

PDX PORTLAND'S WHERE TO GO WHAT TO DO MAGAZINE magazine

MAY 2008



A Walk in the Park

Exploring Portland's public gardens

Wedded Bliss

Tools for tying the knot in PDX pg. 14

Take it Outside

The dish on open air dining in Portland pg. 26

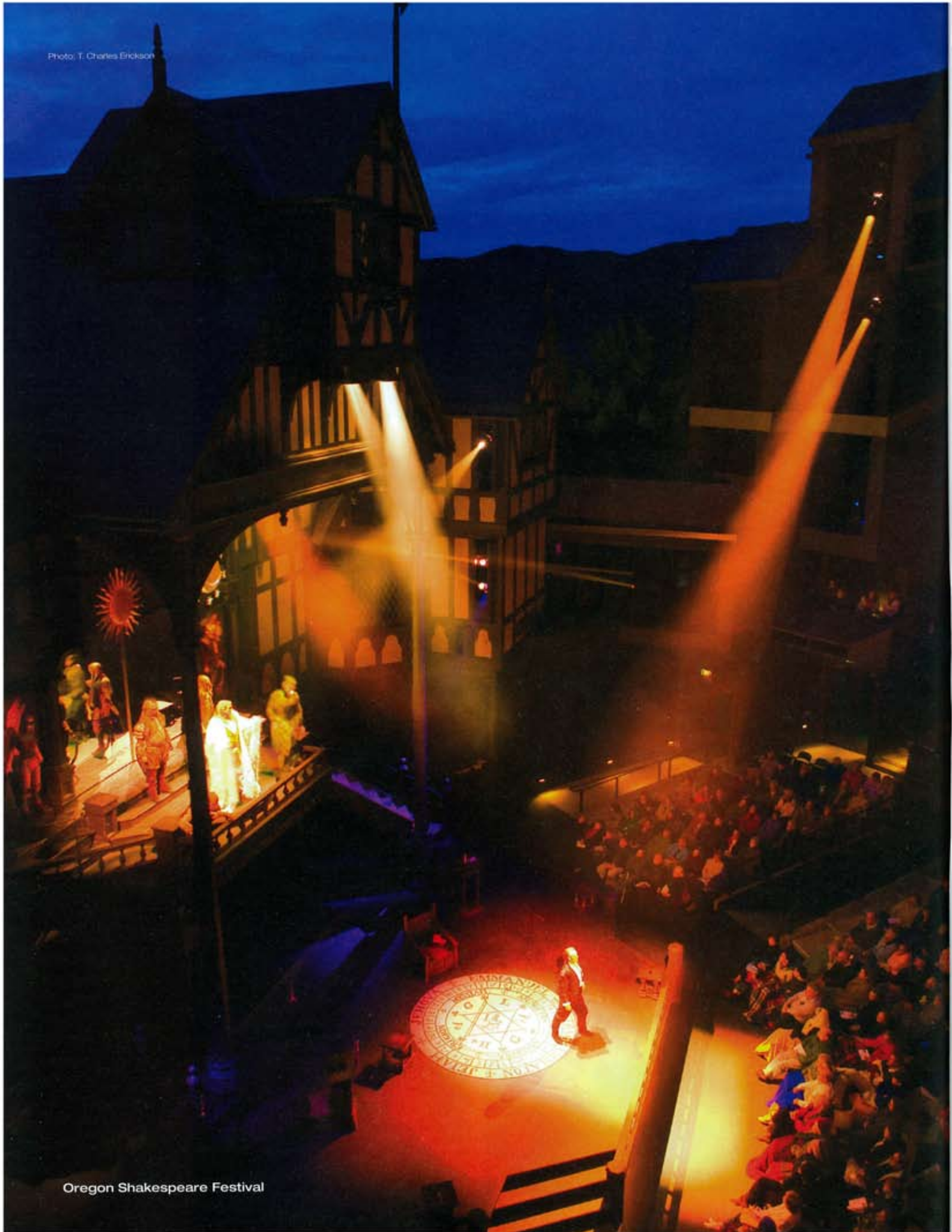
Ashland Adventure

Discover this Southern Oregon destination pg. 88

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Photo: T. Charles Erickson



Oregon Shakespeare Festival

Ashland Adventure

Why this small Southern Oregon town packs a big punch | By Jeremy Lloyd

With a population of fewer than 22,000 year-round residents, at first glance, the city of Ashland seems like just a blip on the Southern Oregon map. But make the trek down I-5—just past Medford—and you'll see for yourself that this is anything but a quiet little town. Here you'll find the world-renowned Oregon Shakespeare Festival, an extensive collection of art galleries, top-notch hotels, quaint bed and breakfasts, and an energized and impressive dining scene. Ashland also serves as a jumping-off-point for the area's many outdoor activities and attractions, be it a whitewater rafting trip down the nearby Rogue River or a wine-tasting tour through the neighboring vineyards. Sounds good, right? But where to start? Glad you asked.

Festivals & Events

Any conversation about Ashland must begin with the **Oregon Shakespeare Festival** (osfashland.org). Now in its 67th year, this Tony Award-winning festival will stage 783 performances of 11 plays in three different theaters, and is expected to draw upwards of 400,000 in attendance over the course of eight-and-a-half-months (February 15 to November 2). Shakespeare buffs will have their need for comedy and tragedy satiated with productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Coriolanus*, *Othello* and *A Comedy of Errors*. The remaining schedule is filled out by two American classics, four new plays by young American playwrights and—perhaps most intriguing—a 2000-year-old Indian tale, *The Clay Cart*. On June 3, the impressive 1200-seat outdoor Elizabethan Stage (pictured left) will open, offering the festival's most dynamic theater experience.

If you're the type who only steps foot into a theater to see a Bruce Willis movie, take heart, Ashland has something for everyone. The city puts on several annual events that offer a unique combination of small town charm and big city panache, including their 4th of July Celebration and the Food and Wine Classic in November. Check out ashlandchamber.com for the full scoop on events throughout the year.

Just about a half hour's drive north to the historic 1850's gold rush town of Jacksonville, music lovers of all sorts will gather for a series of outdoor concerts under the stars at the **Britt Festivals** (brittfest.org). A variety of concerts are scheduled from June through early September, featuring every imaginable genre from classical to country, rock and jazz. Even the Red Headed Stranger himself, Willie Nelson, will perform in August. ►



RoxyAnn Winery

Photo: Tyler Maddox

Where to Eat & Drink

Thanks to easy access to fresh, locally grown produce and a wealth of top chefs who call the area home, Ashland's culinary scene is thriving, boasting 100 restaurants. A local favorite, **T's Restaurant + Bar** (303 E Main St, 541-488-1458, tsashland.com) is all about casual class, featuring an ever-changing Northwest-themed menu to complement decadent house-made desserts and an impressive wine and cocktail list.

Located inside the Ashland Springs Hotel, **Larks** (212 E Main St, 541-488-5558, ashlandsspringshotel.com/dining.php) specializes in farm-to-table comfort food from Executive Chef Damon Jones—formerly of Emeril's of New Orleans—paired with great wines and their renowned artisan chocolate desserts. Just down the street, featuring a spacious patio and colorful and inviting décor, **Pasta Piatti** (358 E Main St, 541-488-5493, pastapiatti.com) offers impressive, yet affordable new world Italian cuisine in a relaxed atmosphere.

Thanks to the area's rich mountain valleys and diverse microclimates, the sheer

number of Southern Oregon wineries is nearly as overwhelming as Ashland's many culinary options. Among the most renowned are **Valley View Winery** (1000 Applegate Rd, 800-781-9463, valleyviewwinery.com), located near Jacksonville in the warm and dry Applegate Valley; **RoxyAnn Winery** (3285 Hillcrest Rd, 541-776-2315, roxyann.com), perched atop the southwest slopes of Roxy Ann Peak near Medford; and **Paschal Winery** (1122 Suncrest Rd, 541-535-7957, paschalwinery.com), nearest to Ashland, which offers hilltop views of orchards and the Siskiyou mountain range.

Certainly you wouldn't want to miss a taste of these, or any of the other noteworthy wineries that the area has to offer. Fortunately, **Jules of the Valley Wine Tours** (877-215-7676, julesvalley.com) can take you to several of these great spots in one day for \$75 per person, which includes a visit to up to five wineries and a catered picnic lunch. Or, if you prefer to plan your own vino adventure, visit sorwa.org for a list of all your options.



Where to Stay

Ashland offers an abundance of lodging options. But considering the thousands of visitors who pour into town during the summer months, it's best to make your reservations as early as possible.

Surrounded by peaceful gardens and Koi ponds, **Lithia Springs Resort and Gardens** (2165 Jackson Rd, 800-482-7128, lithiaspringsresort.com) pumps hot mineral spring water right into the two-person whirlpool tubs that are offered in each of their cottages and suites. Nearby, the **Plaza Inn & Suites** (98 Central Ave, 888-488-0358, plazainnashland.com) is located just a block away from all the happenings at the Shakespeare Festival, and offers lush accommodations in an informal atmosphere.

First built in 1925, the historic **Ashland Springs Hotel** (212 E Main St, 541-488-1700, ashlandspringshotel.com) recently underwent a two-year restoration project which managed to keep the hotel's small-inn charm while adding modern amenities that give the space a contemporary resort spa feel.

If you prefer the intimacy of a B&B, **Ashland's Bed and Breakfast Network** (abbnet.com, 800-944-0329) allows you to browse through photos and detailed descriptions of 24 different inns and then book your stay, all in one place. In the neighboring town of Jacksonville, **Bybee's Historic Inn** (883 Old Stage Rd, 877-292-3374, bybeehistoricinn.com)—a Classic Revival home located on three acres about a mile outside the city—offers five theme-decorated rooms and B&B-style personal attention for each guest.

And just about 10 minutes outside of Ashland, **Callahans Siskiyou Lodge** (7100 Old Highway 99 South, 800-286-0507, callahanslodge.com) will reopen their doors this June after fire leveled the building in 2006. This tree-lined resort will offer 19 spacious suites with Jacuzzi tubs, wood-burning fireplaces and terraces. ▶



Bybee's Historic Inn



Downtown Ashland

Photo: Christopher Britscoe



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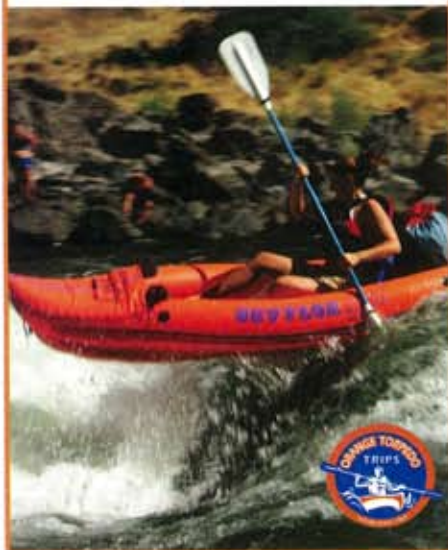
Not just another vacation



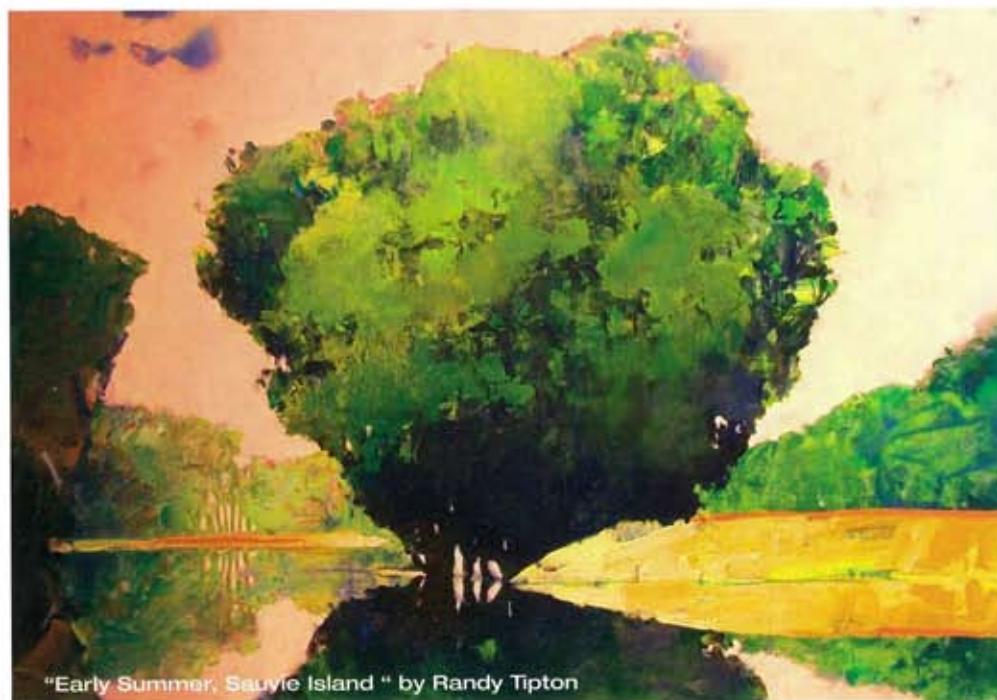
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Schneider Museum



"Early Summer, Sauvie Island" by Randy Tipton

Galleries

While Ashland is most widely known for their performing arts scene, it is also home to many painters, sculptors and craftspeople; and as a result, over 30 art galleries grace the city streets. The best time to tap into this vast creative energy is during Ashland's **First Friday Art Walk**—which takes place next on May 2 from 5–8pm—where local exhibitors pull out all the stops with food, wine, music, and of course, the latest installations from both local and national artists.

Conveniently, most of these galleries are located within a few blocks of one another, making it easy for visitors to roam the streets in search of inspiration. But if you'd like to get an advance look at all your options, the **Ashland Gallery Association** (ashlandgalleries.com) website is a great resource, and also provides detailed information on First Friday.

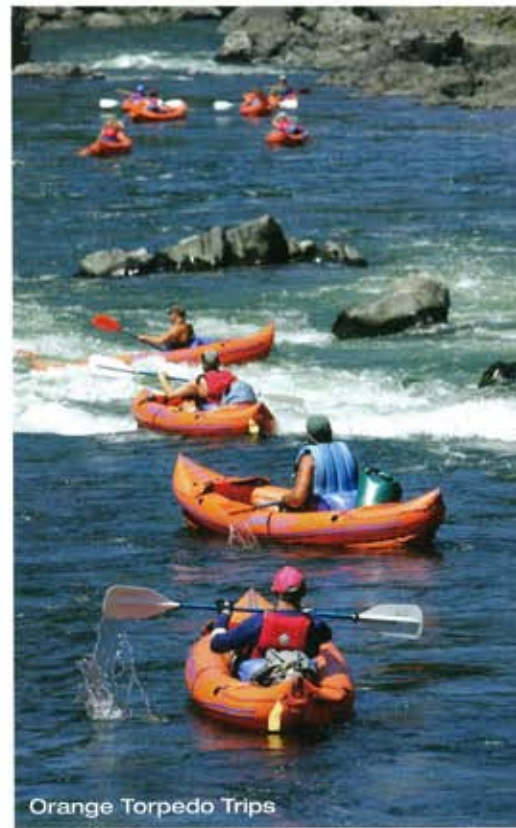
Some of the most celebrated art spots in town include **Gallery DeForest** (270 4th St,

541-482-1005, gallerydeforest.com), featuring etchings, photography, paintings and hand-blown glass; **Hanson Howard Gallery** (82 N Main St, 541-488-2562, hanson-howardgallery.com), which for nearly 20 years has been exhibiting a diverse collection fine contemporary art from paintings to ceramics and sculpture; **David Bjurstrom Studio and Gallery** (64 N Pioneer St, 541-201-1167, bjurstromstudio.com), the namesake gallery of the national award winning artist who is best known for graphite pencil drawings with amazing detail; and the **Schneider Museum of Art** (1250 Siskiyou Blvd, 541-552-6245, sou.edu/sma)—located on the Southern Oregon University campus—which serves as a hub of sorts for the local visual arts scene.

For additional information on local galleries, and for a list of the many historic sites in Ashland's **Railroad District**, visit ashlandrrdistrict.com. ►



Orange Torpedo Trips



Orange Torpedo Trips

Where to Play

Thanks to the surrounding natural beauty and its close proximity to the Rogue River, a visit to Ashland wouldn't be complete without a little outdoor adventure—and there are several tour companies in and around the area who can facilitate your much-needed adrenaline rush.

If you're looking to brave the rapids, **Orange Torpedo Trips** (806 SW Broadway, 227-3606, orangetorpedo.com) is a great place to start. They'll take you out on an all-inclusive guided kayak tour that lasts anywhere from one to four days and, depending on your needs, can make the trip either family-friendly or adventure-heavy. **Rogue Klamath River Adventures** (800-231-0769, rogueklamath.com) specializes in exhilarating white water rafting trips, but

also can put together the perfect fishing trip on the Rogue, which is known for some of the best salmon and steelhead fishing on the West Coast.

Noah's River Adventures (53 N Main St, 800-858-2811, noahsrafting.com) can also fulfill your whitewater rafting and fishing needs. But if you're more inclined to take a relaxing float down a peaceful stretch of the river with a glass of wine in hand, make sure to check out their Grapes of Raft tour. To add a little more horsepower to your river adventure, try **Hellgate Jetboat Excursions** (966 SW 6th St, 800-648-4874, hellgate.com). They'll take you through the spectacular and beautiful Hellgate Canyon and can either crank the engine and hit the rapids hard, or slow it down while you enjoy a leisurely meal.

Last but not least, **Main Street Tours** (60 N Main St, 541-488-7895, ashland-tours.com) offers a bit of everything on both land and water, from horseback riding, mountain biking and hiking tours to fly fishing lessons, rafting excursions and even tours of Crater Lake.

With so much to see and experience in Ashland—and for that matter, all of Southern Oregon—we could only present a few highlights. For a more comprehensive look at everything the area has to offer, check out the **Southern Oregon Visitors Association** (sova.org) website to help plan your trip. But whatever you do, make sure you don't miss out on the art, food, drink and adventure that awaits in Southern Oregon's biggest little town. **PDX**

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