

# Adobe Inn

BED • BREAKFAST

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Golf, Kayaking, and Hearst Castle Packages are Available Upon Request

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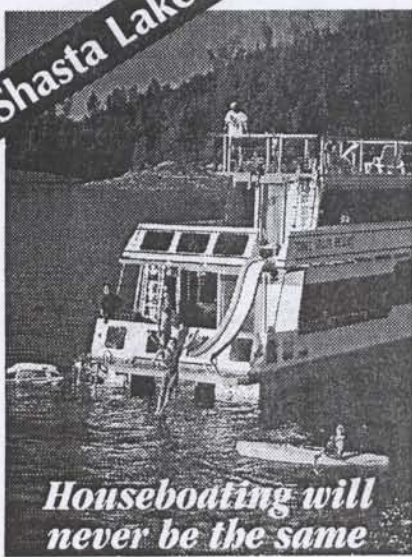
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## GREAT ESCAPES

### Boats, Bananas and Beer:

# A Weekend Houseboating on Shasta Lake

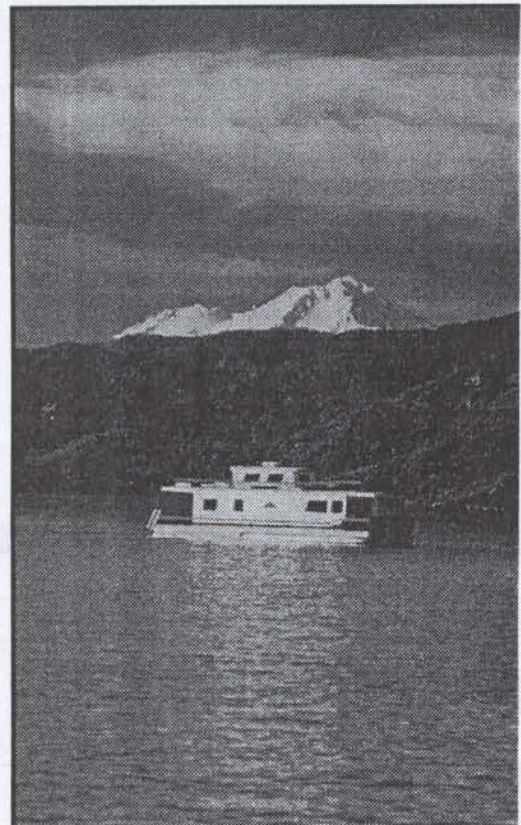
**E**ternal hell and damnation to whomever said that infamous line about San Francisco summers. It's on everyone's lips as we huddle against the wind, squint our eyes and toss away Java Jackets to cuddle with the hot cup... and it's July.

Time to consider Graham Chapman's sage advice: Run Away!! Run Away!! About four hours north of the Bay Area, the sky is clear, the sun is stinking hot, and when it all gets to be too much, you can walk out your front door and fall face first into cool, turquoise water. Houseboating on Lake Shasta is the remedy.

Shasta Lake is a glistening man-made heaven with four rivers, many streams and inlets and more miles of coastline than the San Francisco Bay. Shasta does have hotels, cabins, campgrounds and such, but my freezing friends and I weren't in search of a hotel-and-beach adventure. We were after a put-the-hotel-on-por-tions-and-find-a-moonlit-cove kinda deal. So I did the shopping.

There are about ten houseboat marinas to choose from in various areas on the lake. Most of the boat designs are similar, as are the costs, so location was an important issue. Some of the marinas, like Silverthorn and Packers Bay, require long, twisty drives or extensive backtracking. Some are at the northern part, like Sugarloaf. We wanted to get there and on the lake as quickly as possible, so I narrowed the field to three of the most accessible: Bridge Bay, Jones Valley and Holiday Harbor. Bridge Bay was too hard to reach (their corporate reservation office in Irvine kept me on hold for ten minutes—twice! I gave up both times). Jones Valley offered plush, top-of-the-line boats; but, I decided to go with Holiday Harbor.

I must confess I was already partial to Holiday Harbor. The location is close to Interstate 5 and tucked into a cove on the McCloud arm of the lake, so you can hit the fat part of the water quickly. Another attraction there is attitude—the staff is cheerful, friendly and very helpful. There's a good variety in the houseboat interiors and their Toy Box has the lake's largest selection of water playthings: ski boats, wave run-



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ners, AirChairs, wakeboards and even parasailing. You can rent these toys even if you've rented a houseboat from someone else, but when they offered me a discount on "tag-a-longs" (towable boats) with a houseboat rental, I practically threw my credit card at them.

So, one happy Friday, ten fog-sick people cut out of work at noon, piled into cars and drove an easy 240 miles north on I-5 to Shasta County. We didn't have to bring much with us—the boats are pretty well equipped—but bedding or sleeping bags, pillows, food, beverages, bath and beach towels and plenty of sun screen are de rigueur. On arrival, we loaded up the boat and proceeded to learn how to operate a 56-foot floating house. It doesn't sound easy, but it is—simple controls and common sense made us Insta-Captains. Our patient instructor also gave us basic lake intelligence tips: keep out of

brown waters (shallows don't anchor too close unless you want beach guests; keep the ski line m.p.h. around other boats). Marie Antoinette the sleeping room on the slices off easily if you'd bridge clearance). It was soon we were floating the gorgeous McCloud.

We were just up and; once we started only had a couple of hours til dark. We toiled and found a small cove, and let the week's trip away. The houseboat equipped kitchens and ing in the luscious side doors, we mixed salads and grilled steaks up