



Photo by Erich Bookelheide

Onsen Hot Tub rents relaxation and two sizes of hot tubs, with privacy.

## Onsen unveils hot tub rentals

By Mary Campbell  
Of the Emerald

Last November, four Californians with an idea moved up to Eugene.

The idea? Renting hot tubs.

What they had in mind wasn't the usual "tub palace" found in California lavishly equipped with video screens, mixed drinks and gyrating, piped-in music for Californians in search of hydro-jetted water plus atmosphere.

Rather, they fashioned a hot tub operation geared toward the "discriminating" Oregonian.

On Thursday, Dan Upton and Iris Peters, with the help of builder/designer Don Knight and his wife Renae, revealed Onsen Hot Tub rentals to Eugene.

Their business is not a piece of Los Angeles brought north, says Peters, also a sign language instructor at the University.

"People might have misconceptions about what a hot tub facility is, but the emphasis here is in terms of health and relaxation — that's all," she says.

At Onsen the owners have attempted to capture what they believe to be the uniqueness of Eugene's character.

The one story wood building at 1883 Garden Ave. holds 10 private tubs, eight of which can accommodate from two to four persons. The two larger tubs hold up to six people. The open-air tubs may be rented to anyone over the age of 18 on an hourly basis.

"Tubbers" sign a contract in which they agree to abide by the rules of the operation. No alcohol or drugs are permitted. There is a half an hour check where someone will knock on the door so "tubbers" may gauge their time.

"Once they shut the door they can do what they want to," Peters says.

The foursome have built a covered bike area and landscaped the perimeter of the parking lot with maple trees and azaleas. The parking lot itself is uniquely designed with cement and turf squares laid out in checkerboard fashion.

"We wanted the surroundings to be aesthetically appealing as far as a business courtyard goes," Peters says.

"It is important to us that people feel it is a clean facility. We welcome the spectrum of the community — bikers, runners, students and families," she says. "All the hot tubs are handicapped-accessible, too," Peters adds.

"Our dream is that bikers could come from the biking paths and runners from the running trails."

Onsen's location may indeed be ideal for runners and bikers. The city of Eugene has plans to extend a bike path connecting Knickerbocker Bridge to Autzen Stadium, which are near Onsen's property.

"We're fortunate to have this lot — it's always quiet and you can hear the birds and the river in the evening," Peters says.

In spite of a recession, Peters remains undaunted about starting a new business.

"Our operation may be a new concept for Eugene, but we feel it will be an opportunity for people to come and enjoy a tranquil atmosphere," she says.

"If it rains, it rains. Eugene residents are active all year and when people O.D. on the rainy weather, they can always come and relax in the tubs."

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