



seaside, oregon

more than just a day at the beach

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day 1

With the top down on our Mustang convertible and the stereo cranked, my friend Mary and I cruised into Seaside, Oregon for a much needed weekend getaway.

This charming coastal town of 6,000 residents is one of the most popular summer vacation spots along the Pacific Ocean. The beach at Seaside is listed as one of the top ten beaches from Canada to Mexico. In contrast, lush forests flank the eastern border, granting visitors and residents with an array of natural habitats, wildlife discovery, and outdoor activities.

We made our way to The 10th Avenue B&B and Vacation Rental and were pleased to find a quaint, century-old inn near a dead-end turnaround on the beach. Mary and I marveled at the inn's Victorian charm as innkeepers, Jack and Lesle Palmeri, greeted us warmly and led us to our rooms. Mary's room was the Sunrise Room, which boasted an ocean view and built-in window benches. My room, the Retreat Suite, was complete with a small sitting room, fireplace, four-poster king-sized bed and beautifully updated bathroom. I immediately noticed the fine attention to detail of our cozy accommodations: soft sheets, fluffy comforters, plush towels, and gourmet chocolates on the nightstand. We freshened up and joined Lesle in the main living room for some insight into local hot spots and set off for some girlfriend fun.

A short jaunt along the Prom (promenade), led us to a flurry of local shops. At the apex of these shops is Fultano's

Family Pizza Parlour, an open air pizzeria at the front of a huge arcade. After a scrumptious lunch, served by manager Bill Nielson, Mary and I were encouraged by the arcade owner, Marci Utti, to cut loose a bit in the arcade. We climbed on the side by side motorcycles, laughed ourselves silly, and blew through a roll of quarters in no time.

Strolling along Broadway Street, we stopped at The Carousel Mall, a landmark collection of ships built around an ornate old-time carousel. We bought souvenirs at Country Bungalow, picked out some earrings at The Jewelry Box, and stopped at Flashback (malt and gift shop) for a cool treat before taking a spin on the carousel.

Feeling adventurous, we headed for my favorite part of the trip—a helicopter ride over Seaside. As novice helicopter passengers, Mary and I were a bit nervous climbing into the five-passenger chopper with our handsome pilot (yes, ladies he is single). Gary Turel, owner of Seaside Helicopters LLC, provided us with an amazing aerial tour of Seaside, complete with some Lewis and Clark history. For people who prefer to keep their feet on the ground, the Seaside Family Fun Park neighbors the landing pad and offers go karts, bumper boats, and miniature golf.

One of the most nostalgic pieces of the town is the Seaside Aquarium and it has been making memories since 1937. Aquarium manager and resident sea-life guru, Keith Chandler, said the aquarium was originally designed as an indoor saltwater swimming pool that later be-

came an aquarium. For sixty years, the aquarium has entertained generations of visitors. We fed the seals, laughed and carried on like children, avoiding the inevitable splashes from one of the barking show-offs slapping his tummy for a treat.

Dinner was served at Taste of Tuscany, an exquisitely decorated Italian restaurant owned and operated by Donna Wirges and her daughter Cindy Blackman. Sipping on fabulous Chianti, I marveled at the uniqueness of my salad which was tossed in a maple-balsamic vinaigrette. While Mary raved about her Cioppino, I enjoyed Pork Tenderloin ala Douglas. The meat was pan seared, baked, and served atop a mouth watering polenta cake, grilled veggies, and a



balsamic pomegranate reduction. Dessert was amazing and although Mary shared her Heavenly Chocolate Mousse, I was particularly stingy with my Chocolate Martini (spumoni ice cream floating in a secret concoction of vodka and velvety after-dinner liqueurs).

Our post dinner walk led us to Goose Hollow at the Cove, a quirky little beach pub which proudly serves 14 different micro-brews and exceptional live music.

We relaxed and listened to the smooth sounds of Denise Drake and special guest, Dave Quinton. The atmosphere was casual, but lively, and rumor has it that Goose Hollow serves a mean Reuben sandwich.

day 2

I woke up this morning in my majestic bed, surrounded by just-right pillows and morning sunshine peeking in from the beach. I could hear the waves crashing on the shore and the wind whistling through the trees. Surprisingly, it wasn't the wind or waves which lulled me from my slumber—it was the aroma of sausage and gourmet coffee. I hastily dressed and grabbed my running shoes before heading downstairs where Leslie greeted me with a to-go cup for my coffee. Apparently, her inn-keeping prowess also enables her to read minds. How did she know I'd want to run along the beach before breakfast? My run turned into a walk because I am not coordinated enough to drink coffee and run simultaneously. Not to mention, I'm enough of an inlander to stop dead in my tracks at



every little seashell and sand dollar.

Jack Palmeri, innkeeper and resident chef, had breakfast ready for all of the guests when I returned from the beach. I was famished from my morning adventure and the Chili Cheese Puffs, Sausage Links, Fresh Fruit, and Sourdough Toast was heavenly. This was no ordinary breakfast – it was melt-in-your-mouth fantastic.

After breakfast, Mary and I pondered over whether we should rent kayaks from the Seaside International Hostel for a ride down the river or spend the day pampering ourselves and shopping. Ultimately, pampering won and we spent

the morning getting facials and enjoying the luxurious atmosphere at the Day Spa on Broadway. Wendy Camden created the spa with enough room for a six person sauna, hair and nail salon, facial rooms, and massage rooms (including a couples' massage room with a large soaking tub).

Faces glowing and lattes in hand, we walked over to see Calisa Hill at Nevaeh Skincare Retreat for pedicures. Calisa works by appointment only and Nevaeh (heaven spelled backwards) is the perfect retreat. Between the hot stone massage and the peppermint leg mask, I couldn't believe this was a pedicure. We munched on gourmet cookies from Corpeny's and flipped through the pages of the Seaside visitor's guide.

Toes sparkling and makeup reapplied, we headed to a local favorite for a hearty lunch. Norma's Ocean Diner, established in 1976 and located in the heart of downtown Seaside, serves the finest seafood and award winning clam chowder. Owner Randy Frank recommended I try the pan-fried razor clams, just harvested off the beach, and served with a bowl of the famous chowder. The savory clams were fork tender and the chowder was definitely worthy of its reputation.

After lunch, Mary and I headed back to the Carousel Mall for some old-time photos at The Hole in the Wall. Owner Casey Lipok and his assistant not only dressed us up as fancy saloon girls, but told stories to bring out the renegade attitudes needed to capture the perfect shots. We laughed until our cheeks hurt and thought our corsets would burst.

We toured the famous Phillips Candy Kitchen and talked to owner Steve Phillips about the intricacies involved with making candy. Phillips Candy Kitchen (established 1939) is the only place in Seaside that makes its own saltwater taffy.

We continued our shopping at Beach Books for a commemorative picture book highlighting Seaside's history, stopped at The Natural Nook to peruse through lavish displays of candles, plants, and floral arrangements and then crossed the street to our next destination – Yummy Wine Bar and Bistro. After a busy day, Mary and I were eager to sit by the

fire, enjoy some wine, and sample the gourmet munchies. Proprietor Corey Albert, an ex-Coast Guard rescue swimmer, envisioned a place where people in all different stages of wine appreciation could gather in a relaxed, comfortable environment with friends, drink fabulous wine, and savor Chef Jonathan Hoffman's culinary creations. We sampled Turkey Breast Panini, Sunchokes Gratin, Beef Carpaccio (my personal favorite), Chai Seared Sea Scallops, and the Half



Baked Flourless Chocolate Cake (sinfully satisfying).

Although nearly stuffed from our happy hour snacking, we sauntered over to McKeown's for a delightful dinner and mouthwatering dessert. Owners Dennis and Nancy McKeown described their delicious menu as "eclectic" and introduced us to their signature appetizer, Crispy Fried Artichokes. Dennis also the chef at McKeown's, humbly reported that he once cooked for Elvis and received a \$50 tip. After dinner, it was time to put another day in Seaside to rest.

day 3

After brunch at the Best Western Ocean View Resort, souvenir shopping at Shearwater Clothing, and a final walk along the Prom, it's time to leave Seaside. As I sip my coffee and leave a note in the guestbook, I realize why Seaside is a generational vacation spot. The coastal landscape, activities, and allure of the town promise fun-filled days, but the people of seaside, the history, and memories are what leave me longing to return.