

northwest

Rooms with a View

Inn's struggle to keep history alive is resolved

Story and photos by James Maxwell

Only 30 minutes from downtown Portland lies the View Point Inn. Located in Corbett, the inn offers such a rich history and scenic views of the Columbia River Gorge that a person might almost fight to the death to ensure the property is being used to its fullest potential.

This is exactly the case for the owner of the View Point Inn, Geoff Thompson. He, along with partner Angelo Simone, had an eight-year struggle with the Columbia Gorge Commission to allow the men to run the inn as a private business. Because of strict environmental guidelines established by the commission's Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Act in 1986, some of the board wanted the inn stay a private property not open to the public. However, Thompson's

persistence and love for the property prevailed. The couple were finally given the permits to open the inn Dec. 1, 2003.

"That is actually when the work really began," said Simone. It took him and Thompson three additional years and close to \$1 million in renovation costs for the inn to open to the public. Their hard work paid off, and the grand opening of the View Point Inn was Memorial Day 2007.

"It has been an awesome summer and fall, a dream come true for the both of us," said Thompson. He and Simone, who have been partners for five years, live in a beautiful cabin next to the inn.

Not only does the View Point Inn offer great views of the Columbia Gorge, it also provides world-class lodging and dining. The five-bedroom hotel offers a variety of lodging choices, all of which have been decorated beautifully for guests to feel welcome and comfortable. The View Point also offers an amazing dining experience with talented chef Matthew Crone at the helm. Crone, who was born in Memphis, Tenn., has studied and worked for some of the most prestigious restaurants in both Europe and the United States. Crone and the owners have developed unique brunch, lunch and dinner menus for the inn that excel in both presentation and taste. "My goal for the inn is to be one of the top 100 places to visit, and I know we have the location and staff to reach this dream," said Thompson.

The View Point Inn already has 80 weddings lined

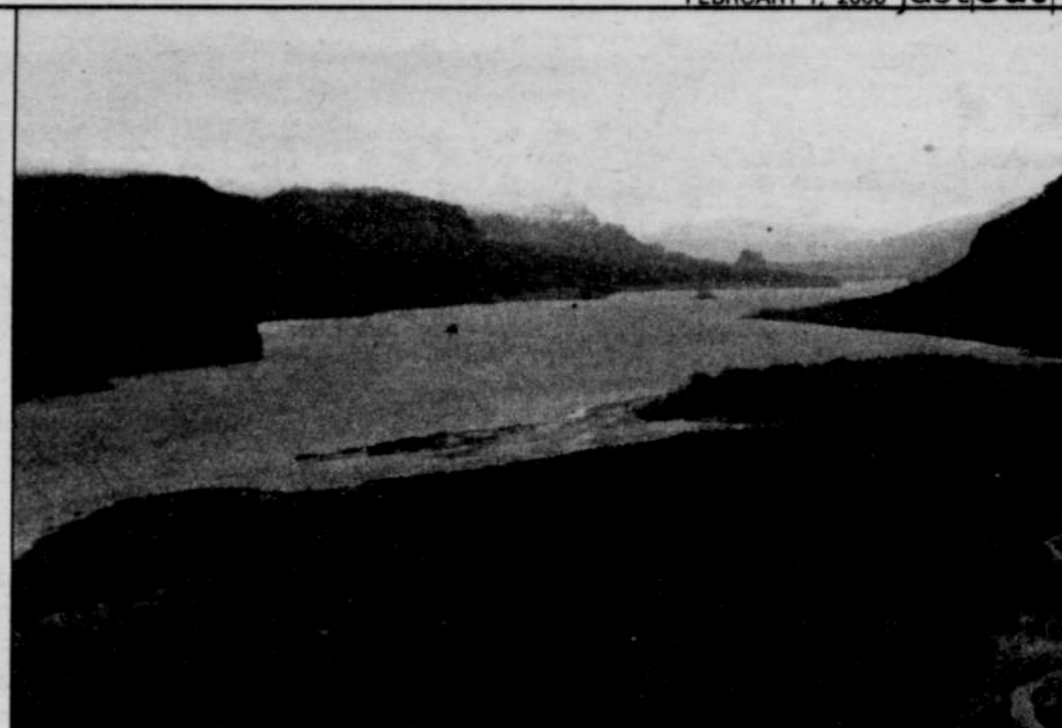
up for 2008, and its grand dining hall, bar and garden are perfect for a variety of ceremonies and events. Thompson and Simone would love to open their doors for same-sex couples looking to celebrate their commitment. "Just bring your budget and excitement, and we will see what we can do to help you celebrate," said Simone.

This Valentine's Day, the inn is throwing a romantic dinner and dance celebration. "It will be a perfect night for both couples and groups of friends looking to have a great evening," said Thompson.

The View Point Inn offers celebrations for almost all holidays throughout the year, from an Easter Sunday brunch to a relaxing Fourth of July dinner followed by a fantastic fireworks display over the Columbia Gorge.

"You cannot just create a place like this, with such a great history and views," said Thompson. "It really just makes people come in and say 'wow,' and I could not be more proud." ☺

The VIEW POINT INN celebrates Valentine's Day with the Echo Jazz Trio and a five-course meal 5 p.m. Feb. 14 at 40301 E. Larch Mountain Road in Corbett. The cost is \$85 with an optional \$25 wine flight. RSVP to 503-695-5811. For more information visit www.theviewpointinn.com.



The View Point Inn earns its name from this striking scene.



The inn was the subject of a controversial preservation dispute for eight years.

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