

# Discover Oregon's Mountain Inns

by Myrna Oakley

What is it that draws us to the mountains when winter comes? Perhaps it's the lure of frozen lakes sparkling in the sun . . . skiing or snowmobiling through snow-clad forests once traversed by pioneer mountain men . . . hurtling down snowy volcanic peaks on alpine skis or sleds. Or perhaps it's the lure of the crackling fire on a stone hearth, convivial conversation with fellow mountaineers, hot brew and the chance to soothe away city cares for a time.

No matter what the reason or the elevation, there's an Oregon mountain inn ready to share its special treasures. Varying in size from small and intimate to large and rambling, they may cater to meeting and convention groups as well as families, couples or individuals.

**Crescent Lake Lodge**, located nine miles east of Willamette Pass Ski Area and two miles south of Highway 58, has new owners. Larry and Fran Souza left the ocean community of Newport, took a detour through California, Arizona and Montana before settling in the southern Cascades. "We decided we really love Oregon," explained Fran Souza. "Right now we have two inches of snow on the ground and it's snowing—we're looking forward to a great winter season."

The Souzas maintain 17 comfortable cabins, a ski rental shop and a small restaurant in the main lodge. "We plan to have the restaurant open all year," says Souza. They will serve hearty woodsman's sandwiches and homemade soups weekdays, with a house special on Friday nights and prime rib on Saturday nights.

Most of the cabins have kitchens and fireplaces. Wine, beer, groceries and a roaring fire are available in the main lodge. For snowmobilers, a network of snowmobile trails is maintained between Crescent Lake and Diamond Lake, about 30 miles to the south. The trail to Fawn Lake is reserved for cross country skiers. For information and reservations, contact the Souzas at Crescent Lake Lodge, Box 73, Crescent Lake, OR 97425, tel. (503) 433-2505.

Lying high on the crest of the southern Cascades and just off Highway 58 near Willamette Pass, **Odell Lake Lodge** sits comfortably at the east end of Odell Lake and has a clear view across the water to snow-clad Maiden Peak. First opening in 1915 as a summer lodge for fishing enthusiasts, Odell Lake Lodge began remaining

open for the winter season in the early seventies.

In the central lodge, which has a number of guest rooms, a stone fireplace spreads warmth in the well-used knotty pine common room. All cabins include bedding, towels, kitchens, heat and firewood for those with Franklin stoves.

"Midweek is a good time to come up to the lodge," says owner Jim Venner. "It's less crowded on the cross country ski trails along with a better selection of cabins and rooms."

The lodge restaurant serves three meals a day, with different chef specials each night. Phone ahead you're going up just for dinner. For further information and reservations, contact Odell Lake Lodge, PO Box 72, Crescent Lake, OR 97425, tel. (503) 433-2540.

Located near the western-style town of Sisters (take Highway 126 east from Eugene), **Black Butte Ranch** is a condominium and homeowners resort community situated on 1,800 acres of ponderosa at the base of Black Butte—a 6,436 foot volcanic cone. From the late 1800s until around 1969 it was a working cattle ranch and stopping off place for herds of sheep coming across the Cascade mountains.

Those seeking solitude, wide open spaces and an abundance of quiet will find Black Butte Ranch a peaceful place to park for a few days. Lodgings include individual guest rooms, complete condominiums and some private homes. All the rentals are private dwellings and reflect the personality, decor and furnishings of each individual owner.

For nordic ski buffs, the nearby terrain is well-suited to cross country treks. It's best to bring your own gear. Special activities such as trail rides, hikes, hay rides and sleigh rides are held on a scheduled basis in season. Or, simply hole up in front of a friendly fire and have a good snooze.

Also try gliding through the snow-laden forest on some cold, crisp afternoon bundled in winter garb and quilts—seated comfortably in a horse-drawn sleigh. You may want to take the camera along because deer or elk may be spotted along the way. For information and reservations, contact Black Butte Ranch, Black Butte Ranch, OR 97559, tel. (503) 595-6211.

Head into central Oregon country another 40 miles or so to Bend and you'll find **Inn of the 7th Mountain**—located at the foot of Mount Bachelor, just west of Bend. According to inn personnel, "We

have the longest ski season in the western United States and the U.S. Nordic and Alpine ski teams come here to train." Skiers flock to Mount Bachelor like migrating birds to enjoy some of the best powder snow west of the Continental Divide.

At **Inn of the 7th Mountain**, a self-contained condominium resort, accommodations feature lodge guest rooms, fireside studios with kitchens, small suites and family suites with kitchens. Recreation facilities are suited to couples as well as to families and they include an ice skating rink, two swimming pools, three whirlpool baths, arts and crafts classes and cross country ski lessons. The inn also offers complete convention facilities for groups up to 500.

"We believe in a welcoming attitude—that family feeling with company manners is our motto," says amiable inn manager Warren Klug. For information and reservations contact Inn of the Seventh Mountain, PO Box 1207, Bend, OR 97709, tel. (503) 382-8711 or 1-800-452-6810.

One of Oregon's historic treasures, **Timberline Lodge** is located at 6,000 feet on the south flank of Mount Hood—about three hours from Eugene via the Portland route. The massive Cascadian edifice has the look of the rough-hewn castle of some legendary mountain king.

The main door of the lodge is five feet wide, ten feet high, and weighs 1,100 pounds. Four hundred of those pounds are the massive hand-forged ironware, hinges, latch and knocker; the remainder of the door is hand-hewn Ponderosa pine.

Approved in 1935 by President Franklin Roosevelt as a WPA project during the Depression, an army of 250 artisans—carpenters, stonemasons, woodcarvers, metal workers, painters, weavers, furniture makers—created in two years the magnificent lodge at a cost of less than one million dollars.

Visiting Timberline Lodge is just as much fun for today's travelers as it was back in 1938 when it was dedicated in person by President Roosevelt—and the roads are decidedly better.

Most of the guest rooms are one of a kind, with carved headboards, patchwork quilts and hooked rugs. Everything was made by hand; some of the curtains were made by dyeing old army uniforms and blankets. The Indian or pioneer as well as native flower and animal motifs which decorated many of the rooms back in the

1930s all have been restored and repaired by The Friends of Timberline.

Oregonians and visitors make unceasing winter pilgrimages to the lodge—to ski, swim, play in the snow, climb to the top or to just curl up with a book and watch the ever-changing moods of the mountain. For information and for reservations, contact Timberline Lodge, Government Camp, OR 97028, tel. (503) 226-7979 or 1-800-452-1335.

How about taking a sleeping bag to a mountain inn? At the 7,000 foot level, above Timberline Lodge on a high moraine below the Palmer icefield, is an historic structure in the process of being rescued and restored for use by the hardest of ski and mountain lovers.

**Silcox Hut**, a Cascadian rustic structure built in 1939 by the Timberline Lodge craftsmen as the upper terminus and warming hut for the original chairlift, is being saved from deterioration. The Friends of Silcox Hut are raising funds and doing the work. There will be bunk lodging for 40 and a small restaurant serving hot beverages and snacks during the day and family-style meals during the evening.

The rustic stone and timber structure is on the national register of historic places and plans are for Silcox Hut to be open year-round. From the massive stone steps, the panoramic view of the Cascade range to the south is a mountain-top experience, to say the least. For information concerning the 1986-87 opening, contact Silcox Hut, PO Box 536, Welches, OR 97067.

Other mountain lodges and inns awaiting cross country and alpine skiers, snowbunnies, snowmobilers and those who yearn for a crackling fire on the hearth in a mountain setting include . . .

**Diamond Lake Lodge**, Diamond Lake, OR 97731, tel. (503) 793-3333. Located 80 miles east of Roseburg, facilities and activities include: cabins; extensive cross country trail system; ice fishing; snowmobiling; guided cross country treks to Crater Lake.

**Santiam Lodge**, Box 20/Highway 20, Sisters, OR 97759, tel. (Eugene) (503) 342-5540. Near Hoodoo Ski Area on Santiam Pass (Highway 126 east) and managed by Hoodoo; for groups of 20 to 60.

**Belknap Springs Lodge**, Box 1, McKenzie Bridge, OR 97413, tel. (503) 822-3512. Located a few miles east of McKenzie Bridge—a good spot to stay overnight and soak travel weary bones in Jim Nation's 96-degree hot springs swimming pool.

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