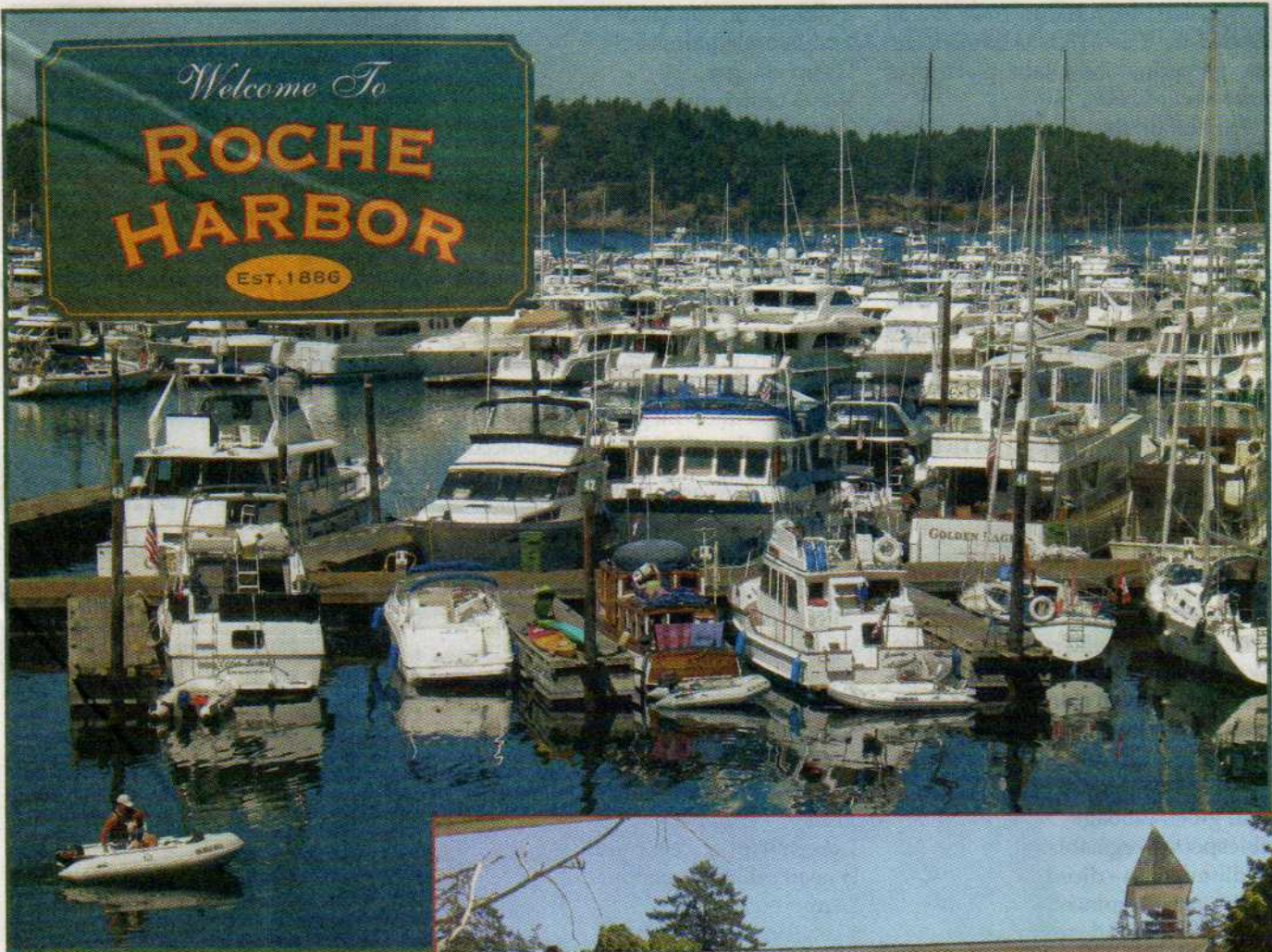


48° North

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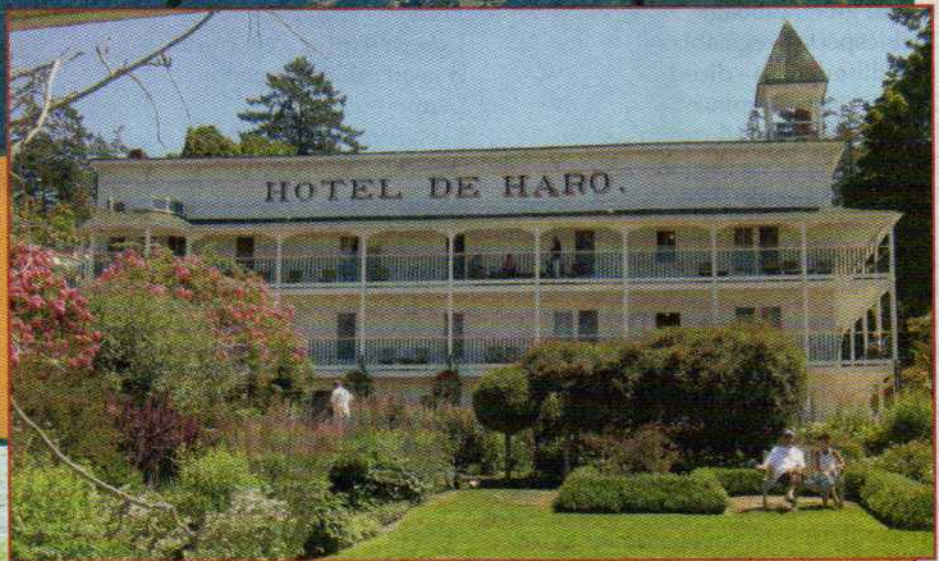
Charter Guide Issue



Top: Roche Harbor Marina, recently voted one of North America's Top 10 Marinas.

Right: Historic Hotel de Haro, built in 1886, surrounded by immaculately maintained gardens.

Below: Bronze herons huddle in the Westcott Bay Sculpture Park.



Roche Harbor Resort is renowned among sailors the world over for its peaceful, isolated ambience, and its majestic centerpiece, the white terraced 123-year-old Hotel de Haro. But there's far more to this typical Pacific Northwest scene where fir and pine forested rocky outcrops descend to a deep blue harbor filled with dozens of expensive yachts and sailboats lying still in its calm water. It's such a popular boater's haven that hundreds of sailors have reunions here every year.

BY ROY STEPHENSON

Since its major additions of new docks and slips, a refueling dock, and modern bathrooms, showers, restrooms and laundry in 1997, Roche Harbor Marina has firmly established itself as one of the Pacific Northwest's idyllic and convenient destinations. Recently voted as one of North America's Top 10 Marinas, its 11 fingers of long wooden docks now accommodate up to 377 boats, from 20 to 150 feet long.

This superb, deep-water marina's telephone hookups, high speed internet access, and unique floating mobile pumpout for sewerage (affectionately named *MV Phecal Phreak*), make it a home away from home for salt encrusted sailors from around the world. A covered 40 by 40-foot barge is available for boating guests, complete with propane barbecues, chairs and tables. There's even a marine mechanic available for repairs.

For sailors, the amenities are second to none. The Hotel offers three superb restaurants featuring the finest in Northwest seafood cuisine. Try their grilled oysters with garlic butter, flame cedar plank roasted king salmon, baby spinach with smoked Westcott Bay mussels and hazelnut-encrusted cod stuffed with Dungeness crab. Respected Northwest wines like the Yakima Valley Lone Canary Sauvignon Blanc round off a perfect meal.

In the evenings sailors and hotel guests gather at the flag Pavilion to watch Roche Harbor's moving colors ceremony, where flags from the U.S.A., Canada, and Great Britain are lowered to their national anthem, followed by "taps" and a booming shot from the cannon. This tradition has been passed down from the 1950's.

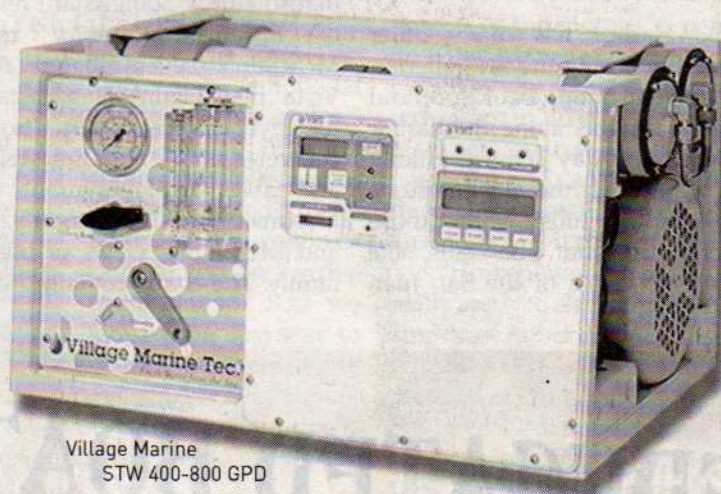
But the historic and majestic two-storied, white painted Hotel de Haro, built in 1886, is always the harbor's eye-catching showpiece, surrounded by immaculately maintained gardens featuring arbors of rose and clematis plants. Now on the National Register of Historic Places, the hotel's guests include President Theodore Roosevelt, in 1906 and 1907. You can see his signature in the hotel register, enclosed in a glass case in the lobby. It's easy to imagine frequent visitors John Wayne

and Johnny Carson lounging by the large fireplace admiring the historic photos on the lobby's walls. The hotel has retained antique furniture in all rooms, so guests will feel like they've slipped back into the past.

Everywhere the history of the harbor is palpable. The harbor is named after British midshipman and surveyor Richard Roche, who visited the area in a 19th century expedition. The hotel is named after Lopez Gonzales Haro, a Spanish sailor who was the first European to discover

the San Juan Islands in 1787. There were disputes between the British and United States for possession of the island since 1857, and finally settled in 1872 by the island being awarded to the U.S.A. by Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm, the arbitrator of the whole affair that eventually became known as the Pig War.

Then, in 1881 two brothers, Robert and Richard Scurr, started the island's lime industry. However, it was John S. McMillin, a Tacoma lawyer, who discovered the large, richest lime



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deposit in Roche Harbor in 1884, and founded the Roche Harbor Lime and Cement Company. By 1890 the town had 800 residents, most working in the productive limestone quarries and kilns with warehouses stretched several hundred feet into the bay, holding 20,000 barrels of lime. The workers stayed in large bunkhouses or cottages nearby. McMillin was a seafarer with a 50-foot yacht, the *Calcite*, and Commodore of the Roche Harbor Yacht Club in 1908.

A few minutes walk from the hotel, a row of immaculately restored old, white, wooden buildings with green trim, known as Company Town Cottages, are available for families to rent. They formerly housed workers from the limekilns in the Harbor's heyday.

Roche Harbor has many other attractions. Exploring the art galleries, gift and souvenir shops, bookstore, and historical landmarks along the harbor is a pleasant half-day activity. Hiking trails wind through the old limestone quarries on the hillside for those who prefer dry land. The trails take in spectacular views of the San Juan

Islands and Vancouver Island across the strait. Closer to the harbor, tennis courts and a swimming pool provide a great way for the more energetic to burn some calories.

Art aficionados will love the Westcott Bay Sculpture Park. A 10-minute stroll up the gently sloping road, featuring over 100 sculptures spread out over a gently rolling, 19-acre grassy reserve. Here you can admire an amazing variety of whirling kaleidoscopes of brightly colored glass and dazzling metal, ceramic sculptures, and smoothly carved stone and wood figurines.

Then, walk across the road up a narrow dusty dirt trail among the firs and pines to the surreal McMillin family mausoleum. Somewhat reminiscent of Europe's funerary monoliths, McMillin's seven-pillared Afterglow Vista mausoleum is a testament to his love for this family. Its towering concrete pillars and limestone chairs and tables display symbols from the Masons, Sigma Chi fraternity, the Bible, and McMillin's views of life and his family. The chairs contain the ashes of

family members, so be careful where you sit.

Renting mopeds is a fun way to go around San Juan Island or further afield to Friday Harbor, just 15 minutes away. Here, browsing bookstores, souvenir shops, seven art galleries, the Whale museum, the Historical museum, and the American Legion museum will easily keep you entertained for a day.

At the end of a relaxing day, the Roche Harbor Spa, Afterglow, next to Hotel de Haro, offers an outstanding array of ways to pamper yourself, with massage, facials, and marine pedicures.

For more on Roche Harbor visit their website at: www.rocheharbor.com/

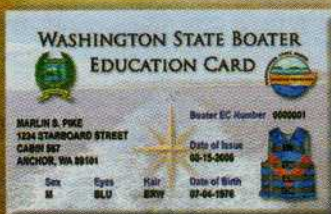
Roy Stevenson is a freelance writer residing in Seattle, Washington. He writes on travel and culture, history, military history, running, sports and fitness for over 80 magazines and newspapers in the USA and U.K.

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