



Photos courtesy of Friday Harbor House

Immediate Charm and Hyperlocal Food at Friday Harbor House

by Julia Wayne



Pulling into the ferry terminal at San Juan Island's Friday Harbor, the town is immediately charming. Stilted wharf buildings and multi-storied, multi-use buildings form a stacked backdrop to the highly walkable village. And watching over the ferry arrivals and departures, the visitors falling quickly in love with this town, is [Friday Harbor House](#).

In the guestrooms, crisply pressed white-striped linens drape a firm bed, soft enough to crash into after a long day exploring the island. Call ahead and the friendly staff will chill a bottle of something for you to enjoy after you kick off your shoes, while you lean on the balcony and watch the ferries just off to your right.

Below your balcony, you may see one of many intimate weddings taking place on the lawn. Or, diners may be digging into new chef Jason Aldous's hyperlocal food. You should join them, once you've taken a bit of time to take a nap on the comfy bed or unwind in the two-person spa tub.

Downstairs, in the newly remodeled [restaurant](#), you'll find a sophisticated menu meant for fancy evenings or just a chill lunch or dinner. Chef Aldous is no stranger to cooking on an island, having recently left Camano Inn, and Willows Inn on Lummi Island before that. He made short work of getting to know the island farmers and his menu reads like a culinary map of the San Juans.

One slot on the menu that truly celebrates the island is the lamb, raised on San Juan Island by Lazy G Ranch. Aldous buys whole lambs, changing the cut at preparation regularly, to use the whole animal.

Another dish, the fried chicken, speaks to his global influences. Inspired by flavors of Cambodia, the crispy chicken comes with a tamarind glaze, smoked coconut cream and a carrot-papaya salad. It is delicious and should not be missed. The same should be said, too, for the crispy brussels sprouts appetizer, an oft seen app that is seldom as good as this one.

After dinner, if you're too beat to watch the light fade over the other islands, the boats lit up against the darkening sky, head upstairs. But don't say no when the kind server offers to bring up your dessert and some wine for a nightcap you can enjoy while cozied up in your plush robes.

In the morning, that view is still the same exquisite one, and there's local bacon and sausage in the included continental breakfast downstairs. Hang out, there's always another ferry.