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### ELK COVE INN: SECLUDED, REJUVENATING, QUINTESSENTIALLY MENDOCINO

One of the first bed-and-breakfast retreats established on the Northern California coast, Elk Cove Inn remains an exemplar of the class: a pampering getaway that provides a welcome respite from metropolitan life and bears the personal stamp of its innkeeper owner.

Turn off Highway 1 at the inn's entrance and one of Elk Cove's most powerful charms is immediately apparent: a sweeping, iconic North Coast view of craggy rock formations jutting from the blue-green ocean, a driftwood-strewn beach, and a fragrant forest backdrop. That view is a primary feature of the windowed dining room and most of the inn's 15 rooms.

The rooms stand out for their individuality as well as their views. Elk Cove Inn offers an unusual range of accommodations, from rooms tucked away in the Victorian main house to cliffside clapboard cottages to a quartet of luxury spa suites in a pair of shingled, two-story duplexes. While the suites share an upscale ski lodge-meets-beach house décor, the rooms and suites each have their own style.

This variety reflects a succession of owners who've left their mark on the property. The L.E. White Lumber Company built the main house in 1883 as a retreat for executives presiding over what was then a booming business supplying redwood planks to build San Francisco. Today's guests can get a taste of that heritage in the Lumber Baron room, which contains a William Morris wallpapered Arts & Crafts-style ceiling and what is believed to be the original carved wood bed.

German immigrant Hildrun Uta-Triebess turned the property into a bed-and-breakfast inn in 1968, and raised two daughters here while developing a reputation for her ample German breakfasts. She added a second story to the house as well as the current dining room and a fully licensed restaurant kitchen— a rarity among B&Bs, and a feature that allows the Elk Cove Inn to turn out a generous, varied, high-quality breakfast buffet every morning as well as specialty dinners.

Recent former owners, Elaine Bryant and Jim Carr, added the luxury suites in 1997. Jim Carr, an architect, designed and built them himself, right up to the hand-eased beams in the second-floor suites' cathedral ceilings.

#### **New Owner Plans Spa, Ups the Luxury Level**

Current proprietor David Lieberman took over in November 2001 and is wasting no time in putting his stamp on the Elk Cove Inn. He's already begun constructing a full-service therapeutic spa in the shell of the inn's rebuilt classic country garage. Opening in February 2003, the spa will minister to guests and the general public with a full range of massage therapies, wraps, facial and foot treatments, and aromatherapy.

In the meantime, guests can order selected services in their rooms, which Lieberman is gradually refurbishing with an eye toward making the inn more luxurious while maintaining its distinctive character. The inn's newest room, Ridgeview, shows off his approach: its relaxing décor, a contemporary take on colonial-tropics style concocted of rattan furniture, a palm motif, and cream and melon walls, is sophisticated yet playful.

Rooms already have been restocked with more luxurious amenities, so it's no surprise that what guests comment on most is the inn's attention to detail—the bath products imported from Provence, the fresh flowers everywhere, the welcome baskets of wine, fruit and the inn's signature cookies, the after-dinner port and chocolates laid out in each room, and especially the hard-to-leave beds piled high with feather beds, down comforters and pillows and made up with suede-soft 400-thread-count Egyptian cotton sheets.

Two amenities Lieberman won't be adding are in-room phones and TVs. "People come to the Elk Cove Inn to unwind and get away from all that," Lieberman says. "Our guests don't want those distractions."

### **Local Activities Abound**

For guests who can drag themselves out of bed, Elk Cove Inn serves as home base for an array of activities.

A path from the inn's gazebo—scene of weddings and private dinners for two—slopes down the cliffside to Greenwood Beach State Park, a long stretch of sandy beach that guests often have to themselves. A short stroll along the public beach path leads to the center of Elk, a sleepy village still known among some locals as Greenwood, after four trapper-hunter-rancher brothers who were among the first settlers to reach the area. At its peak as a logging town, Elk was home to about 1,000 people, as well as 10 hotels, 14 saloons, several dance halls, and other necessities. Present-day Elk has about one quarter the population, along with a friendly pub, a couple of cafes and gift stores, and a historical society.

A 15-mile drive north from Elk takes you to Mendocino, a well-preserved 19<sup>th</sup>-century town that serves as the county's shopping and fine-dining hub. About 20 miles inland lies the Anderson Valley, where many of Mendocino County's top wineries run tasting rooms amid the vineyards. And for active nature lovers, there are miles of hiking trails in nearby state parks, horseback rides through the redwood forests and along the beaches, and kayaking in coastal waters rich with wildlife ranging from birds and sea lions to playful otters and spouting whales.

Whatever guests decide to do, they can look forward to a late-afternoon cocktail or a glass of local wine and hors d'oeuvres back at the inn, a casual dinner in town or an elaborate meal at one of several fine Mendocino Coast restaurants, and of course, a good night's sleep.

For Elk Cove Inn reservations, call 800/275-2967 or visit:  
[www.elkcoveinn.com](http://www.elkcoveinn.com).

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