

## About Cazadero

I acquired the 40 acre piece of land on Pole Mountain Rd., Cazadero, Sonoma County in 1986. Pomo Indians and loggers were my only human predecessors, I found myself in the natural remains of the former and the detritus of the latter. No one has lived here, although the land was probably once familiar to the Pomo Indians of the area. I have found arrowheads and chert cores. Then there were two major loggings, the first took giant redwoods, leaving vast stumps which gave birth to second growth, resulting in a second logging which took place about 30 years ago.

When I arrived only a vast meadow was accessible, everything else was overgrown, the old logging roads were covered with downed trees, chaotic evidence of logging, and years of neglect. To move through the land required a machete, heavy protective clothes, and a sense of direction. Losing my bearings was a great treat. I no longer get lost, alas.

Using hand tools I began by clearing the fallen trees blocking some of the logging roads, then making small foot paths, usually letting the animal trails serve as guidelines as to the best way to move through this mysterious space. Most of the time my passion has been trail making, discovering the many magical spots and helping to make them visible. The ultimate art form, I am in a giant canvas, that I can gently help to emerge. Years later, as the project has grown I have made some of the miles of paths more visible, so that guests may feel secure in their explorations of this wilderness.

As soon as I acquired the property friends wanted to know

‘Where will you put the house?’

What house? This was not going to be about house.

It was all the house.

I am the house.

Lichens, gray, pink, lavender, sea green, they creep across the rocks, grow into my crevasses and slowly navigate through my neurons. Leaves tremble in my bloodstream No matter in what direction I gaze I experience wonder and ecstasy. Why would I want to look at a building? What vision would I then lose? Then I would always be oriented in relationship to that structure, “is it to my right? left? is it behind me? its over there waiting for me.” I didn’t even want to go into a structure. I taught myself lashing and built an outdoor kitchen area. I made beds in favorite spots, in trees, near boulders, Someone gave me, a giant four poster bed made of telephone poles, which I put in the middle of the vast meadow. Lying beneath mosquito netting I was intimate with the sky, and the wandering night animals, waiting for my mountain lion. I never know till evening where I am going to bed down, it depends on wind, moon, temperature, my state of mind. I guess you could say that I ‘sleep around’.

I experimented with various indigenous dwellings, things I could put up with the materials at hand. It was all about play, in the fields of the lord. Nothing to get too serious about. There was the Temple to the Goddess of Whimsy in a clump of boulders. It was all a massive foreplay, which eventually became the passion of a long relationship. My euphoria would begin at the bottom of the 2 mile dirt road, and build to our union when placed my foot on sacred land.

The property had no water, and none available, so for ten years I brought in my own water. I did not want to drive across the meadow, so I parked at the edge of the property and wheeled everything in a wheelbarrow. Nothing was ever a chore, all seemed worth doing, to be there, in the arms of my beloved. Now I am buying water from a neighbor, which makes my life easier and gives some fire protection. Hope for my own water springs eternal. There is still dowsing and catchment to be explored.

Originally the predominant trees were redwoods and Douglas firs. I wanted to help them come back, for now all of the young ones were struggling under the new growth of tan oaks and bay trees. Eventually I acquired a chain saw to help me deal with downed trees, but trees that are standing I still thin out with hand saw. I need to hear them.

The first structure I built was the yurt, it took over two years to complete, and I have never used it. During this time I got a small camper, which meant I could be there in the rain, wind, and have a real nest. It is now gone, I no longer need it.

Although I have built several small structures, they are the least important aspects of the land, and creating them is the only thing I do there that feels like work. Forestry, rock moving, trail making, whimsical art pieces made of available materials, none of these are 'work', but things I cannot resist doing. Artistic Gardening.

It is constantly changing, and shortly after I am gone it will show nothing of my time here.

Through the last 18 years I have called this entity by several names.

In the beginning was no word. Who was I to impose a name on such ephemeral magic? But I had to speak of it. "I'm going up," "Just came back from the country," wasn't quite enough.

### **THE LAND**

Then it became "THE LAND". It has never felt like MY land, I am just a guardian, someone to help reveal its beauty and share it with others. It is still the name I use most often.

"**TALIESEN**" is my personal name for it, I find something rather whimsical in calling this place where I am doing nothing of great architectural significance after one of the great pieces of 20th century architecture. Rather tongue in cheek.

Now the official name is "**CAZADERO NATURE AND ART CONSERVANCEY**": a 40 acre property in Sonoma County dedicated to the preservation and respectful honoring of natural habitat with non-invasive art works. It is a place where artists may exhibit and/or house their works, where ritual and music is performed, films are made, and artists may retreat from the marketplace. A poetry festival has taken place in the stone amphitheatre and Guardian Grove annually since 1996.

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