

Modern Green Living + Spa Wisdom

organic spa

MAGAZINE

OUR 3RD ANNUAL

Eco Fashion Issue!

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10 Little
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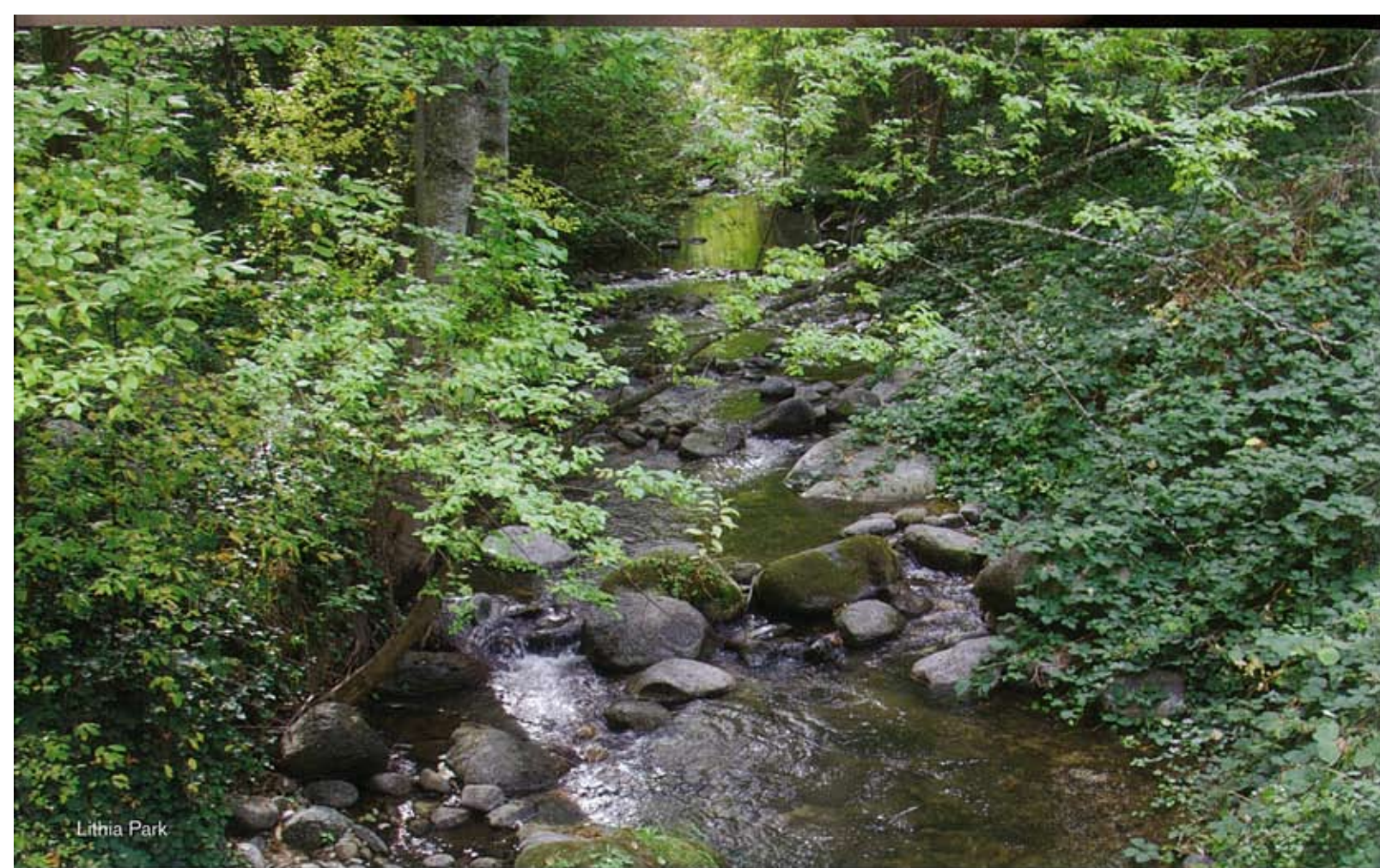
Tips On Creating
A Personalized
Outdoor Space



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Lithia Park

ON THE ORGANIC TRAIL...

Ashland

This vibrant city in Southern Oregon has attracted visitors since the turn of the last century, thanks to its cultural offerings, its climate, and its curative waters.

By **Mary Bemis**

SPAS

ALCHEMY BOTANICALS

Maybe it was the scent that drew me into this magical little shop that has an extensive selection of herbal preparations, among other fragrant offerings. I wandered in off the main drag in Ashland to find this well-stocked retail shop and skin-care spa that's owned by Tricia Acheatel, an esthetician, clinical herbalist, and nutritionist. If you're looking for organic beauty products to purchase for yourself or as a gift, this is where you'll find them. I was happy to see some of my favorites here, including John Masters' hair care and 100% Pure body care. The product line of

choice and one that is well-loved here is Eminence Organic Skin Care (the spa just started offering the company's new Biodynamic Facial)—the line that's used in the facial services. This is a by-appointment-only skin-care spa with a wide selection of facials for women, men, and teens, as well as waxing and make-up services. 541-488-4418, www.alchemybotanicals.com

CHOZU BATH & TEA GARDENS

This was one of my favorite spots in town, located in the historic Railroad District. Owner Ilene

Rubenstein has succeeded in creating a lovely Japanese-inspired space that not only offers fairly priced communal and private bathing along with spa treatments, but also a wonderful tea room serving an impressive variety of tea and tasty Japanese food. (I sampled the prawn shumai, followed by a sushi salad and cup of Jasmine Rishi Fairy tea). There's also a Pilates studio here, as well as newly added Garden Cottages, allowing for overnight accommodations. I didn't stay in them, but toured them and wasn't crazy about the design, finding them a bit too dark and sparse. But we

each have our own idea of comfort and style, and with that said, it should be noted that the cottages are redesigned historic homes from 1903 and offer wifi, full kitchenettes, fireplace, double showers, and orthopedic beds and pillows. I opted for one of the private pools (90 minutes, \$35) and enjoyed dividing my time between the relaxing hot water, the sauna, and the cold plunge. A Deep Tissue massage followed (60 minutes, \$100) that managed to work out my kinks. This is a popular place for locals who enjoy lingering at the communal salt-water hot pool (90 minutes, \$25), so do make sure



Left to Right: Alchemy Botanicals, Chozu Bath and Tea Gardens

to book in advance. 541-552-0202, www.chozugardens.com

JACKSON WELLSPRINGS

If you're shy, this isn't the place for you. If you don't like sharing your spa experience with others, this isn't the place for you. If you think a spa experience is all about fluffy robes and slippers and cushy towels and personalized service, this definitely isn't the place for you. However, if you can appreciate the value of healing mineral-rich waters, an artesian spring-fed naturally warm swimming pool, and a serious sauna, then you'll enjoy this 30-acre hot springs development (complete with botanical garden, tent camping, teepees, domes, and an RV site) that has been attracting visitors since Eugenia Jackson applied for water rights back in 1862. I passed it numerous times, stopping in once for a quick, casual tour that didn't make me feel much like lingering. It took me a while before deciding to give it a go—I couldn't resist the lure of the water. Although I'm free in mind and spirit, left-handed and most definitely left-leaning, I'm not exactly what you'd call the "alternative type." I don't have a tattoo, the only part of me that's pierced are my ears, my long hair is dreadlock-free—and I like wearing a bathing suit. So, I stuck out somewhat—I enjoyed every

therapeutic minute (and the \$8 entry fee). Although I didn't try one, spa services are available and include Watsu, Shamanic Chakra work, Reiki, and facials using Ilike, a very nice organic line from Hungary. 541-482-3776, www.jacksonwellsprings.com

WATERSTONE SPA

One of the reasons why this day spa has such a loyal following may be in part due to the fact that its very passionate owners also happen to be massage therapists. Deanne Anderson and Deb Cleland give special attention to the staff they hire—skill takes precedence over trends here—as well as to the brands they use. If you're a Jurlique fan as I am, you'll be pleased to learn that this is the organic line that's used in the majority of treatments. Located in a quaint historic building adjacent to the Ashland Springs Hotel (see "Places to Stay"), Waterstone has some nice touches, including a Japanese Ofuro soaking tub located in the popular Duet Suite area, a Solarium that feels like you've stepped back in time, and a tiny retail area featuring locally made products. I know of one couple that lives in nearby Gold Hill, who make a habit of celebrating special occasions by booking the Royal Treatment in the Duet Suite (165 minutes, \$450). This treatment for two starts with

a soak in the Ofuro tub (infused with bath salts and rose petals) and involves sparkling cider and organic chocolates followed by a foot treatment in the Solarium, then a 90-minute side-by-side aromatherapy massage, a 30-minute facial and always-soothing scalp treatments. 541-488-0325, www.waterstonespa.com

HIDDEN SPRINGS

While this is more wellness center than spa, it's worth a mention here because it provides a restful

environment and a number of healing therapies. "Your treatment begins as you enter the grounds, cross the bridge, and look for the resident crane who often stands in the large spring-fed pond," shares Will Wilkinson, the Center's marketing director. On the menu: naturopathic and chiropractic appointments, yoga, colon hydrotherapy, mind/body work, a fitness center, and many educational programs. 541-488-8858, www.hiddenspringswellness.com



Waterstone Spa

PLACES TO STAY

ASHLAND SPRINGS HOTEL

This historic landmark hotel is the centerpiece of downtown Ashland. In business since 1925, it has undergone numerous reincarnations, most recently a two-year restoration that turned it from the Mark Antony Hotel—referred to as the “Dark Agony” by locals because it was dark, dingy, and had a dive bar where the wonderful Lark’s restaurant now resides—into the cheerful and genteel Ashland Springs Hotel. It was basically “cheap group accommodations,” says one in-the-know resident who tells me that the property was originally built on a Native American gravesite. The new owners, says my source, not only poured millions of dollars into the renovation, but called in Native Americans who performed a blessing ritual on the site. Each room is unique because restorers had to work with and around the original structure, and each room is charming in its own right.

541-488-1700,

www.ashlandsspringshotel.com

COUNTRY WILLOWS INN

I loved the décor and special attention to detail at this farmhouse turned elegant bed and breakfast. Run by Chuck and Debbie Young, the property was originally built in 1896, and is located on five beautiful acres surrounded by the Siskiyou and Cascade Mountain Ranges. Relax in one of the Adirondack chairs before traipsing off to your room of choice. My favorite? The newly revamped Almond Room (named for the almond tree you can see from the window) with its antique furniture and “eco-green sensibility.” Low-VOC paints, luxurious organic linens, and native Oregon

Myrtlewood flooring are just some of the fine details here. 541-488-1590, www.countrywillowsinn.com

LITHIA SPRINGS RESORT & GARDENS

If there’s one man who knows more about the history of Ashland than anyone else I’ve met, it’s Duane Smith, the affable owner of this quirky resort that I found remarkably rejuvenating. It was Duane who first filled me in on the area’s spa history and the old-time Ashland slogan that has since stayed with me: “Where the palms meet the pines!” It turns out Ashland was a popular spa resort destination in the first few decades of the last century, renowned for its healing Lithia water. Lithia Springs Resort is the only lodging here to pump in the natural warm mineral springs water to each of the inn’s rooms. I stayed in one of the expansive new Irish Suites with a two-person tub that I filled to my heart’s content with the wonderful warm water. This is obviously a labor of love for Duane, who has outfitted each room very curiously. (My favorites are the Asian-inspired, over-the-top Emperor’s Chamber and the Water Tower Estate Room with yes, a big red heart-shaped tub smack in the center of the room.) Four acres of nicely maintained organic gardens and delightful details, including koi ponds, make this a fun place to meander.

541-660-8806, www.ashlandinn.com

MT. ASHLAND INN AND B&B

Yes, this property has a spectacular setting (it was voted “One of the Top 10 Hotels for Nature Lovers”), but what really won me over was the warmth and hospitality of its owner, Laurel Biegert. Located on 40 gor-



Above: Ashland Springs Hotel, Mt. Ashland Inn and B&B

geous acres near Mount Ashland ski area, the log-home style lodging was handcrafted from the property’s incense cedar trees and has five cozy guest suites (many of which feature beautifully crafted beds by Laurel’s multi-talented husband, Chuck). I stayed on the top floor in the Sky Lakes Wilderness Suite with majestic views of Mt. Shasta. The very cozy suite had a Jacuzzi tub for two, a river rock fireplace and big comfy bed with a handmade quilt and down comforter among other welcoming details. Not to be missed: the fabulous organic breakfast, served by the course (loved the fresh fruit smoothie and homemade blueberry jam). 541-482-8707, www.mtashlandinn.com

RESTAURANTS

There are lots of wonderful places to eat that feature local and organic fare, for a more complete list, check out www.buylocalrogue.org where you’ll also find information about farmers markets and more. A few of my favorites:

GRILLA BITES

A casual, inexpensive option for lunch that features organic grilled sandwiches, soups, and a salad bar. I opted for the Portabella Burger that came with veggies and hummus. 530-343-6848, www.grillabites.com

LARK’S HOME KITCHEN CUISINE

Dinner here was a welcome and pleasant surprise. Executive chef Damon Jones features locally grown farm-to-table comfort food and offers a creative menu with just-

right portions. Try the Grilled Filet of Northwest Steelhead with a Fresh Herb Vinaigrette and Pecan Couscous. 541-488-5558, www.larksrestaurant.com

NEW SAMMY'S COWBOY BISTRO

The top of the line—enough said. This spontaneous dinner left me satiated and speechless. The intimate and idiosyncratic restaurant (great for couples, keep the kids at home) is situated a few minutes outside of Ashland proper and is tenderly run by husband-and-wife team Vernon and Charlene Rollins. The couple has owned restaurants for 20 some odd years and has always featured food grown from their organic gardens. A match made in gastronomical heaven, the two are a magical mix of personalities and talents. He's the brain behind the extensive and impressive wine list; she's the magician in the kitchen. But beware: If you're in a hurry, you won't be welcome here. The style is to go slow (dishes take a while to appear) and savor your surroundings, your company, and your outstanding food and wine. 541-535-2779

ORGANIC FOOD & WINE

Ashland and its immediate surroundings are home to some pretty impressive biodynamic, organic, and sustainable labels. Of special note:

Cowhorn Vineyard & Garden:
541-899-6876, www.cowhornwine.com

**Lillie Belle Farms
Handmade Chocolates:**
541.664.2815,
www.lilliebellefarms.com

Maranatha Nut Butters:
510-346-3860,
www.maranathafoods.com

Mary Bemis is the founder and editor in chief of *Organic Spa Magazine*.

Organic Nation Spirits:
541-482-3160,
www.organicnationspirits.com

Roxyann Winery at the Hillcrest Orchard:
541-776-2315, www.roxyann.com

Rogue Creamery: 541-664-1537,
www.roguecreamery.com

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

For more information on highlights of the area, including the world-renowned Oregon Shakespeare Festival, check out these sites:

www.travelashland.com
www.southernoregonwinetours.com
www.oregonwineandfarmtour.com
www.noahsrafting.com
www.osfashland.org

LAST LOOK

NECTAR ECO BOUTIQUE

This is my favorite clothing shop in Ashland. Why? Because the owner has a great eye for fashion and accessories and because I always find something new when I visit. It's a terrific place to find that special gift (I recently bought a good friend of mine a unique bracelet made by an artist in Portland who fashions jewelry from recycled tin cans. Trust me, it was really pretty.) Nectar stocks styles for women, men, and there's even a small collection for kids. It carries some of my favorite eco labels: Kate Organics (I love the Padme dress so much that it has become my signature!), Stewart + Brown, and Eco Lux, to name a few. 541-488-3340, www.nectarecoboutique.com

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Enjoy! Stephanie

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