
SAUSALITO WOODEN BOAT TOUR

A Three Mile Stroll With Historic Footnotes



Third
Edition

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY VICTORIA A. COLELLA

SAUSALITO WOODEN BOAT TOUR

Welcome to the third edition of the Sausalito Wooden Boat Tour, a self-guided tour of the historic Sausalito waterfront and the eclectic collection of wooden boats and historic vessels 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 wooden boats, or is simply a reflection of your own 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

Author / Founder

Sausalito Wooden Boat Tour

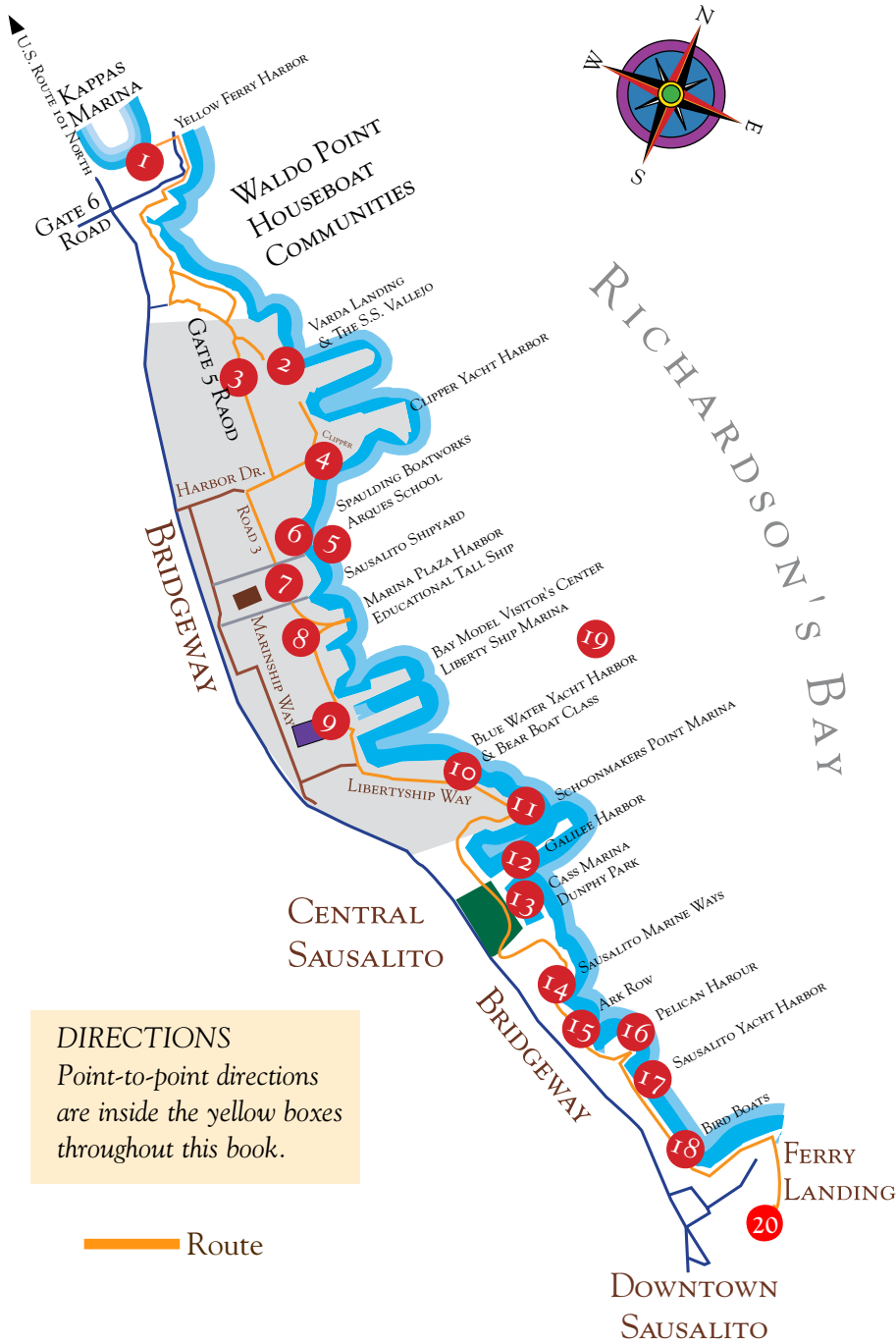


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1 THE HOUSEBOAT & FLOATING HOME COMMUNITIES



For decades the houseboats at Kappas Marina were considered illegally docked, but this dispute was resolved by Senator Carol Migden in 2006.

Overlooking the floating community of Kappas Marina from the adjacent park, our "Sleeping Lady", Mount Tamalpais, dominates the skyline. Her reflection in the water is a familiar and comforting sight to locals and visitors alike.

Once a free-floating community of funky houseboats, the "Last Free Ride" is long past, and berth spaces are now considered prime real estate with prices to match. Like floating condominiums, the new communities are all hooked up properly with electrical, phone, internet, cable and sewage. But in the beginning, it was not this way. In the beginning, if your boat was offshore 100 yards, the only way to get to it was to take a plank and move it from boat to boat until you reached your boat. There were no docks. Hundreds of people lived here wild and free before the Waldo Point development began in the 1970s.

Original houseboater Chuck Green recalls that one of the first things the developers did was to install the pilings for A Dock. Chuck and his buddy didn't like it. They went out in the middle of the night with rubber gators and a two-man logging saw, and they cut down the newly placed pilings. They were very proud of themselves until they discovered that the sawing action had corkscrewed them into the bay mud, and they couldn't get out! The morning construction crew arrived to find the pilings down and two sets of rubber gators stuck in the mud.

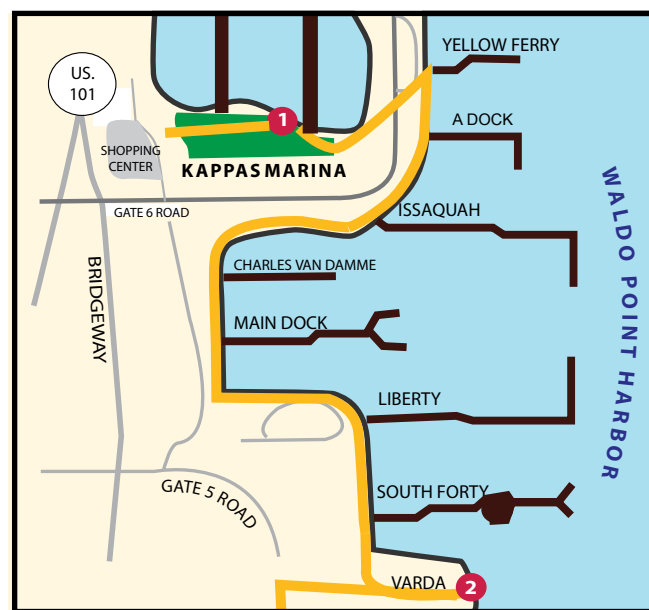
KAPPAS MARINA AND YELLOW FERRY HARBOR

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the area painfully went through a complete rebuilding era resulting in what you see today. Highlighted in this section are a few favorites—the older vessels with stories to tell.

In 1967, Ken Gutelben purchased a 1940s steel lifeboat for \$200 from Matson Steam Ship Company in New Jersey and converted it into a houseboat for \$2,000. He lived on her in the Barndale Marina in Alameda and rediscovered the boat in 2012 as a participant on the Sausalito Wooden Boat Tour!



Gutelben's lifeboat now sits atop a boat-shaped concrete barge. Most of the new homes now float on concrete barges. These barges are hollow, serving as storage or second level living space.



DOCK MAP

As you enter Gate 6 Road from Bridgeway, turn left behind the shopping center at One Gate 6 Road. Immediately on your right through the gate is Kappas Marina and park.

3 MARINSHIP HISTORIC DISTRICT - GATE 5 ROAD

Head inland through the parking lot to Gate 5 Road. Cross the road, but take note that this is not just any road. This is Gate 5 Road, and this was the assembly line for the big ships. Under the pavement lie the gantry crane rails.

The entire country was taken by surprise when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in December of 1941. With the advent of WWII, there was a sudden need to quickly rebuild our fleet and Sausalito was chosen as one of the ideal sites for a shipyard. The W.A. Bechtel Corporation, acting with the authority of the U.S. government, acquired the necessary land for the proposed six launching ways and shipyard. Bechtel Corporation and Cal Ship were responsible for the Marinship.

In March 1942, 15 days after Sausalito was chosen as the site, excavation of beautiful Pine Point neighborhood began. Thirty to forty homes and buildings were moved or torn down. In order to fill the mud flats of Richardson's Bay, 838,763 cubic yards of earth and rock were moved from Pine Point, Waldo Point, and surrounding areas. Some 26,000 pilings were driven to support all of the buildings and shipways.

A deepwater ship channel 300 feet wide and one and a half miles long, required three million cubic yards of bay mud to be dredged. The shipyard buildings were still under construction when the first keel was laid for the Libertyship *William A. Richardson* in June 1942. The Liberty ships were built to send food and supplies to the United Kingdom and by December 1942, seven ships had been launched.

In June 1945, Marinship set a world record by constructing and delivering the oiler *Huntington Hills* in just 33 days. These oilers were 550-feet long and, with a combination steam and electric engine, they could move through the water at 23 knots per hour. By the end of World War II, Marinship had constructed 15 Liberty ships, 16 fleet oilers and 62 tankers, a monumental 93 vessels in three and a half years.



SAUSALITO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Seventy thousand people worked day and night to build the ships that won the war!

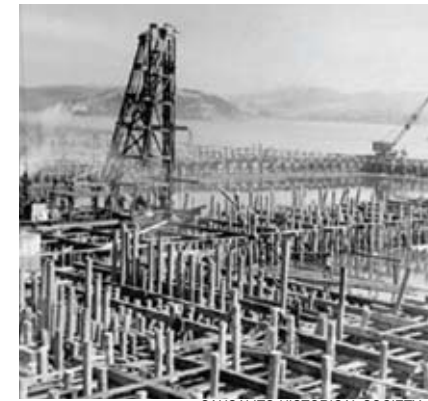
Thirty-five percent of the workforce were woman. John Pullum, who worked in the yards, remarked that "the woman were better welders than the men because they could follow instructions!"

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An astonishing 838,763 cubic yards of earth and rock were blasted from Pine Point, and 26,000 pilings driven to form the Marinship district. This forever changed the character of the little fishing village. Our working waterfront now includes industrial and creative uses that would have otherwise vanished if not for restrictive zoning in the Marinship district.



SAUSALITO HISTORICAL SOCIETY



SAUSALITO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The William A. Richardson was the first of the Liberty Ships built in 1942.



SAUSALITO HISTORICAL SOCIETY




SAUSALITO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

11 SCHOONMAKER POINT MARINA

Follow Libertyship Way south, turning left just after List Marine sign and go onto the wooden boardwalk of Schoonmaker Point Marina, home to Sausalito's only sandy beach. Le Garage, Sea Trek, and Open Water Rowing are the main draws, but also Doug Gilmore's wooden kit boats are on display.



 **Yucca** (Down below left at bottom of first ramp off wood boardwalk) This 1937 Marconi-rig sloop was purchased in the 1960's by one of San Francisco Bay's most renowned helmsmen, Hank Easom, who has sailed her in hundreds of regattas and races. Easom sailed with Myron Spaulding when he was three years old and built many wooden boats here including strip-planked Dashers.



Easom sails Yucca to win first in her class at the 2013 San Francisco Yacht Club Championship Series.



PHOTO BY LESLIE RICHTER

Chrysophyle (Berth #17—end of dock B)



This yawl was built by Myron Spaulding in 1960 for a southern California yachtsman who was killed in a boating accident before the yacht was finished. Spaulding owned the boat and then sold it to Dean Morrison. She has been in the Morrison family for three generations.

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Chorus

This 1958 ocean-going sloop was designed to race in the waters of Southern California.



Gas Light

This is a replica of a 1874 50-foot scow schooner. There used to be a fleet of 400 scow schooners navigating San Francisco Bay carrying over-sized loads of hay. She is gaff-rigged with a flat-bottomed steel hull and transom at both ends.

Gas Light was designed and built in Sausalito by her owner, Captain Billy Martinelli, who sailed with actor Sterling Hayden and refers to Gas Light as an "18 wheeler of yesteryear" (www.schoonergaslight.com).

Acania is a 136-foot 1930 prohibition era luxury motor yacht built for the infamous gangster Al Capone.

Acania

Designed by H.G. Wells and built by Consolidated Shipbuilding Corporation in New York, she has a steel hull and two new 600 horsepower Caterpillar engines.

There were two Acanias built and this one was fully restored over a five year period by her current owner, David Olson.

(www.acaniayacht.com)



Yesterday (Anchored out mid-bay)



This 1942 Aviation Rescue Vessel, known as a "Crash Boat," was used to rescue downed pilots during WWII. Brought to Sausalito in the 1970s, Yesterday is now home to our own Alfred "Ale" Ekstrom and his ferocious coon cat. Yesterday's hull is constructed of oak frames and double planked with diagonal cedar on the interior and horizontal mahogany on the exterior. A little door has been cut into her hull at water level for easy access to and from Idleboot, Ale's 22-foot scow sloop. Ekstrom has lived on the anchorage over 50 years.



Marbara (Anchored off Marina Plaza Harbor)

This 1940 Rhodes 27' was designed by famous Naval architect Phillip Rhodes who described her as "lovely, comfortable, and nimble."

Marbara was built at the Herman Lund Boat Yard in Erie, Pennsylvania with mahogany planks, steamed oak ribs and a Burmese teak deck. She features a "dog house" cabin and a whopping 54-foot mast of old growth spruce and a three-quarter sloop rig. The name Marbara means "a propensity towards generosity," and she has long been considered one of the sleekest anchor-outs in Sausalito.



 **Sequestor** (Anchored off Schoonmacher Point Marina)



Outside of a few trips to Mexico, this 1940 John Hanna Tahiti ketch spent most of her life in the Sacramento Delta and San Francisco Bay. She was one of two Tahities built side by side by Mr. Cups in Antioch who opted for husky double-sawn oak frames. Rebuilt by Greg Goble in 2000, she was passed on to her current owner Hans List in 2004.

Taihoa races against Sequestor in the first Tahiti Ketch race on San Francisco Bay in October 2005.



The Tahiti Ketch: "It's not a small boat, its a tiny ship."

Most probably more circumnavigations have been made in a Tahiti Ketch than any other boat ever designed. Boat designer John Hanna first introduced this design in 1926. Originally named *Neptune*, her design received little attention upon its debut. Twelve years later, Hanna's plans were published in *How to Build 20 Boats* magazine under the exotic name of Tahiti ketch. It captured the hearts of backyard builders worldwide and secured John Hanna's fame in yachting history. Now, over 70 years later, the Tahiti still has a reputation as a solid ocean-going vessel.



Herring Fisherman

Every year in January and February, the herring fishermen come in for the harvest. You know they are here when the harbor seals start making a lot of noise and the local chefs feature this delicacy on their menus.

If you visit Sausalito's downtown area, you will find adorable boutiques, world class dining establishments, accommodations and views galore. Highlighted here are just a few of the more prominent waterside landmarks.



Ferry Landing

The first ferry to disembark from this landing was the Princess in 1868. This was a train terminal and car ferry hub until 1948. The switch was made from car ferry to commuter ferry in the 1950s.

Yee Tock Chee Park at the bottom of Princess Street is named after a beloved Sausalito merchant who generously extended credit to his customers in lean times.

The Sausalito Yacht Club, adjacent to the ferry landing, was built in 1960.

Vina Del Mar

Elephant sculptures flanking the park were salvaged from the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exhibition in San Francisco and recast in 1936. The name is a reference to one of Sausalito's sister cities, Vina Del Mar, Chile.



Ice House

As the name implies, this was once the town's ice house. Later it was converted to office space by architect Michael Rex who donated the building to the city and, in turn, to the Sausalito Historical Society. Exhibits, books, maps and helpful docents greet and inform visitors about the history of Sausalito.



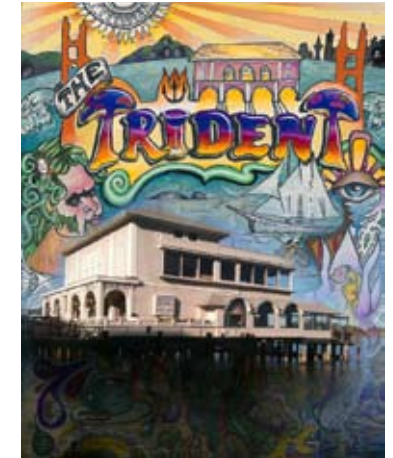
Scoma's Sausalito



This late 19th-Century Victorian was the site of a well-established tugboat and ferry service called Lange's Launches. In the 1940s, it became the raucous Tin Angel and, in 1951, it became a Sausalito favorite, the Glad Hand. Scoma's restaurant was established in 1969 with the merger of two Sicilian families, Scoma and Gotti. Both families have deep roots in the fishing and restaurant industry.

The Trident Restaurant

This was the place to be in the 1960s-70s. Owned by The Kingston Trio, Janis Joplin had her own table here, and other musical dignitaries such as the Rolling Stones, Carlos Santana, Jerry Garcia, and Van Halen were regulars. Vince Giraldi played piano, and Robin Williams was the dishwasher. The psychedelic interior with its ceiling murals, and swirling woodwork are still in place today. The tripped-out menus have been made into posters so no one has to steal them anymore.



Valhalla (Walhalla)



Remnants of the Nunes Brothers Boat and Ways Co. can be seen waterside.

Once called Walhalla, Baby Face Nelson worked under-cover as a bartender here. In the 1950s, a famous San Francisco madam Sally Stanford moved in and changed the name to "Valhalla." When the Sausalito Woman's Club found out, they painted all of the curbs red so that Sally would have no place to park. In keeping with town spirit, Sausalito made her mayor! Sally held court in a barber's chair, and there was always a red light glowing upstairs.