

# Mt. Hood dining: snails, steaks, and down home cooking

It's a cozy, cotton-candy world at Mt. Hood, when the red sun falls to its knees at the end of a winter's day.

You'll want to sit on the edge of the sunset and watch the white-frosted mountain blush pink. But when the spirit of darkness snaps up your shadow, it's time to snuggle up for dinner.

Forest Inn and Chalet Swiss received the highest ratings in a survey of Mt. Hood restaurants where owners or managers of each establishment were asked where they would dine out -- other than their own restaurant.

For more casual dining, the Log Lodge and Zigzag Inn were rated the most popular.

By Lenna Fitch  
Staff Writer

Beethoven, Rachmaninoff and other classical pianists accompany the European decor at the Forest Inn at Aldercreek. Most of the customers who patronize the Inn drive from the city to warm by the stone fireplace and make an evening of the continental cuisine. The Forest Inn is cradled in a valley 8 miles east of Sandy on Highway 26, and proprietors are Hans D'Alessio and his wife Ulla.

Evergreens in the forest beckon in the wind as Ulla greets you at the door. With your cocktails, hors d'oeuvres of tiny Japanese baby lobsters are a suggesting prelude to a symphony of primed aged meats and delicacies of the sea that have recently won D'Alessio a five-star international rating by Michelin's magazine, a French publication. Other awards bestowed on them are the Holiday five-star and the Mobil Travel five-star. Many celebrities and public figures make the Forest Inn a must when in Portland.

You'll dine beneath a coat of arms, or shadows of moose horns silently scaling the

cedar walls. Soup of dill, curry, spinach or other potage creations precede a crisp salad.

An entree of stuffed abalone seduces even the modest appetite. Australian lobster tempts you from a tantalizing orange shell. Steak dishes transform the most abstemious into gourmets. The "sauce" is the secret.

While skis and toboggans sketch the mountain sides, D'Alessio and his assistant spend the day in the kitchen interweaving spices and other choice ingredients harmoniously into a variety of piquant compositions.

With his gourmet training in Zurich Switzerland at Hotel Merkur, Totdhar and Jungfrau Joch, D'Alessio adds the sauce and transcends tender cuts of fillet into Tournedos Rossini, Medallions of Beef, Cream Ou Morrelles, and other pleasures that will bring you back again and again.

Reservations are necessary. Prices start at \$7.40 for complete dinners. The restaurant opens at 5:30 p.m. and is closed on Monday.

The D'Alessios also own the Ivy Bear next door where the quality food draws the younger set and those with modest budgets.

When dining out, Hans and Ulla D'Alessio eat at the Chalet Swiss.

Anytime you'd like to have dinner at a remote herdsman's hut in the Alps without going abroad, dine at the Chalet Swiss on Highway 26 in Wemme. While winter's bride rides the night winds, spinning cartwheels up the highest peaks, take refuge in this

mouth like manna from heaven. If you to cook your own meat to perfection table, order Fondue Bourguignonne be served a variety of sauces to pieces of beef in.

Dinner is not complete without Toblerone (Hot Toblerone chocolate) over a scoop of vanilla ice cream and It is superb.

Prices start at \$7.00. The restaurant at 5 p.m. and closes on Monday and day. It is also to be closed Dec. 13, 29.

Where would Mezgar dine out?

"At the Forest Inn," he said. For casual dining he would eat at the Log

"You don't have to go to a fancy to get good wholesome food," he

Log Lodge is the most popular restaurant among owners for the quality food and congenial atmosphere. And all restaurant owners agreed that the for breakfast was Log Lodge. It's cabin located on Highway 26 in Rhedron.

So by the time the mountain blush come to rest on the first morning sun it's time to head out for breakfast. want to enjoy the splendor of the new before the fresh snow blossoms with the roadside. Log Lodge opens at

Why do the local people go there for breakfast?

"It could be the old-fashioned potatoes," said owner B.J. Kim. He said he uses no ready made or frozen

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gleaming little fortress. Reserve a seat. The restaurant accommodates only fifty.

Among the selections of hors d'oeuvres to give you strength, as you relax with cordial spirits served in bell-shaped glasses, are Buendnerfleisch (paper thin dried beef) and a Roclette Taster (Swiss Raclette cheese broiled over a roll).

Kurt Mezger, owner of the Chalet Swiss, served his apprenticeship in Bern and in "season hotels" in Switzerland -- his homeland. In the Mt. Hood area he converted an old community church into a restaurant where he ministers to the hungry red-nosed skier and the weary traveler as well as the connoisseur of the culinary arts.

Swiss wheat, cauliflower or cucumber soup warms the heart. Antique bells and copper pots hang above Swiss farm furniture. Back in the kitchen that glistens as clean as the fresh fallen snow, Mezger works alone, with only the aid of a dishwasher.

While you're trying to persuade the waitress to reveal the secret ingredients in the green colored salad dressing, Mezger is preparing you one of seventeen entrees.

If you like snails, Steak a L'escargots (served with herb butter on rice) could be your choice. You may want to try Zurcher Geschnetzeltes (a dish of delicate veal scallops blessed with a rich cream sauce and mushrooms). It is served with Spaetzli -- tiny home made noodles that melt in your

"Ninety five per cent of everything made from scratch," he explained. "I fry potatoes, I start by peeling the toes."

Kim said that almost all of his customers are regulars. He opens the restaurant for breakfast and dinner on Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday. Among the selections offered for dinner by the side are steak sandwiches, a ham and cheese sandwich that is popular, and complete dinners along with an oriental special Thursday evenings. Kim is from

The Log Lodge is known for its homemade pies of huckleberry, blackberry, blueberry, and pumpkin. Kim's wife Eileen does most of the cooking.

"I think my prices are lower than anywhere else," said Kim. Complete dinner range from \$4.50 to \$6.95.

Zigzag Inn in Zigzag is another restaurant favored by owners for casual dining. Hopscotch merrily along an old log fireplace on the back wall. From the window, customers can watch the snow. For dinner they are served everything from soup and sandwiches to chicken and scallops and steak and lobster. Home made pies follow. They do a tremendous business.

Owners are Merrill and Collette Bar. Chefs are Salvatore Hernandez and Tom Redding. They are open 7 days a week 11 a.m. Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m. on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

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