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Guest can relax in the hotel's mezzanine (above), the warm and inviting lobby or in beautifully decorated rooms.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ABRHAMSON/SONICUS HOTEL, CTN



The Grand Dame of Southern Oregon

ASHLAND SPRINGS HOTEL

words by *Maureen Flanagan*

Ashland Springs Hotel has been a beacon of civility and elegance since it opened in 1925 as Lithia Springs Hotel. It's the tallest building in Ashland—located on downtown's Main Street—and is visible from almost any vantage point in the Rogue Valley.

Today, the hotel commands the respect and admiration of visitors and locals, regarded not only for its historic significance but also for its beauty, contemporary conveniences and signature events.

Whether it's meeting space for a business get-together, a top-shelf venue for the season's most coveted social event or a vacation to die for, you'll find it at Ashland Springs Hotel. The annual Oregon Chocolate Festival was founded here and will celebrate its sixth anniversary next March. The hotel also hosts launch parties for local and regional events like Taste of Ashland, Ashland Independent Film Festival, Southern Oregon Authors Fair and Jefferson Public Radio's annual wine auction.

Wedding bells ring here all year round. Blushing brides and nattily-attired wedding parties are regularly spotted coming and going from the hotel, whose gardens, gallery and ballroom are perfect for formal affairs with up to 350 guests.

Designed to serve the needs of both business travelers and tourists who come for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Southern Oregon wine country and other cultural and culinary features, this landmark provides hospitality alongside its history. Exercise facilities, Wi-Fi and a world-class restaurant add convenience while the building's Tourtelotte and Hummel architecture, constructed of reinforced concrete with Gothic and

Neo-Classical Revival elements, is sure to please design enthusiasts. As in the early 20th century, the hotel's huge lobby/atrium with its wrap-around mezzanine is filled with light, graced with original terrazzo floors, stained glass windows and a massive brass chandelier.

In 1960 the hotel was renamed The Mark Antony and was redesigned to reflect the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Tudor themes. But hard times got hold of the hotel, and the expense of renovation became more than the owners could bear.

It wasn't until Doug and Becky Neuman bought "The Mark" in 1998 that this extraordinary historic structure would be fully restored to its original splendor and christened Ashland Springs Hotel.

"Becky Neuman chose a motif with a natural theme to reflect the Chautauqua and remind people of a simpler time," explains Karolina Wyszynska, director of sales and marketing. "To create an oasis where people looked at nature and thought about the world."

The organic theme extends throughout, with palms and wicker furniture providing comfortable spaces for conversation and reading. You'll spend hours peering into the cabinets of curiosities, with wondrous collections of bird's nests, starfish, mysterious instruments and myriad treasures that enthralled early naturalists and continue to fascinate today.

"We want people to explore the hotel," says Wyszynska.

Whether it is the Elfin Room's crystal chandelier and cast deer sconces, the mezzanine's many nooks or the gardens filled with blooms, Ashland Springs Hotel is full of discoveries—from both today and days gone by. ★

Left to right: Ashland Springs Hotel opened as Lithia Springs Hotel during the early half of the 20th century and in 1960 it was renamed The Mark Antony. Ashland Springs Hotel as it stands today.



Ashland Springs Hotel
212 East Main Street
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Ashlandspringshotel.com



Katharine Gracey will greet you with a smile and help you find those unique items you are looking for at Jacksonville Mercantile.



Behind the Best Businesses

WHAT MAKES 2009 SOUTHERN OREGON MAGAZINE BEST BUSINESS AWARD WINNERS SO GREAT?

words by *Sandy Cathcart*
photography by *Jerry Clarkson*

It is often said that a way to a man's heart is through his stomach; it must be the way to a woman's heart as well, because the winners of both our big business and small business categories are food purveyors. In the big business category, Harry and David is well-known for its creatively-packaged, homemade treats and mouth-watering Fruit-of-the-Month Club. In the small business category, Jacksonville Mercantile has a well-deserved reputation for its hand-picked gourmet and specialty items, the quality and variety of which make the store a chef's dream.

Jacksonville Mercantile

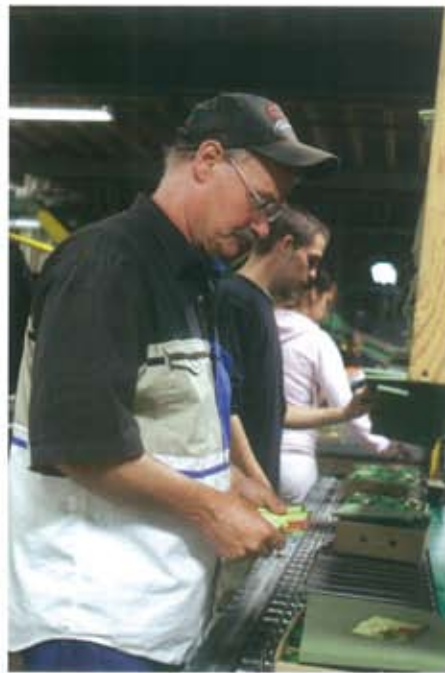
Jacksonville Mercantile is one of the most unique and fun shops in the Rogue Valley. Housed in a warehouse building built in 1861, the mercantile is now a culinary landmark, renowned for its popular mix of quality specialty foods and knowledgeable, friendly staff.

The store is usually overseen by owners David and Constance Jesser, who love watching the surprise on

people's faces when they are introduced to a new product or recipe. The Jessers focus on outfitting cooks with everything needed to impress dinner guests. Even novice cooks can find plenty of prepared foods that make a great impression.

"People come in here expecting to test us to see if we're carrying a product they're hoping to find," says David. "It becomes an adventure searching the store and, 90 percent of the time, we have it tucked away on our shelves."

The Jessers give back to the community through their membership in several business associations: The Jacksonville Oregon Business Association, Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce and serving on four other city committees. During busy times, the couple hires others to come in and help. Workers talk of the freedom to experiment and the delight of discovery inherent in their work. It's easy to see why Jacksonville Mercantile is considered a local treasure.



Employees of Harry and David package fresh fruit that is grown on the company's own orchard.



Harry and David

"Big business" winner Harry and David is Southern Oregon's largest employer, with more than 2,500 year-round employees and a seasonal workforce of more than 8,000. Seems like most everyone in the region has worked at least one holiday season enjoying such benefits as a 30 percent employee discount and paid Thanksgiving holiday. Add that to a lunchroom filled with tasty goodies, a workout room and friendly bosses and co-workers, and it's clear why many seasonal employees return year after year.

If being located in the beautiful Rogue Valley with its pristine mountains and flowering orchards isn't enticement enough, Harry and David also showers full-time employees with a flexible benefits program, insurance, paid vacation and holidays, retirement plans and 30 percent discounts. The plant's close proximity to Historic Jacksonville, Ashland's Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Crater Lake National Park also make it a great place to work and visit.

Harry and David's vision of being everyone's first choice for gifting, celebrations and everyday delights make them a favorite with tourists and local shoppers. A guiding principle that "everything starts with people" is realized in both the workplace and the Country Store.

Success is attributed to truly listening to customers for over 70 years and making every event a celebration. Fruit is grown in the company's own local orchards; cakes and cookies are made from scratch; chocolates and confections are carefully prepared; and everything gets hand-packed into custom gifts that delight the eye and palate. That's the "Harry and David difference," which is backed with the strongest guarantee in the business.

These two winners have a lot to offer the community: sustenance, sustainability and style.

Congratulations! ★