

A Rogue Romance

Take your honey to Ashland
by Chelsea Fine

Things begin to look different as you drive south down Oregon's Interstate 5 corridor, especially after you pass Exit 99. The scenic vistas change and the forests get thicker as you cap the tail end of the Cascade Range and descend into the Rogue Valley.

The Rogue Valley is considered to be a combination of Grants Pass, Medford, Ashland and all points in between; it spans about 50 miles on the freeway, through two counties and diverse landscapes.

But the magic begins when you leave the freeway and venture deeper into the valley, especially if you are looking for a romantic getaway. A couple seeking something different can definitely find it in the southwestern corner of the Beaver State.

A weekend in Ashland wandering through its lush parks, sidewalk cafes, elegant restaurants and eclectic galleries should be on any pair's must-do list for a romantic weekend away. Whether celebrating an anniversary, birthday or just because, couples looking for a place out of the ordinary should look to the Arden Forest Inn (261 W. Hersey St., Ashland, 800-460-3912, www.afinn.com).

after relocating from the Bay Area. Every aspect of the inn shows personal touches, from gourmet breakfasts to tasteful art collections adorning each room to enchanted gardens.

Faiia and Unmack are proud to have the Arden Forest Inn listed as the No. 1 B & B on www.tripadvisor.com for the Ashland area. Double-occupancy rooms start at \$160 a night, and suites rent for \$220 a night.

Ashland lends itself to timeless romance as the Bard's language of love runs rampant on the stages of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (15 S. Pioneer St., Ashland, 800-219-8161, www.osfashland.org). The festival is open February through October and highlights Shakespeare's canon as well classic and contemporary playwrights.

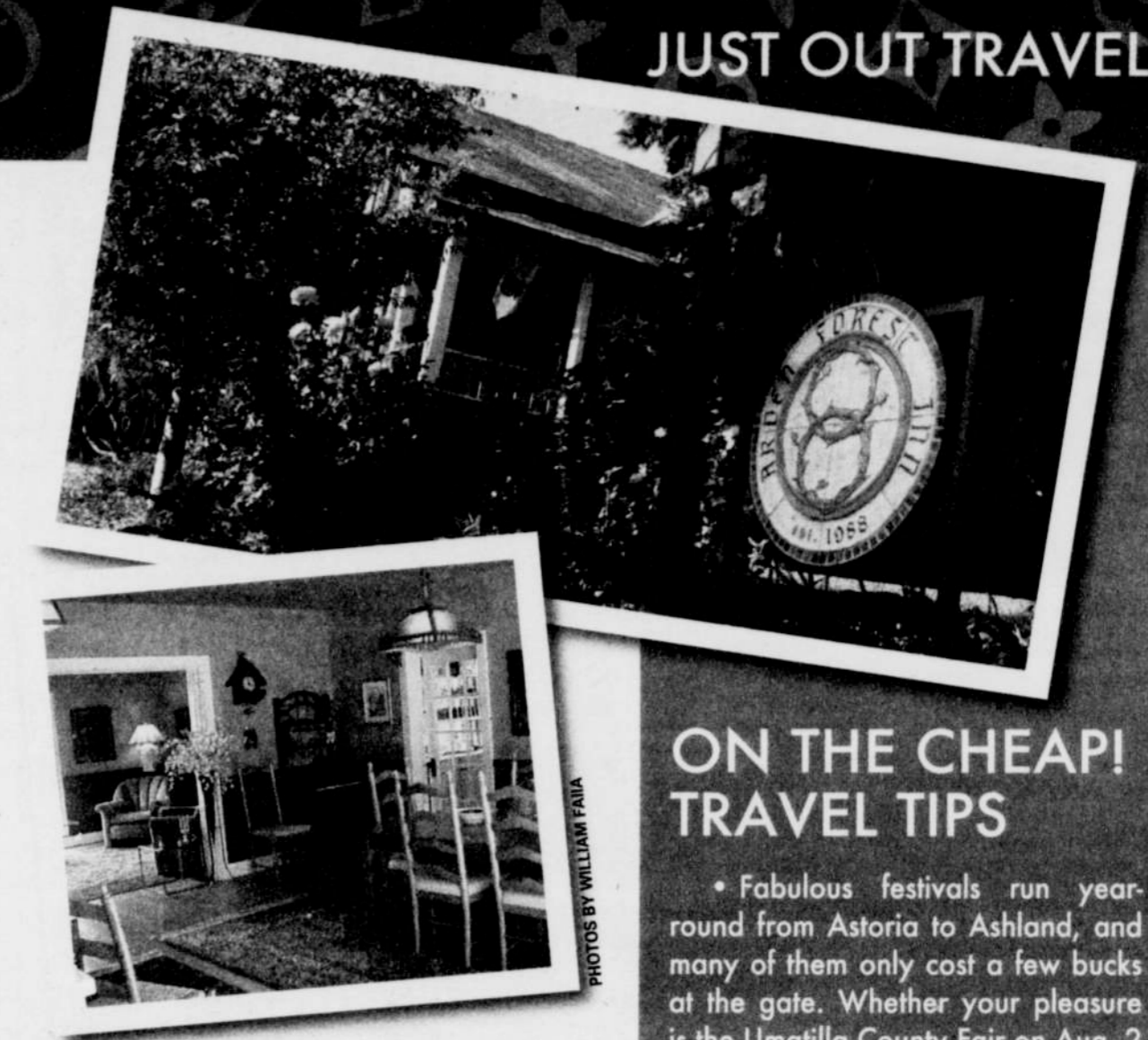
Out-and-proud first-year artistic director Bill Rauch has selected a diverse cast of characters to present to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival audience this year. The 2008 season features 11 shows, including an ethereal and psychedelic version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and a passion-filled *Othello*, which is staged in the Elizabethan Theatre under a thick blanket of stars.

To tickle the funny bone, *The Further Adventures of Hedda Gabler* by Oregon's own Tony-winning Jeff Whitty is playing in the Angus Bowmer Theater. Tickets for all shows start at \$20, and reservations are highly recommended.

After tasting the rich words of the theater, a romantic stroll a block or two down the plaza will bring you to the front door of Liquid Assets Wine Bar and Bottle Shop (96 N. Main St., 541-482-9463, www.liquidassetswinebar.com). The contemporary yet classic feel of the warm wood interior and

relaxing lighting sets the tone for an evening of incredible wines paired with fresh, seasonal, locally grown entrees. Husband-and-wife owners Jim Piotter and Denise Daehler-Piotter welcome everyone to their fine establishment as chef Jason Trujillo creates a weekly menu to complement more than 26 wines available by the glass.

The Piotters feature a tasting of a red wine



ON THE CHEAP! TRAVEL TIPS

Fabulous festivals run year-round from Astoria to Ashland, and many of them only cost a few bucks at the gate. Whether your pleasure is the Umatilla County Fair on Aug. 2 in Hermiston or the fungus frenzy that is the Yachats Village Mushroom Fest from Oct. 17 to 19, check out www.oregonfestivals.org for lots of cheap festival ideas.

Old towns and flea markets are great ways to sample local artists and artisans—not to mention taste some local flavors, from Bandon fresh-picked cranberries to Florence fresh-caught fish—and the price tags usually let your eyes stay in their sockets. The little coastal town of Florence boasts a bountiful Old Town Market (Nopal and Bay streets, Florence, from May to October) that is worth your while.

Camp isn't just another word for queer comedy. If hotel rates have you pinched, consider pitching a tent with your buddies in places like Newport, Gold Beach or Coos Bay. Visit www.traveloregon.com for nearly 100 spots to safely drop a stake and strike a campfire, complete with driving directions, informative links, phone numbers and more.

—Stephen Marc Beaudoin

and white wine flight of obscure varietals that change weekly. The advantage of tasting wines in a flight is the ability to compare varieties and vintages side by side.

Both the weekly menu and wine club information can be found on the Liquid Assets Web site. Jim says he is particularly proud to offer more than 250 labels to choose from in the bottle shop. Part of the advantage of having a retail bottle shop coupled with the wine bar is the ability to buy a higher-quality bottle of wine to enjoy with your dinner rather than paying the markup that diners usually encounter in restaurants.

For those who enjoy their hops more than their grapes, Liquid Assets serves six beers on draft and many others bottled. With appetizers starting at \$5, the average entree running \$17 and glasses of wine and desserts beginning at \$8 each, Liquid Assets offers a wonderful and affordable venue for a romantic evening. The knowledgeable staff is welcoming and doesn't mind assisting you to find the perfect blend of tastes and even pick out that perfect bottle to take home to remind you of your romantic weekend in Ashland. **10**

CHELSEA FINE is a freelance writer and photographer based in southern Oregon.



T. CHARLES ERICKSON

The large bed-and-breakfast, four blocks from the downtown plaza, features a beautifully landscaped courtyard, heated pool and lively breakfast discussions as proprietors Bill Faiia and Corbet Unmack join guests for informal theater chats and delightful conversation. The couple purchased the inn in 1995

Surfing Immersion Week Retreat - North Oregon Coast - Aug. 17-22, 2008
Kauai Bali Hai Week Retreat - Apr. 21-27, 2009

EMPOWERMENT • CONNECTION • TRANSFORMATION
Day Camps! Weekenders! Girlfriend Getaways! Retreats! Lessons!



nwwomenssurfingcamps.com Lexie Hallahan, Director (503) 440-5782



FEELING STUCK?

RE: Making a change?

Whether behavior, health, career or relationships, it's normal to feel two ways about change.

COME SEE ME AND IN 5 SESSIONS
YOU WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE A CLEAR DECISION.

Contact Ann, Motivational Enhancement Facilitator
Hollifield Associates (360) 606-1684 www.hollifieldassociates.com

Your Source for GLBT friendly
Businesses and Organizations

Serving the Community
throughout the US and Canada



Travel - Weddings - Real Estate
Legal - Health - Shopping & More

ATTN: Business Owners!
Add Your Listing from \$10/mo.