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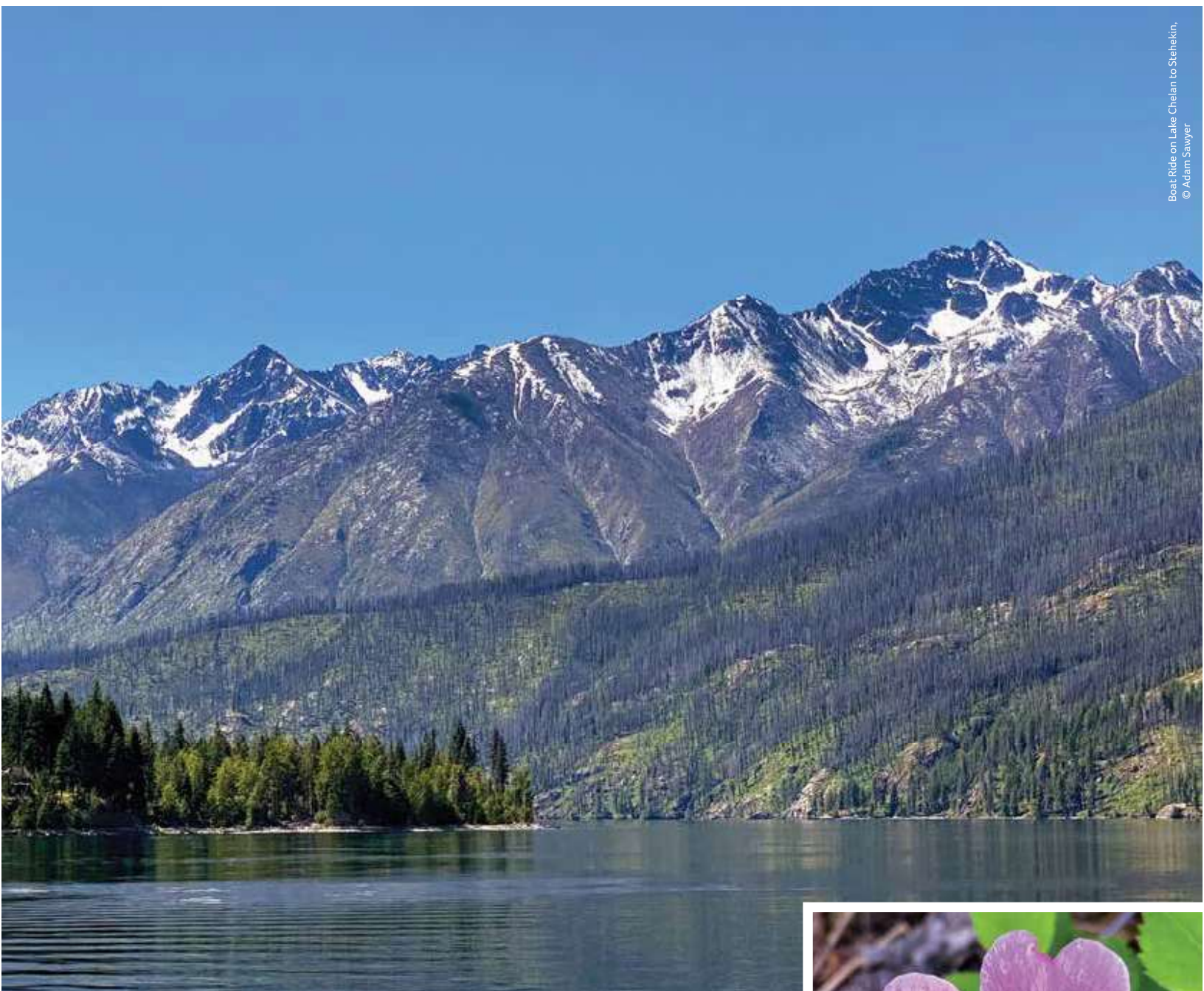
SPRINGTIME IN STEHEKIN WASHINGTON

BY ADAM SAWYER



As signal-free destinations go, idyllic Stehekin, Washington, comes straight out of central casting. Located at the far west end of the 55-mile-long Lake Chelan, Stehekin is only accessible by hiking in, floatplane or boat.

It is a place of dramatic, unfettered North Cascades beauty with outdoor recreation options shooting off in every direction. It is small and peaceful, with the permanent resident tally hovering around 75. Lodging and dining options are limited but thematically perfect in how and what they provide. There is no cell service, no cable and no television. Every season in Stehekin has its charms, but I visited in spring to witness firsthand the town and the landscape come back into post-winter flourish.



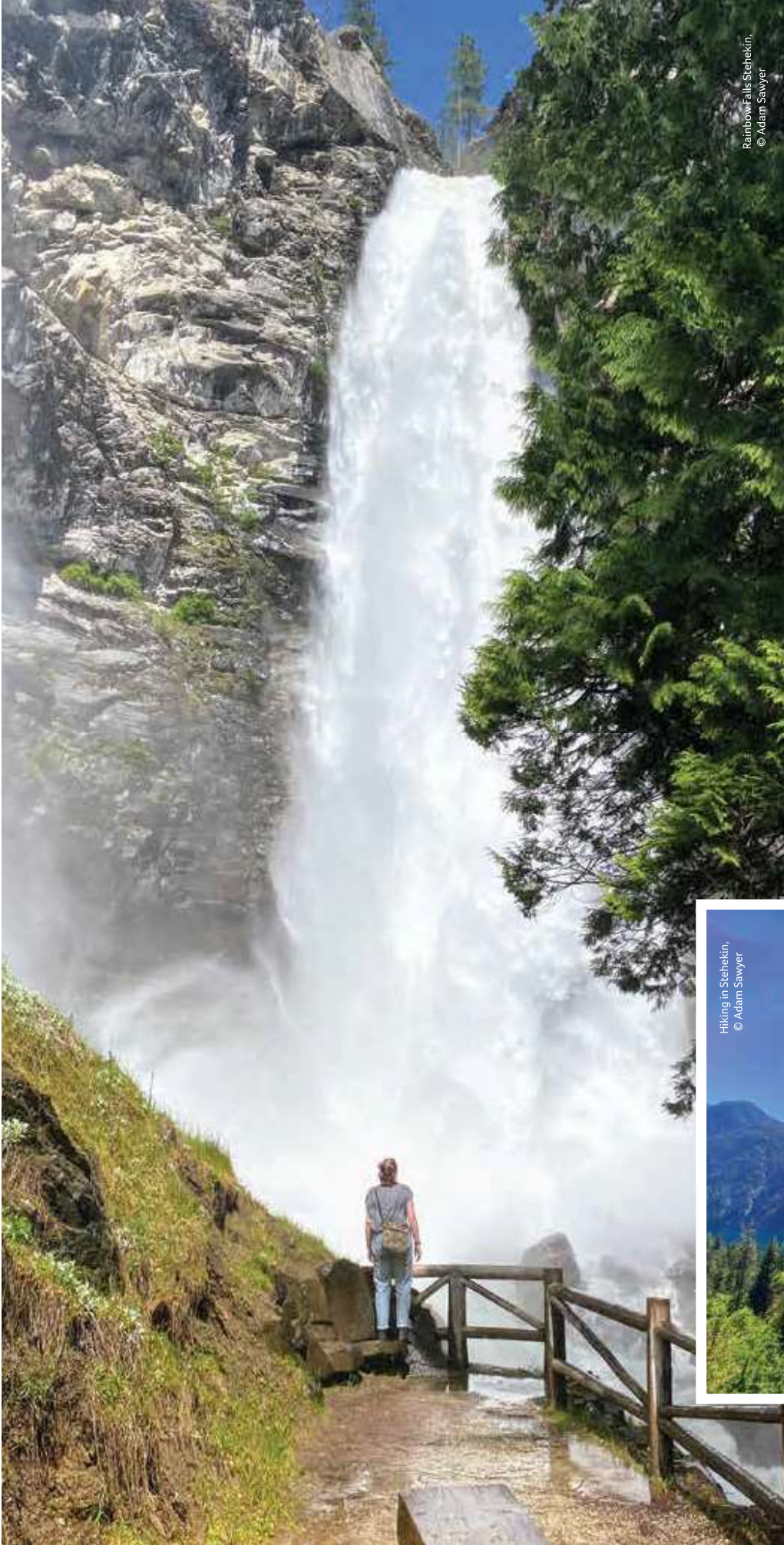
Boat Ride on Lake Chelan to Stehekin,
© Adam Sawyer

The consistently scenic multi-hour Lady of the Lake boat ride from Chelan to Stehekin is a splendid tone-setter. Upon arrival, I was greeted by an affable host from my home for the next two nights, the North Cascades Lodge at Stehekin, which is conveniently steps away from the dock, nestled on the lakeshore. The restaurant at the lodge is excellent. And that's a good thing because unless you're staying at the Stehekin Valley Ranch a few miles away, it's the only game in town.

After a fish and chips and IPA-induced nap, I explored some of the hiking paths around the lodge and discovered a pair of waterfalls, some excellent lake access areas and a bench with a view for the ages. I also discovered that Stehekin in spring has a remarkably perfumed air. A potpourri of the lake, high Cascades forest, crisp air, Nootka rose and false Solomon's seal that was clean, sweet and distractingly pleasant.



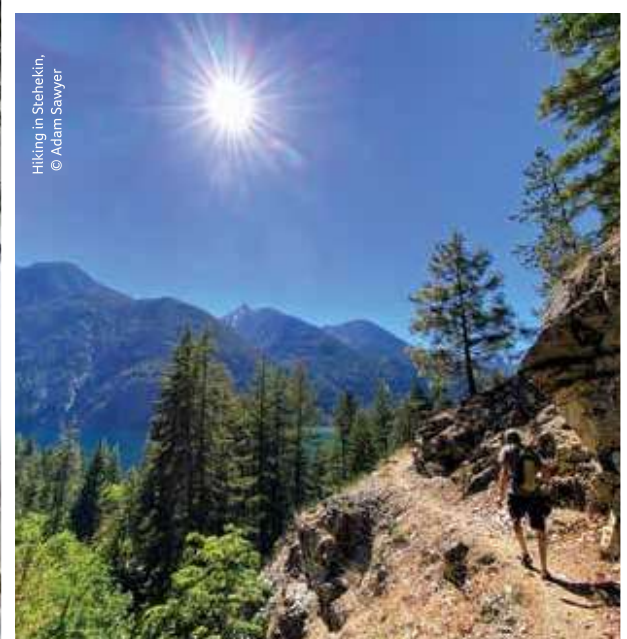
Nootka Rose at Stehekin,
© Adam Sawyer



Rainbow Falls Stehekin,
© Adam Sawyer

As dusk approached that evening, I walked down to a bench on the shore and watched the sun set over the North Cascades. Though still and silent, time moved swiftly, and, before I knew it, I was gazing up at a sky illuminated by starlight that provided a soft reveal of the rugged ridgeline features on the mountains across the lake. It was a sublime evening and I looked forward to recapturing the same magic the next night, which I did.

The next day I had big goals. I took a rented ATV miles up into the valley beyond the lake to hike the Agnes Gorge. A wonderful adventure that highlighted the splendor of the region and the season via wildflower meadows, a lush forest, waterfalls and the rushing, pristine waters of Agnes Creek. Back in town I dropped off the ATV, picked up a bike rental and headed back into the valley to visit Rainbow Falls. In spring, the cataract swells with snowmelt into a jaw-dropping 312-foot monster that casts spray far and wide, which was a treat on that unseasonably warm day.



Hiking in Stehekin,
© Adam Sawyer

On the ride back into town, I stopped at the Honor Gazebo at the Stehekin Pastry Company to pick up some goodies. My last stop of the day was The Garden, an incredible organic garden that also sells homemade goat cheese, honey, candles and more. Karl, the owner, is a treasure.

The next morning I took a kayak onto the lake as my final act before heading home. The clear blue water, snow-capped

distant peaks and a little exercise were a great way to start the day and embrace the morning. On the boat back to Chelan I admonished myself a bit for not booking out more than two days. But then I cheered myself up with the prospect of coming back to take in the fragrance and colors of fall, perhaps over the course of four days. 🍁



WHEN YOU GO

Find lodging and plan your activities at
stehekin.com.

Learn about Chelan, Washington at
lakechelan.com.

Book passage on Lady of the Lake at
ladyofthelake.com.

Find information about North Cascades National Park - Stehekin at
nps.gov/noca/planyourvisit/stehekin.htm

