

What's New and Cool in the San Juans

Summer/Fall 2025

On the Food and Farm Front

Isle of Cider

Orcas Isle Cider is a new family-run farm with the goal of growing and producing minimally processed cider and perry with low-intervention methods. Enjoy their delicious heritage varietals and blends (Apple Pear, Golden Russet, or Orchard Cider blend). The “Beaver Den” tasting room is the only tasting room on the West Coast that overlooks an actual beaver lodge. Joe Mentor and partner Lisa built and designed the space as an ode to the resident critters. They are proud to display a selection of beaver-themed artwork by First Nation peoples, as well as impressive, chewed carvings by the beavers themselves (see it to believe it!). For more information: www.orcasislecider.com

Setsunai at The Galley with a Book

Chef Josh Ratza's noodle bar Setsunai has almost a cult status among ramen fans—handmade noodles made with Skagit Valley wheat flour and served up “island style” with things like halibut and scallops—now with a new location inside another Lopez Island landmark, The Galley. Two menus, curated from one kitchen. Whether you're in the mood for kimchi or fish and chips, they've got you covered. Ratza also reveals his passion for instant ramen by self-publishing a cookbook, “Elevated Instant Ramen,” with a dozen recipes for using them in unexpected ways. The restaurant is about showcasing the abundance from the lands and waters of the San Juans and the Northwest while the ramen cookbook is about how to eat creatively on a budget. For more information: www.setsunainoodlebar.com

Savory Orcas

Craving bold flavor and feel-good vibes? Check out the new Savory Orcas food truck in Eastsound—serving up innovative savory food fusions that combine global flavors in exciting ways. Whether you're a smoothie sipper, a float fanatic, or a fan of flavor-packed bowls, their menu brings the yum with every bite (and slurp!). From Creamy Curry Chicken to Cold Cured Steelhead Trout with a hot pepper cranberry kick—served your way: on greens, grains, or house focaccia! Their waffle fries are crispy, crave-worthy, and customizable—Old Bay seasoned, or loaded with smoked pork or bacon & queso magic. Open Wednesday – Sunday, 11:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. For more information: savorywa@gmail.com

The Marvelous Miss Mabel

Capturing headlines and hearts across Whatcom County and beyond while she evaded being caught for several months, the story of Mabel the cow has become one of local legend and trivia— including an upcoming children's book written by author Derek Munson and documentary with Clay for Earth Productions. It all started when Mabel and a friend escaped from a livestock trailer in northern Bellingham. Weaving in and out of traffic, one cow was quickly captured but Mabel disappeared into the green belt behind the Barkley Village movie theater. After many unsuccessful rescue attempts, Mabel was finally captured by the Whatcom Humane Society. Now she'll be making her forever home on San Juan Island at the Heaven and Earth Animal Sanctuary, living her best life with other resident cows Daphne and Pepper. For more information: Karen Clark Cole karen@heavenonearthanimalsanctuary.org or visit www.heavenonearthanimalsanctuary.org.

A Madrone Experience

Are you interested in learning more about wine and cider production, all while enjoying a private wine tasting with the winemaker? Join winemaker and co-owner Shaun Salamida for a private tour and tasting at the Madrone Cellars, located in the San Juan Valley. Surrounded by Land Bank preserved land and shared property with Island Haven Animal Sanctuary, the winery is, in simple words, the happy place for Shaun and Amy. The Salamidas strive to create quality wines and cider that reflect the story behind the glass, like their Barrel-Aged Aronia Black Currant and Island Perry. For more information: Amy Salamida info@madronecellars.com or visit www.madronecellars.com.

Nature, Stewardship, and Sustainability

Kelp Reverberation

Kelp Reverberation, part of the fall exhibition at the San Juan Islands Museum of Art (SJIMA), will immerse visitors in the vibrantly complex world of a bull kelp forest to learn and appreciate its wonder. This exhibit is a creative collaboration between a group of visionary artists and scientists steeped in the ecology and beauty of the kelp forest. Showcased in the glass atrium gallery of the SJIMA, the installation will feature a maze of deep blue and turquoise cyanotype banners, created by artist and author Josie Iselin, using sunlight to imprint images of bull kelp and other understory seaweeds from the ocean forest. This sea of cyanotypes in the upper spaces of the atrium will invite visitors into a spatialized soundscape of the underwater world of kelp through an innovative soundframe system built by sound designer Ken Pearce in collaboration with Canadian composer and sound artist Jonathan Kawchuk. Sculptures made from locally foraged bull kelp by Puget Sound artist, Betsy Peabody, will complement the sound and banner scape in the atrium. For more information: Barbara Marrett barbara@sjima.org or visit www.sjima.com

Arts & Culture

The Alchemy of Art and Farm

Visitors will soon be able to check out the new Alchemy Art Farm, a new space that will include artist studios and classrooms, residencies, a gallery and performance venue, a community kitchen and apothecary, and more, all working together to nurture a rich and inclusive arts environment. This vision is taking shape within the old Pelindaba Lavender Farm production building, a 14,000 sq ft facility that is ready for new life. Inside, they will showcase work by local Alchemy artists - paintings, ceramics, and prints displayed in a gallery-style setting to create an inspiring environment for visitors and volunteers alike. The Alchemy Farm Store – the roadside gift shop – will be a hub for both agricultural and lavender products and eventually artwork made by Alchemy artists. They envision building a vibrant, multi-use art community that weaves together creativity, community, and connection. For more information: Maria Michaelson alchemyartcenter@gmail.com or visit <https://alchemyartcenter.com/alchemy-art-farm>.

All is a Circle Within Me

The two works in this exhibition at the San Juan Islands Museum of Art showcase the eternal interconnectedness of existence through two radically different modes of representation—one figurative and organic, the other abstract and geometric. Both modalities take the circle as their central theme, a

universal symbol used across many cultures and spiritual traditions to embody wholeness, unity, and timelessness. Emily McIlroy's work, *Blessings to the Seven Directions*, consists of six geometric works structured around a Celtic infinity knot. It abstractly represents both the temporal plane of life in which time is chronological and the eternal plane in which time and space are boundless. The figurative work, *River of Their Passing*, alludes to an unbroken circle of time represented by an overlapping and interconnected line of caribou. In creating these pieces, McIlroy embraces a worldview in which all beings and phenomena are profoundly and elegantly bound together in relationship. For more information: Barbara Marrett barbara@sjima.org or visit www.sjima.com

Complex Simplicity

The third exhibit in the fall show at the San Juan Islands Museum of Art is *Complex Simplicity*. Artist Jan Hoy creates abstract sculptural forms of striking simplicity and austere elegance, finding the perfect balance between positive and negative space. Her unadorned shapes are, in the artist's words, "a three-dimensional answer to a question." The concept and construction are arrived at through a prolonged contemplation of space and structure. The silvery skies and greens and browns of the Pacific Northwest landscape have influenced Hoy's aesthetic sensibility. Her chosen material is clay with an iron-oxide finish; however, she also works in steel and bronze. For more information: Barbara Marrett barbara@sjima.org or visit www.sjima.com

Hands Across the Water

What began as an evening of reflection on the shores of Orcas Island became something more: a stirring realization shared amongst friends and neighbors. Could this be time to rekindle what history once forged—community, friendship, shared destiny? From this shared vision arose a simple yet powerful idea: a meeting of communities—Orcas and Salt Spring Islands—guided not by politics but by purpose. Grounded in respect and inclusivity, this gathering would honor our common heritage and confront our unsettled truths, including the enduring injustices faced by Indigenous peoples whose voices also must be heard. With the spirited support of the Orcas Island Yacht Club and the community of Ganges on Salt Spring Island, this idea soon caught wind and set sail. Whether by land or sea, Hands Across the Water is a joyful celebration of islander spirit and international friendship. The three-day event lineup for September 19-21 includes fireside chats with historians and indigenous community leaders, live music, wine tours, "Taste of Salt Spring" restaurants featuring local producers, and an island sistering ceremony. For more information: Natalie Zohar nataloo@gmail.com or visit <https://acrosstthewater.org/>.

New Shops, Products, & Services

Soapy San Juan

San Juan Soapery's new storefront in Friday Harbor is the vision of Savannah Brandt, whose soapmaking passion started in the height of COVID as a stress relieving hobby. Choose from a selection of handmade, non-toxic artisan soaps, bath bombs, lotions and much more, all carefully crafted right here on San Juan Island. All of Savannah's products are both sustainable and eco-friendly (all the way down to the packaging!). Every product is uniquely handcrafted in small batches using top quality, vegan, natural, skin loving, locally sourced ingredients. Treat yourself to quality skincare while supporting a local, LGBTQ- and woman-owned small business. For more information: Savannah Brandt sanjuansoapery@sanjuansoapery.com or visit <https://sanjuansoapery.com/>.

Owl at Otters Pond

Amanda Zimlich, chef and owner of Otters Pond B&B on Orcas Island, has added a new endeavor – Owl Hollow Pottery Studio. She makes porcelain and stoneware functional pieces, art vases, bowls and tiles, and decorates them with unique glazes that she makes herself. Most of her creations are influenced by the Arts and Crafts Revival / Roycroft style and inspired by the beauty that surrounds us in the San Juan Islands, on the ponds, in the forests, reflecting in the tide pools of the Salish Sea, in lighting through the trees, and by all the animals everywhere. For more information: Amanda Zimlich or visit www.otterspond.com/Owl-Hollow-Studio-at-Otters-Pond.html

A Spoonful of Blueberries

Orcas Island favorite Girl Meets Dirt is introducing a new jam to their preserve pantheon—the Limited Edition Blueberry Lemon Spoon Preserves, a refined celebration of the Pacific Northwest's berry bounty. featuring Bow Hill Blueberries, Certified Organic heirloom varieties from the oldest family-run blueberry farm in Skagit Valley. With their classic French-inspired flair, they've made these blue beauties shine by adding generous curls of lemon zest and ample juice. Like all their preserves, there's no pectin, allowing the natural fruit flavors to take center stage. This jam pairs perfectly with creamy desserts like panna cotta or cheesecake, spread over fresh chevre or triple-cream brie, or swirled into Greek yogurt. For breakfast lovers, it's a delightful addition to pancakes or waffles. For more information: Audra Lawlor audra@girlmeetsdirt.com or visit www.girlmeetsdirt.com.