



a: Photo courtesy Ashland Chamber of Commerce/Photo by Graham Lewis. Autumn in Lithia Park. **b:** Photo courtesy Ashland Chamber of Commerce/Photo by Christopher Briscoe. Ashland's plaza. **c:** Photo courtesy Oregon Shakespeare Festival/Photo by Jennifer Reiley. Dance Kaleidoscope and the Terra Nova Consort perform in the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's 2004 Green Show. **d:** Photo courtesy Oregon Shakespeare Festival/Photo by T. Charles Erickson. Open to the sky, the outdoor Elizabethan Stage seats 1,200 people. **e:** Photo courtesy Ashland Chamber of Commerce/Photo by Christopher Briscoe. Lithia Park, welcoming to all. **f:** Photo courtesy Ashland Chamber of Commerce/Photo by Graham Lewis. Exercising in Lithia Park. **g:** Photo courtesy Oregon Shakespeare Festival/Photo by David Cooper. An interior view of the New Theater in arena staging. **h:** Photo courtesy Ashland Chamber of Commerce/Photo by Orville's Photography. Ashland's Festival of Light.



South before Winter

Summer's lease hath all too short a date.

— William Shakespeare

STORY BY KATE VEROTSKY

Despite the passing of four centuries, Shakespeare still is widely considered the master of giving poetic voice to humanity's most enduring troubles — one of which is the end of summer. As the days cool and shorten into fall, why not plan one last summer road trip, perhaps as homage to the Bard? Make your way down to the charming town of Ashland to eat, drink and be merry — with a side of tragicomedy thrown in for good measure.

Lodging

As you can imagine, lodging options abound in this town, that sees its fair share of tourists year round. Here are a few havens that may be particularly convenient for theater patrons.

The Ashland Springs Hotel, located just one block from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, is a local landmark. Originally opened in 1925, the beautifully restored structure is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a member of the Historic Hotels of America. Seventy guestrooms are furnished with European-styled elegance, while amenities such as cable television, air conditioning and data ports provide modern convenience. Lark's Home Kitchen Cuisine executive chef Damon Jones, formerly of Emeril's New Orleans and Sunriver Resort's Crosswater Restaurant, creates "farm to table" comfort food using the freshest products from the local grower's market. Favorites such as maple glazed pork chops with apple compote, fried chicken or homemade meatloaf are paired with an impressive wine list featuring many local selections as well as a decadent dessert selection.

If a cozy bed and breakfast is more your style, you're certainly in the right town. Nine blocks from the Festival, *A Midsummer's Dream Bed and Breakfast* recently opened after a thorough

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PHOTO COURTESY OF ASHLAND SPRINGS HOTEL



An elegant lobby welcomes visitors to the Ashland Springs Hotel.

restoration to the 1901 structure. Victorian charm permeates from the five luxury suites, each of which is named for a Shakespearean character. From the Falstaff attic room with its charming window seat overlooking the mountains to the stately Romeo suite in the rear cottage, each room is lovingly decorated and boasts a king-size bed, fireplace and spa-tub. Guests will relish the delicious, three- to five-course breakfasts that may include blue cornmeal waffles with lavender cream, fresh fruit in a homemade ginger syrup or caramelized apple French toast. Afterward, enjoy a stroll through the quiet, pristine gardens.

The Ashland Creek Inn, located just three blocks from the Festival, boasts a beautiful park-like setting near downtown shops and restaurants. Each of the multi-room suites features a private entrance, kitchen, sitting room and private deck overlooking Ashland Creek. From the charming English countryside to exotic Morocco or the mysteries of the Far East, each suite is uniquely decorated with art and antiques from all over the world. Fresh gourmet breakfasts are served on the deck overlooking the creek, in the lovely terraced gardens or the elegant dining room.

Transport yourself to Old World Europe at the *McCall House*, a beautifully restored 1883 Italianate mansion serving as a bed and breakfast inn just one block from the Festival. Originally the home of one of Ashland's most prominent citizens, Captain John McCall and his wife, Lizzie, the McCall House has hosted a number of notable visitors including President Rutherford B. Hayes, William Jennings Bryan and General William Sherman. It was eventually purchased and restored by Shakespearean

actress Phyllis Courtney, and opened as a B&B in 1981. Period antiques and custom-made linens adorn each of 10 guestrooms, each beautifully appointed and luxuriously equipped.

Dining

At first glance, you may not recognize *New Sammy's Cowboy Bistro* for the world-class restaurant that it is. Have faith, however, and follow the arrow pointing toward the front door (there's no sign) because the food here will more than make up for everything you find lacking in the location (a few miles north of Ashland in Talent, in a shack on a singularly uninspiring stretch of suburban road). The tiny, six-tabled room adorned with cowboy wallpaper is the setting for some of the most outstanding food and wine you'll find anywhere — Oregon and beyond. Co-owner Charlene Rollins personally prepares every single dinner dish for patron's fortunate enough to secure a reservation (they are booked weeks in advance during theater season, so call ahead). In addition to consistently succulent seasonal entrées such as a recent Bristol Bay salmon filet poached in salmon lovage broth with asparagus, sugarsnap peas, fava's, spring onions, purple potatoes and tarragon-dill gribiche sauce, the wine list will astound even the most experienced connoisseur. Ask for the "big book," which includes about 3,000 wines, many of which can be found nowhere else in the world for the bargain prices offered by Vernon Rollins.

Amuse Restaurant in downtown Ashland, just a few blocks from the Festival, is a lovely choice, particularly for those interested in dining al fresco on a balmy summer evening. The menu combines fresh, locally

PHOTO COURTESY OF ASHLAND CREEK INN



The Ashland Creek Inn boasts spacious rooms with intriguing international décor as well as private balconies.

sourced Northwest meat and produce with traditional French flavors and technique for a decidedly elegant culinary style. A recent menu featured such items as Dungeness crab cakes with shaved radish, daikon and grain mustard remoulade and a black truffle roasted hen with lacinato kale, roasted fingerlings and celery root remoulade. The cheese menu may include both local and imported selections such as the Rogue River Blue from the nearby Rogue River Creamery or a Boucheron, a strong, creamy French goat cheese, served with Chionga beets and balsamic syrup. The delights continue right up through the mouthwatering desserts, from the decadent bittersweet chocolate truffle cake with coffee ice cream to the refreshing Meyer lemon ice cream and sherbet with macarons.

Extremely popular with the pre-theater crowd and just four blocks from the Festival, *Cucina Biazzi* celebrates the authentic flavors of Tuscany. Tucked into an unassuming cottage, the rear patio boasts terra cotta walls with wisteria and grapevines draped overhead — an ideal spot in which to enjoy a

romantic dinner for two. The multi-course prix fixe menu changes daily, but will typically include a plate of flavorful antipasto such as the famous Tuscan white bean salad, imported olives, marinated mushrooms and assorted crostini, followed by a choice of pastas that may include the raved-over lobster ravioli. Next, the entrée selection typically provides the main protein and may include fresh seafood, pork tenderloin or a succulent cut of beef. True to the European custom, the fresh, perfectly balanced salad is served after the entrée (to aid the digestion), but save room for a decadent dessert such as traditional Tiramisu or warm chocolate cake with homemade ice cream.

Try to book as much time in Ashland as your schedule will allow, because there's much more to this region than world-renowned theater. Rafting trips down the Klamath and Rogue rivers provide both the thrill of a whitewater ride and the serenity of beautiful surroundings. Wine tours through the Rogue Valley will introduce Willamette Valley Pinot Noir drinkers to the award-winning Bordeaux wines produced in this sun-

nier region. Finally, don't miss Crater Lake, the deepest freshwater lake in the nation and Oregon's only National Park. So if you find yourself mourning the end of the season, perhaps a road trip to southern Oregon will ensure that at the very least, this summer's lease goes out like a lion. ✦

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE OREGON SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL/PHOTO BY T. CHARLES ERICKSON



Cyrano de Bergerac by Edmond Rostand. Roxane (Robin Goodrin Nordli, left) and her cousin Cyrano (Marco Barricelli) remember their youths together.



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Baseline

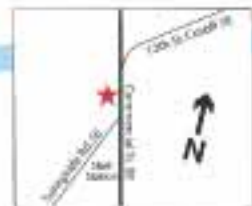


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