

SAUSALITO WOODEN BOAT TOUR

A Three Mile Stroll With Historic Footnotes



WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY VICTORIA A. COLELLA

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Welcome to the second edition of the Sausalito Wooden Boat Tour, a self-guided three mile tour of the historic Sausalito waterfront and the eclectic collection of wooden boats that call this little village their home.

Some of the people and boats you will encounter on this tour have lived adventurous seafaring lives, others have never navigated beyond the Golden Gate. Nonetheless, the handcrafted wooden boats that grace our harbors continue to inspire adventure, art, poetry, and song in those who know and love them. Whether your appreciation is based on the historical or artistic significance of the wooden boats, or is simply a reflection of your own past personal experience, it is my hope that the Sausalito Wooden Boat Tour brings you a little bit closer to the nautical life with a renewed appreciation for all things made with the hand, eye, and heart.

Victoria Colella

*Founder
The Sausalito Wooden Boat Tour*

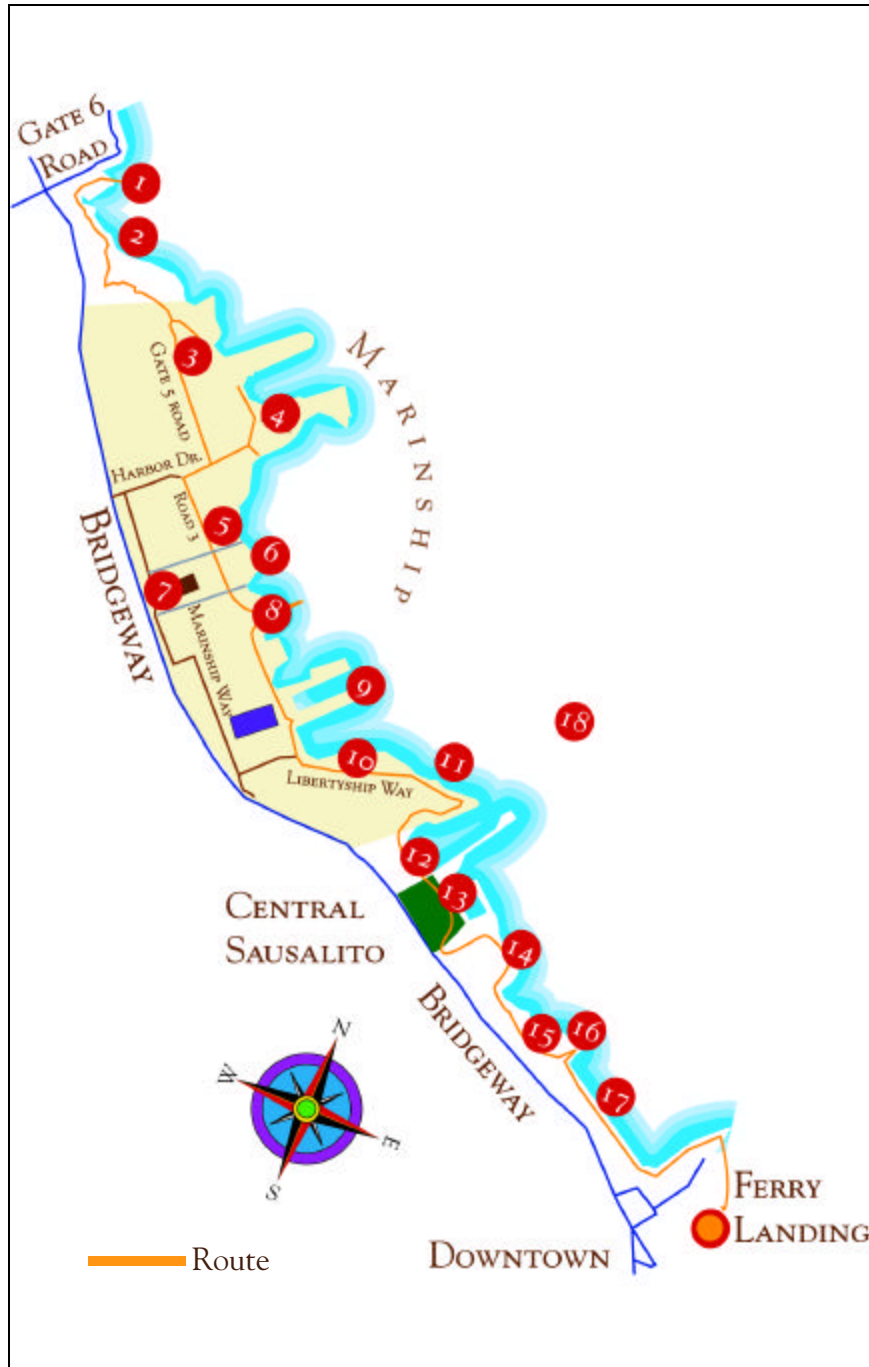


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The Zaca today in Monaco.

Sausalito has a long history of wooden boat building. The Coastal Miwok tribes built the equivalent of sit-on-top kayaks out of the tule reeds that grew along the bay. These same indians were taught how to sail, build and maintain wooden boats by San Francisco Port Captain, William

Richardson. Richardson himself arrived by boat and was followed by Portuguese fishermen and boatbuilders. "El Rancho del Sausalito" (grove of little willows) was granted to Richardson in 1845 by Governor Pio Pico and ships arriving in port would come to Sausalito for review by the Port Captain to pay levied taxes and to get game, water, and wood.

In 1914 a young man by the name of Donlon Arques followed in the footsteps of his father Camillo Arques, a long-time Sausalito boat builder. By 1948 Donlon had acquired and inherited much of the Sausalito waterfront. Arques believed that anyone with two hands and mind to build something should be provided with the necessary work and living space to fulfill their dreams. It was Donlon Arques who owned the waterfront and Donlon Arques who dragged the retired ferry boats and arks onto his mud flats so people could live in them.

The Nunes Brothers, Madden and Lewis, The Pasquinucci family, Easom Boat Works, Reliance Boats and Ways Company, Stone Boat Yard, Atlanta Boat Building Plant, Crichton & Arques and Bob's Boatyard all played a big part in Sausalito's wooden boat building history. Most of the boats they built were work boats, service boats, and tug boats like the 1938 45-foot *Telco* now in the San Francisco Maritime Museum or the wooden subchasers built by Madden and Lewis during WWII, but they also built recreational day sailors like the San Francisco Bear class boats, Bird class boats, Golden Gates, Hurricanes, Clippers, and Mercuries.

Errol Flynn's *Zaca* is perhaps the largest and most famous wooden boat ever built in Sausalito. The *Zaca* was a 1930 118-foot gaff-rigged schooner built

by the Nunes Brothers for Templeton Crocker. This boat was then and is now considered to be one of the finest yachts in the world.

Other famous boats have sailed into Richardson's Bay and obtained new life at the hands of Sausalito's fabled shipwrights. Harold Sommer's *Wanderbird*, a German pilot schooner engaged the entire waterfront as people donated time and materials towards the project. Sterling Hayden's *Wanderer* was also restored at Galilee Harbor prior to Hayden's infamous flight from the Golden Gate.

The Arques Marina and Myron Spaulding's working museum at Gate 3 Road are the last vestiges of wooden boat building on the Sausalito waterfront. The Arques hosts a number of small wooden boat shops and the Arques School of Traditional Boat Building, founded by the Arques Trust.

Parts and pieces of these things still exist on this waterfront today and if you look closely, you will find them all on the *Sausalito Wooden Boat Tour*.



The ferry landing is a good place to start and finish the tour. Located near the historic downtown district, there is ample parking and regular ferry service to and from San Francisco several times a day. From San Francisco's Ferry Building (Golden Gate Ferry: 415.455.2000); from Pier 41 (Blue and Gold Ferry: 415.773.1188). From here you can catch a taxi to Gate Six on the north end of town, where the tour begins. (Happy Cab: 415.457.8294)

If taking a self-guided tour, please be sensitive and respectful of the people and neighborhoods. Stay on the main docks and do not knock on doors, peek in windows or step aboard a boat without a personal invitation from the owner.

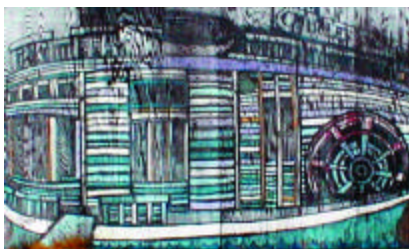
This self-guided tour allows the visitor to stroll at leisure, wandering and stopping to look more closely at the fine details, talking with the natives or admiring the view. Explore and enjoy, but most of all, respect the ambiance of the waterfront.

1 WALDO POINT AND THE YELLOW FERRY

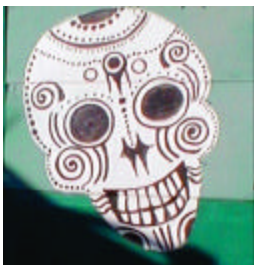
North of Waldo Point is Yellow Ferry Harbor, home to the **City of Seattle Ferry or Yellow Ferry.**

This 1888, 121-foot side-wheeler was built in Portland, Oregon and is the oldest wood-hulled ferry on the west coast. She provided the first regularly scheduled ferry service on the Puget Sound and in 1913 became the first steamer for the Martinez/Benecia line. During WWII, she was requisitioned by the United States government for the Mare Island run and brought to Sausalito by the Tellis family in 1959, where she has enjoyed regular care ever since. In fact, the entire Yellow Ferry Harbor was built around her.

Buckminster Fuller referred to the Waldo Point community when he said "We hope that America will catch on quickly enough to save them."



Mural at Waldo Point



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A word of caution: At Waldo Point, look or walk, don't try to do both at the same time.

A unique set of standards and circumstances brought the Gate 5 Cooperative into existence. A graveyard for "sinkers" provided the building materials for the 1960's bohemians who fashioned all sorts of living accommodations from them.

If one looks closely, one can see pieces of arks, Liberty and Troop ship life boats, driftwood, and a wide range of recycled flotsam combined in the most unusual and creative ways.

The resulting housing solutions show little constraint and have no apparent interest in conforming to the norm.

In many cases, shacks were built over existing boats and modified beyond recognition. Some see them as works of art, others as eye sores; in either case one would hope that the community's new incorporation into Waldo Point Harbor will enhance their colorful way of life.



2 THE HOUSEBOAT & FLOATING HOME COMMUNITIES

Walk south through the gravel lot and onto the board walk along the edge of the floating homes.

Ark Triumph



On the southern shores of Waldo Point is the Ark Triumph, one of the original floating homes. More of these handcrafted structures are located south along the waterfront. The current owner spent 20 years as a public relations consultant for Ringling Brother's Barnum & Bailey Circus.

The Mayflower



This is perhaps the finest example of original ark design. With few exceptions, it has retained its original redwood paneling, windows and doors, claw-foot bathtub, and portal windows. The Mayflower was placed onto pilings between 1920 and 1930. This Sausalito treasure has been preserved and maintained by long time Sausalito resident and four term mayor, Robin Sweeny.



Internet photo

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MAIN DOCK



Main Dock is an example of how the house boat community of Sausalito has evolved. Once a collection of makeshift structures similar in style to the ones seen at Waldo Point, most of the “floating homes” at Main Dock now possess a more conventional style and berth spaces are considered “prime” real estate with prices to match.

The Floating Homes Association of Sausalito offers an annual tour which takes you inside some of these homes. Here we will highlight a few favorites residing in the communities of Liberty Dock and the South-Forty Pier at Waldo Point.

LIBERTY DOCK

Stay close to the edge of the path and descend the little ramp towards Liberty Dock.

Montgomery



In 1948 this Tiburon train station was wheeled down to the bay and hoisted atop the molasses barge on which she sits today making her the oldest resident in the harbor. She belongs to long time resident, Jim Reed.



Namaste

This colorful circus style home grows from the hull of a plywood WWII Landing Craft built by Chris-Craft and designed to last only a short period of time.



SOUTH FORTY PIER

Look for this sign just before Varda Landing on Gate 5 Road.

The Owl



*This home was built over the top of an abandoned pile driver by Skip Melcer and friends in the 1970s. Skip recalls that they just started at the top and worked down without a plan and with a lot of drugs. It was named the **Owl** after the fact.*



The Mirene

This pristine old tugboat was built in the early 1900s and is still 100% operational today.



The S.S. Maggie

This old gal had a reputation for sinking on a regular basis and neighbors were called upon to pump and patch her hull. Now elegantly pristine, she has been retired to a custom hull shaped barge.



Texas Star

This is another WWII Landing Craft that has been converted into a houseboat. There is a little house on its own island floating along side.

Take an immediate left after entering the front gate (chain link fence) and walk through the parking lot, out to the eastern most leg of the north docks.

Black Cat



This is a new design by Robert Darr of the Arques School intended for use in sheltered waters. **Black Cat** is a 15-foot long open catboat built with lapstrake planking and copper fastened. The boat was designed to be fast and beautiful. This is the first Black Cat. The raked, curved transom is made of local pepperwood, the hull of white oak frames with planking of local fir, all cut in the hills above Cazadero, California. The sheer is bold and high at the bow with just a touch of tumblehome (the inward curve of the boat's topsides).

Michael Bush



Internet Photo

In 1997, the Arques School sent a small team to Nova Scotia, Canada to measure and record one of the last of the Bush Island double-enders. Working from their patterns, the Arques team took three years to construct this replica. After a last push by the apprentices, the Bush Island boat was faired, painted, and rigged for launch. Her one-cylinder engine, an original dating from 1913, was installed, along with a lead ballast weighing several hundred pounds. She was launched November 2002.

San Francisco Gillnetter



This green and white boat is historically the most important boat in the Arques Boat School collection. These boats were used by Italian, Hungarian, and Greek salmon fisherman and at one time numbered in the thousands in the Bay. They are an authentic Bay Area adaptation of their European sister, the felluca.

Peapod



This 15-foot row boat design originated on the East Coast. They sport archaic "thole pins" instead of ore locks.

Some of the most famous boats on the waterfront are anchored off shore.

Whitefin (Anchored outside Schoonmaker Harbor)



Originally named the **Richmond**, this 65-foot Standard Oil harbor tug was built at AAA Shipyard in Los Angeles in 1917.

In the 1970s *Whitefin* was purchased by Joe Tate of the Redlegs music group and star of the locally famous short film “The Last Free Ride.” Tate used his proceeds from the film to rebuild the *Whitefin*. The film was based on the true story of the battle between the “hill people” and the “anchor-outs” that occurred in Sausalito during this time. After Tate revived the *Whitefin*, he set out to circumnavigate the globe. While he didn’t quite make it, he did get to Cocos Island off the coast of Costa Rica to search for buried treasure, which was allowed in those days. He also traveled around Hawaii for a year and weathered a hurricane off the coast of the Big Island. With a broken rudder, he was forced to fabricate one from a steel pineapple tank. Tate and his Redlegs played music, had wild parties and naked women were plentiful. *Whitefin* was purchased in 1999 by Dave Gissendaner, known as “Diver Dave” of Dave’s Diving Service and his wife Rosella. They live aboard with their son Luca, who was born aboard *Whitefin* in November 2003.



Read about the **Stornoway’s** history and demise at www.butterflute.com/stornoway.html

Sequestor (On a mooring outside the Arques docks)

This traditional 1940 30-foot Tahiti ketch, designed by John Hanna, inspired the Sausalito Wooden Boat Tour. Built husky with double sawn oak frames, this double-ender spent her whole life in the Sacramento Delta and the San Francisco Bay. She was one of two Tahitis built side by side by Mr. Cups in Antioch. The current owner of 12 years and shipwright, Greg Goble, rebuilt **Sequestor**. She has new Port Orford cedar planks, fir decks, cabin house, parceled and served standing rigging, and Yanmar GM30 diesel engine. Her spacious yet simple interior is reminiscent of traditional work boats.



For more photos go to:
www.butterflute.com/tahiti_ketch.html.

Vadura (Anchored out off Schoonmacher Harbor)



This ketch was built in England and spent many years as a magnificent charter boat in the Mediterranean. It is reported she once had two grand pianos on board.