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# Image

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## CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

The new Cirque is a visual  
spectacle in San Jose

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# SOHUM:

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN MONTGOMERY

## *Some Gems in Southern Humboldt County*

BY DIANE LEBOW

There's nothing "Ho Hum" about "SoHum," that is, spending some time in southern Humboldt County in Northern California. One of the most remote spots on the California coast is just four hours north of San Francisco on the Lost Coast. Like so many things in life, the journey there is worth every stop.

One of the gems is the historic Tudor-style Benbow Inn near Garberville which offers a comfortable home base for your north coast adventures.

### **Benbow:**

Designed by architect Albert Farr, who is best known for creating author Jack London's Wolf House in Glen Ellen, the Benbow Historic Inn was built by the Benbow family and opened to the public in 1926. Its elegance and hospitality continue to provide a quiet retreat today as it has for the likes of Clark Gable, Joan Fontaine, Eleanor Roosevelt, and more recently, the King of Jordan.

Experienced hoteliers, John and Teresa Porter and Jack Macdonald, purchased the Inn in 1994, and continue to upgrade and restore it with loving care while continuing the traditions of comfort and hospitality. The lobby and guest rooms are furnished with antiques and include many personal touches along with modern comforts.

A decanter of sherry welcomes you to your room while guests can enjoy afternoon tea and freshly baked scones in the cozy lobby that has a feel of Old English elegance.

In the spacious dining room, meals include such dishes as pernod prawns, duck confit, local steelhead trout, and scallops with volcano rice. Sumptuous desserts of Meyer lemon pie, chocolate Riesling poached pears, and Benbow bread pudding cap the dining experience.

Chef and sous chef Dustin and Jennifer Vallance use locally grown produce, fresh seafood, and choice meats in their creative preparations. Occurring throughout the year, The Benbow Winemaker Dinners are special treats.

In fact, each season up at the Benbow offers its own charms: from winter holiday excitement and New Year's Eve Dinner Dance, to spring flowers, summer arts and music festivals on the Eel River, and leisurely walks surrounded by autumn colors. The Benbow's scenic nine hole golf course, steelhead fishing, adjacent RV park, seasonal swimming pool, and complimentary bicycles are some additional pleasurable options.

The neighboring Julia Morgan Historic Redwood Grove estate is open for tours which can be arranged via the Benbow

Inn.

Local excursions into the surrounding Redwood Coast may include hikes among the giant coastal redwoods and visits to small Victorian towns. Just six miles north of the Benbow Inn is a 31 mile amazing drive along the Avenue of the Giants. These trees form their own lofty cathedrals as light filters through old growth groves down to the carpets of ferns and moss. Don't miss the special Drive Through Tree.



Benbow Inn Lobby



**Carson Mansion  
Eureka**



### **The Carson Mansion:**

The Victorian seaport of Eureka is an easy day trip one hour north of the Benbow. Eureka began as a shipping center in the 1850s during the Gold Rush and then prospered as logging became the new gold.

Located on Humboldt Bay, Eureka's well preserved Old Town offers the visitor nooks and crannies of charming shops, restaurants, galleries and special events such as the Arts Alive! Art walk on the first Saturday of each month.

The crown jewel of the town was built by the town's earliest residents, William Carson and his wife, Sarah. Prosperity from his lumber mill resulted in the construction of the amazing Carson Mansion (1884-5), a three story, 18 room structure.

Its wide porches, ornamental pillars, gables, turrets, cupolas, and stained glass make the Carson Mansion one of the most photographed buildings in the world. The mansion's private Ingomar Club offers dining and special events to members and their guests.

A few miles off the main highway between the Benbow and Eureka, the quaint Victorian town of Ferndale, founded in 1852 by pioneer dairy farmers, is known for its ornate homes known as Butterfat Palaces, after the source of their owners' wealth. Today many artists call Ferndale home.

### **The Lost Coast:**

Imagine a fishing village that exists almost outside of time, a California coast Shangri-La. Then take the small road west from Garberville out to the Lost Coast and the village of Shelter Cove, permanent population around 500. Due to its rugged landscape, steep terrain, and high mountains, this area has retained its remoteness.

For many years, it was accessible mainly by sea and later small planes. Quiet except for the sounds of the surf and sea bird squawks, Shelter

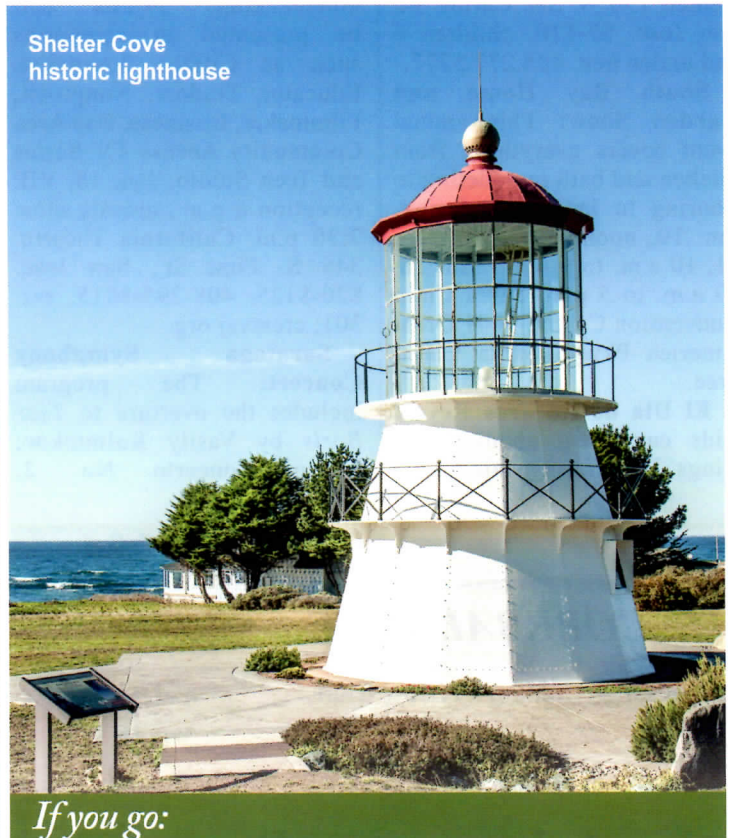
Cove boasts a black sand beach, historic lighthouse, small fishing fleet, golf course, and a handful of bed and breakfasts along with a restaurant or two. The world famous Lost Coast hiking trail awaits intrepid hikers.

The Inn of the Lost Coast is a favorite lodging, perched atop a cliff overlooking the sea. Features include fireplaces, hot tubs and saunas. It's a bit of heaven to watch the sunset from your spa with only the Pacific stretched before you. In spring and winter, gray whales spout and breach right off the coast.

Later enjoy fresh fish at the Cove Restaurant or delicious pizza in the Inn's adjacent tiny restaurant. Just next door, the well run Fish Tank espresso gallery offers fresh baked goods and sandwiches.

Relax in comfortable historic lodging; get lost in tranquility on the Lost Coast, and walk among the world's tallest Redwoods: SOHUM, South Humboldt County.

**Shelter Cove  
historic lighthouse**



*If you go:*

#### **Benbow Inn:**

<http://www.benbowinn.com>

#### **Inn of the Lost Coast**

<http://innofthelostcoast.com>

#### **Humbolt Country California's Redwood Coast:**

<http://www.redwoods.info>

#### **Shelter Cove/Lost Coast:**

[http://www.heltercove-lotcoast.com/lost\\_coast](http://www.heltercove-lotcoast.com/lost_coast)

#### **Julia Morgan's Historic Redwood Grove estate:**

tour reservations 415.526.3180

#### **Loose Caboose Café, Willits:**

fun local stop to eat en route



**Lost Coast  
Black Sand Beach**