



Summer Days, Summer Nights

Dillon Beach Resort — situated on the Marin-Sonoma County line, between the mouth of Tomales Bay and the entrance to Bodega Bay, on 55 coastal acres — just doubled its room offering and just in time, because it is the getaway you need this summer.

By Amber Turpin



Surfers at Dillon Beach



Dillon Beach

Driving out to Dillon Beach, on the very Northern edge of Marin County, you will immediately begin to unplug. Rolling green hills covered with puffballs of sheep, cows of all spots and stripes, and farm stands dotting the narrow road all display the wonders of this fertile agrarian landscape. And then you hit the ocean, where more goodness lies, this time from the water in the form of crab and oysters and breaking surf as far as the eye can see.

So by the time you stumble onto your destination, Dillon Beach Resort (www.dillonbeachresort.com), your meandering views of windswept cypress trees, tractors and bucolic ranches could have you expecting a rustic cabin stay. However, this is not what you'll find.

The historic property, which opened in the 1800s, just doubled in size, adding 13 brand-new and renovated cottages to its existing 15. On a site that's only changed hands three times over the past 130 years, the current owners, a small group of Marin County families who took over in 2018, are very excited to unveil the tiny homes in this new lineup.

Created in partnership with the Eugene, Oregon-based Tru Form Tiny (www.truformtiny.com), longtime builders of small-scale lodging, the new spaces stay true to the style of the resort's existing structures, all perched on a bluff with

panoramic views of the Pacific coastline, but also amp up the modern amenities and design features within each one.

Owner and Petaluma restaurateur Mike Goebel says the families did extensive research to choose which builder to work with, visiting companies from California to Washington to Wyoming. Ultimately, he says, "We settled on Tru Form Tiny, as their quality of craftsmanship was far superior to other builders' and they were all around great people."

But outsourcing the manufacturing was a move that in no way diminished the hands-on approach of the Dillon Beach team, who had a lot of involvement in the design and concept of each new space. "We designed the interior and exterior of every unit, with collaboration from Tru Form as well, of course. We had very specific guidelines we wanted to follow in terms of the different size of the units, loft locations and window placement. We were very conscious about preserving and enhancing the views of the ocean, as well as ensuring each unit had privacy from the next," Goebel says. "We also designed the layout and finishes of every unit, making sure that they fit our coastal-boutique vibe." To that end, he says, that's why they chose key elements like white shiplap walls and vintage appliances, ensuring the units were fun and approachable.



The new accommodations

Tru Form Tiny

Chances are, you will be tempted to stay put at Dillon Beach once you get there, but there are also a bunch of fun things to do, eat and drink within 10 minutes of the property. Here are some of our favorites:

In Tomales:

K&A Take Away A tiny deli shop with a single takeout window featuring homemade bratwurst, sandwiches and a salad of the day

Route One Bakery & Kitchen Legit bakery cranking out sourdough breads, pizzas and baked goods plus local wine and beer selection and an outdoor corner seating area

Tomales General Store Diverse selection of anything and everything, from motor oil and kids' games to local beer and hip trucker hats

AppleGarden Farm & Cottages Stop by to pick up some cider or apples when in season. The hard cider is also served at Route One Bakery.

In Valley Ford:

Valley Ford Cheese & Creamery Picnic fare, sandwiches, and of course, cheese

Estero Cafe Breakfast and lunch with focus on local products

Dinucci's Italian Dinners Old-school, family-style Italian restaurant

Valley Ford Hotel w/ Rocker Oyster-fellers Fun saloon vibe with lengthy menu and cocktails

Northern Lights Surf Shop An O.G. surf shop, providing gear and apparel since the late 1980s




A visit to the on-site restaurant and general store is a must.

Those special touches stand out in each unit, regardless of size. Each tiny home comes equipped with Crow Canyon enamelware, kitchenettes, modern retro Big Chill appliances and hip, functional design features with a focus on bringing the outdoors in. The individual units range from accommodating two to five guests, from the new Osprey 150-square-foot “babies,” three sweet miniature glass walled units that make you feel like you are outside while you brew your Equator pour-over in the foggy morning, to the 360-square-foot Coho cottages, where you can sit in the picture-windowed living room watching the windsurfers a stone’s throw away, all the while sipping on the County Line North Coast Pinot Noir made exclusively for Dillon Beach Resort.

If you need more provisions, the on-site general store is stocked with everything

you might need and many things you don’t but will buy anyway — like scented candles, cozy blankets and salted caramel soft serve from nearby Double 8 Dairy. Or just pop into the on-site restaurant, Coastal Kitchen, for an elevated beachside menu of shrimp tacos, perfectly dressed seasonal salads, crisp fries and clam chowder with house-made focaccia. Both spots feature astounding baked goods by in-house pastry chef Tara Saldana that will sustain you for hours despite that whipping wind down on the beach below.

To feel on the edge of nowhere, but satisfyingly far from desolate: this is a special property. The 55 coastal acres and mile of private beach at the mouth of Tomales Bay are the crown jewel amenity here, which the owners work hard to preserve and protect. Goebel says, “I love feeling like I am in a faraway land but it only took me an hour to get here.” 

Dillon Beach

