

Great Escapes

You'll wish time could stand still

BY ERIC NOLAND, *Travel Editor*

OLEMA — In a bookcase near the sleigh bed was a selection of videotapes and DVDs, and among them was “Groundhog Day.” We drifted off to sleep the first night as Bill Murray wrestled with the curse of being trapped endlessly in the same day.

At dawn, we wished we could have shared his fate.

The Olema Cottages is an enchanting, pleasantly funky little enclave of accommodations about an hour's drive north of San Francisco. It is convenient to Point Reyes National Seashore, and is an ideal place to take up residence for an unhurried sampling of the various artisan tastes of western Marin County.

Emphasis on residence. The property has three cottages and two guest rooms, and two of the cottages have fully appointed kitchens; the remainder have mini kitchens, with just about everything but a range. The cottages also have barbecue grills, and guests of the other rooms may use one in the yard.

So it's quite possible to stock up on goodies on a rambling tour of the region—oysters from Hog Island, steak from Marin Sun Farms, bread from Bovine Bakery, cheese and side dishes from Tomales Bay Foods—and settle in for a home-cooked feast.

Over a two-night visit in June, we got quite comfortable in the Sunflower Cottage, which has its own fenced yard with a bistro table and chairs. In the living room was a wood-burning stove, well stocked with firewood, though the summer evenings weren't nearly cold enough for that. The view through the windows took



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On the grounds of the Olema Cottages, Yogi the dog carries around an egg laid by one of the resident hens.

in a horse corral and a bucolic hillside topped with a mature cypress tree.

It is all overseen by Kelly Emery, who perfectly balances the innkeeper art of being cheerfully gracious but not the least bit intrusive.

We appreciated her little touches most of all: window boxes bursting with flowers, cut flowers in the room, old garden implements used as decorations on the grounds, many of them overflowing with shrubs and blossoms. To enter the fenced yard from the parking area, meanwhile, you pass through a door cleverly framed here out of doors, without walls.

At any hour of the day, that yard is pretty lively, with chickens, ducks, cats and a laconic old dog.

The dog's name is Yogi, and he's got an unusual habit. He'll find an egg that one of the chickens has laid and gingerly carry it

around in his mouth, sometimes for an entire afternoon.

“I guess because he's the land steward, he roams around, and when he finds an egg, he recognizes that it is a special thing,” Emery said.

And if Yogi drops it, “He gets so sad. I don't think he thinks of it as food. I think he looks at it as something to be looked after.”

Nightly rates at the Olema Cottages start at \$145. Coffee and tea is provided in the rooms, so if you pick up fresh pastries at Bovine Bakery and fruit at Toby's Feed Barn in nearby Point Reyes Station, you're set for breakfast.

Excerpted from the Daily News, Sunday, August 6, 2006