

The workload was 'ginormous.'

■ COMMUNES

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and Trillium Farm (1976) on the Little Applegate, all founded by people wanting to live their ideals.

The most basic ideal was back-to-the-land living, from the flourishing gardens at East Side House to Molto Bene's vegetables, home-brewed beer, wine from their own vineyards, chickens for eggs, goats for milk and for meat, and, even, one year, a field of wheat for their own bread.

Other visions, and the means of their enactment, varied greatly. "Basically we were there just to have fun," John says of East Side House. At Trillium, though, part of the vision was to find a trashed-out piece of land and rehabilitate it. There, everyone had to live by what co-founder Chant Thomas called a "very specific (and challenging) set of agreements."

The only rule at Molto Bene was "no dogs in the kitchen." At East Side House there were "no rules except good behavior," John said, but that rule must have implied the incompatibility of hard drugs with good behavior, since hard drugs weren't allowed. East Side House had "the most beautiful swimming hole on the gorge," according to John and every hippy, cop, and biker who met there. "Good behavior" there also meant there would be no tobacco, no dogs, no

fighting, and no glass bottles at the swimming hole.

People from Laser Farm, an acronym for Latin American Studies for Esoteric Research, traveled the world to collect genetically pure seeds for a seed bank. Beyond that, the vision of Bryan Newpher and the other co-founders was simply to share their lives with people, a vision easily fulfilled at Laser Farm: in the summer as many as 150 people could be living there, sleeping in tipis, in the barn, in temporary shelters, in the main house with its four bedrooms, or in individual dwellings.

Music was ubiquitous.

"There was always someone who wanted to play music," says Lori Hava, co-founder of Molto Bene, "whether in the Big House in the evenings or in the gazebo or while hanging out in the meadow."

Music was always playing at Laser Farm—if not guitars and tambourines, then the Grateful Dead on the stereo system. Because East Side House had a reputation as a fun place to go—a better place for a vacation than Mexico, said a mid-1970s *Medford Mail Tribune* article—members of a chamber ensemble from Britt came there to go swimming. They played a free concert inside the house, then came back later for a concert on the beach, playing to a crowd of



The "Big House" under construction at Molto Bene. Photo courtesy of Mike Kohn.



Orion Society Forgotten Language Workshop circa 1998 at Trillium. Photo courtesy of Chant Thomas.

40 people, all naked, including the musicians.

"Back-to-the-land," for the most part, meant that the workload was—Chant's word—"ginormous." There were gardens to keep, houses to build, and even, at Molto Bene, at least for the first year, water to haul. (After that year someone built a ram pump.)

"Everyone worked hard," says Molto Bene co-founder Mike Kohn, "some more than others, but people

helped maintain things, grow things, mend fences. Those who didn't work as hard physically might bring humor, music, and other support to the group."

That unequally shared workload, in other places, caused friction. At Trillium, Chant says, "The real workers were always badmouthing people who were sitting around the pond in the sun, doing crafts and playing music."

The best thing about living in community for Bryan was "conversation, singing, songs, music, lovemaking, sharing the work." For Lori, it was getting to know what it was like to live in nature "on a basic level: creating our own homes—no electricity for common conveniences—the beauty of the area. I got really strong walking from the Big House to my own house in the dark," she says. "It was considered wimpy to use a flashlight in the full moon."

"Good fences make good neighbors" (Robert Frost). Relations between the communes and the larger community were generally good. Molto Bene's neighbors "accepted us for the hard-working people we were," Mike says. A neighbor of Laser Farm, Charlie Elmore, of a generations-long Applegate family, was "one of our best allies," Bryan says. The Elmores, for instance, helped with the haying. "They were very supportive in a joking way," Bryan says. "They were amused by us."

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Note: Part 2, in the Summer Applegater, will focus on difficulties and fond memories of communal living.

Experience being a 'local tourist.'

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seven large rooms with different themes reflecting the history and character of the area, such as the Gold Mining and the Cattleman rooms. Each room has a spa tub and a deck overlooking the river. There is a honeymoon suite (see photo, above), as the lodge hosts between 25 and 40 weddings a year. The lodge also has live music events, a restaurant, and a bar. In the mornings, guests enjoy complimentary bagels and coffee. And the lodge is pet friendly!

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Bybee's Historic Inn

Built in 1857, Bybee's Historic Inn is a grand-luxury, Victorian bed-and-breakfast just one mile from downtown Jacksonville. An authentic Victorian kitchen has a huge antique stove from which delicious three-course breakfasts are made to each guest's dietary requirements. Six themed rooms, lavishly decorated, are outfitted with romantic bathtubs and luxury linens.



Complimentary wine, custom-made treats, and rides to town are all provided for guests. Bybee's hosts weddings and special events, too. When owner Tina Marie was inspired to create a historic retreat, co-owner and cousin, Vikki Lynn, couldn't resist being swept up in the vision.

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Elan Guest Suites



Cherie Reneau and Duane Sturm, proprietors of Jacksonville's Elan Guest Suites, conceived of and built this boutique hotel and art gallery in 2005-2006. According to Cherie, Elan was invented as it evolved. Original art graces the walls of the suites, which are

spacious and airy with sophisticated decor and countless amenities, including kitchenettes. Cherie customarily welcomes the guests, "staging" the suites for their arrival and presenting them with gift certificates for local restaurants and the GoodBean coffee shop. Elan is close to the Britt grounds, tucked quietly off the main drag. The art gallery is used for a myriad of purposes, including private dinner parties for guests.

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Horsefeather Farms Ranchette



Located on the Applegate River in Applegate, Horsefeather Farms Ranchette is an animal lover's paradise. Maryanna Reynolds (see photo, above), who, with husband, Neal, also owns the Applegate Store and Café, moved here 14 years ago from Santa Rosa, California, so they could have all the animals their hearts desired. The ranchette is a rustic bunkhouse with a separate bedroom with a king-sized bed, a wood-burning stove, bunk beds, a kitchen, and a full bath. It can accommodate couples, families, pets, and even a horse or two! There, you can have a true taste of country life in its cozy warmth, introduce your kids to farm

animals, relax on the Applegate River, and, in season, enjoy the lush gardens. As an option, you can have breakfast at the nearby Applegate Cafe included with your stay.

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Jacksonville Inn



Built in 1861, the Jacksonville Inn is a historic landmark with eight guest rooms themed and decorated to reflect Jacksonville's rich history. Furnished with antiques, the rooms have various amenities, including a spa tub for two in the Peter Britt room. In another room a brick in the wall hides a treasure trove of notes left behind by past occupants. Off-site, the Jacksonville Inn offers four luxurious private cottages with king-sized beds, flat-screen televisions, whirlpool tubs, and steam showers. The presidential cottage is truly fit for a president and was once occupied by former president George W. Bush and first lady Laura Bush. All accommodations include a full-service breakfast in the Jacksonville Inn's dining room. *Wine Spectator* and *Wine Enthusiast* magazines have given the inn high accolades. Look to the Jacksonville Inn for its after-Britt festivities and late-night menu.

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