islands spread at your feet like stepping-stones across a channel.

Evenings are best spent stepping back in time at Rosario Resort and Spa. Originally the private residence of Robert Moran back in 1909, the building was opened as a resort in 1960 and is now

a full view of the harbor, as does the elegant dining room.

Anacortes is the crown jewel of Fidalgo Island and mustn't be overlooked in your travels. Even though Fidalgo technically isn't a part of the San Juan Islands, it likes to think of itself as one. By now your worries and stress, last seen waving you goodbye, will have given up and left, leaving you free to enjoy a final night.

The recently renovated Majestic Inn and Spa is in the heart of downtown Anacortes. If you want to forget the world, you'd do well to step into the Majestic's spa.

Perhaps the most indulgent experience here takes place in the Chrysalis Cocoon, a thermal hydrotherapy capsule. You lie on a warmed table, and when the cocoon lid is closed (your head remains outside it), you lie in ambient air and enjoy a scalp treatment. Afterwards, a Vichy shower cleans your body with a refreshing warm spray, so you have nothing to worry about but relaxing in the lounge with a cup of rosehip tea.

One can enjoy several wraps—from re-mineralizing to detoxifying, along with invigorating exfoliations (both with or without the cocoon). Hydrotherapy, massage, facials and manicure/pedicure are also available.

The San Juan Island will soon be behind you, but they'll be waiting here for when you return—and every time you come back, your stresses will be left behind.

Evidence of Moran's trade as a ship builder is everywhere, from the 12-inch-thick walls paneled with exquisite mahogany to the parquet floor and ultra-heavy doors.

Day Spa. Owner Ceily Gray will invite you for treatments that include relaxation massage, foot massage, reflexology, reiki and an energy treatment.

Some massages incorporate hot stones, and if you have the time, it's worth adding the 30-minute Face Glow—a facial without the pain of extractions, but all the goodness of natural ingredients.

Friday Harbor is also worth exploring. A charming town devoid of a single chain, Friday Harbor houses the Whale Museum, which is overflowing with fascinating information about the ocean's giants. The Whale museum also organizes guided whale-watching trips.

Next stop is Orcas Island. The largest of the San Juans, Orcas is 45 minutes by ferry from San Juan Island. This claw-shaped piece of land offers fantastic hiking, especially on Mount Constitution. From the mountain's pinnacle (the highest point in the area at 2,409 ft.) you can

listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

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While visiting Rosario check out the Avanyu Spa. Along with the usual treatments, one can focus on certain areas or problems, such as the back purifying treatment (Emerald Isle) or Mud Glorious Mud, an anti-aging experience.

The Rosario Legend signature treatment includes a green tea and Pacific seaweed salt glow to help you detox, or the lavender soy exfoliation to induce relaxation. This is followed by a body wrap of your choice to help de-stress, re-hydrate and relax. To finish, there's a massage customized for your body.

The guest rooms at Rosario are scattered throughout the grounds. Each has