

The Rain Vacation

Memo:

To: Coastal Lodging Establishments
Subject: Inventing the Rain Vacation
From: Matt Love, self-appointed expert in rain, author of a book on rain, and resident of the Oregon Coast for 17 years.

By MATT LOVE

The French symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud once wrote in a letter to a friend, “Advance always.” I, for one, listen to poets and consistently follow Rimbaud’s advice, particularly with rain. Not long ago, I discovered that some of my best creative energy results when I advance into rain. I also learned that engaging rain can nurture entrepreneurial visions that shamelessly enrich visionaries of rain.

You could be that visionary. Please take a minute to read this gratuitous memo

about better monetizing your lodging business. Rain is the means to grow. Open your mind. Reverse the deluge to your advantage. Turn gray into gold.

Yes, yes, I know many of you view rain quite differently, pejoratively. The bemoaning. The complaining. All those profane insults, all those dismal vacancy rates that challenge you to stay afloat. But that was then, and the future is now. By suddenly embracing rain you will expand your business in liquid, lucrative ways you never dreamed possible because you never dreamed about rain before.

You have absolutely nothing to lose except cliché and the sadly mediocre notion that rain is only about the weather. Here’s what I advocate: This spring, offer folks an unprecedented “Rain Vacation” on the coast and build a fresh existential brand for the region that will surely attract all manner of new visitors during the so-called dead season. Advance your print, radio, television and social media marketing right into rain. Sell rain and sell it hard. In recent years, I have found that many introspective people crave rain, enjoy staring silently at its beauty and simplicity and love diving into rain’s metaphors of clarity and cleansing. They might even live in Southern California or Arizona. Just gently invite them. Throw in some bargains for wet dogs, too.

In your promotion, play up the blissful isolation, the wholesome solitude of walking beaches alone during big storms, the multiple relaxation and reflection possibilities of seeing gorgeous gray skies, monochrome land-

scapes and perpetual rain falling sideways into a rolling black ocean. Too many people spend millions of dollars to travel where the sun constantly shines and foreign capital enslaves locals and monkeys to exploit the sun for profit and banal New Age insights. In contrast, the quintessential coastal rain vacation offers timeless Old Age wisdom and for a lot less money.

If you do proceed with my proposal, I’d like to offer some ideas to enhance the Rain Vacation experience.

Construct a clear plastic or glass shelter where a visitor can enjoy watching and listening to the rain. Maybe put up a hammock.

Provide each visitor a bar of soap made with rain. (I know of at least one coastal manufacturer.)

Have guests memorize this rain mantra and recite at dinner:

Rain is the means to grow. Open your mind. Reverse the deluge to your advantage. Turn gray into gold.

Rain is born to run; the sun born to sit in a soft chair. Rain is wanton, exciting; the sun constant, boring. Rain gallivants; the sun merely beams. Rain plays chess and solitaire with you at the same time. The sun speaks in monologues while rain always dialogues. Amen.

Hire a house band for your lounge that plays nothing but rain songs and contractually obligate them to close every show with Credence Clearwater Revival’s “Who’ll Stop the Rain?” or Prince’s “Purple Rain.” Be sure the lounge also offers drink specials such as vodka and rain on the rocks or bourbon neat with a rain chaser. Set up a sustainable rain collection system so visitors

can drink and bathe in rainwater.

Stock your DVD library with rain movie classics. Bladerunner is a must.

Hold Twister contests in the rain. The senior citizens will love it!

Create a special rain club for kids and deck them out in rain swag. Feel free to poach any of these suggested names: Rain Appreciation Society, Umbrella Eradication Project, Legion of the Rain, Fellowship of the Rain, The Masters of Rain, Monochrome Adventure Club, The Puddle Smashers, Pale Order of Rainy Day Gothic Teens.

Please consider my proposal. Rain is our greatest cultural asset and completely free of charge. Why not extol and harness it for languid pleasure and pure profit? Finally, some last words of advice for your bold new marketing direction: 1) under no circumstances should you ever issue any guest an umbrella no matter how much the weaklings beg; 2) always offer a rain check when the Rain Vacation craze hits and packs your establishment to the leaking, moldy roof with an entirely new kind of tourist. One added bonus about them — they’re very, very, quiet and party in mind only.

Matt Love’s account of one of the rainiest years in Oregon history, “Of Walking in Rain,” is available at nestuccaspitpress.com and coastal bookstores. You can also visit nestuccaspitpress.com to read his blog on rain.



Photo by Alejandra Ortega

THE PHOTOS

When I approached Astoria High School digital photography teacher Mickey Cereghino in October about the possibility of collaborating with his students on my rain project, he was incredibly enthusiastic. The students were, too, especially when they learned that pizza would be their reward. Over the next couple of months, Cereghino’s photographers began taking shots of rain with the only proviso being: no clichés; show people a new way to look at rain. Teach about its beauty and metaphors. I joined them on several occasions, and both Cereghino and I contributed our interpretations. My special thanks to Astoria High School students and their photography teacher. They took some outstanding pictures, only a few of which made it into this layout. I have no doubt we’ll be collaborating again.



Photo by Matt Love



Photo by Lucas Caruana



Photo by Matt Love



Photo by Sheyanna Fruith



Photo by Luke Warnecke

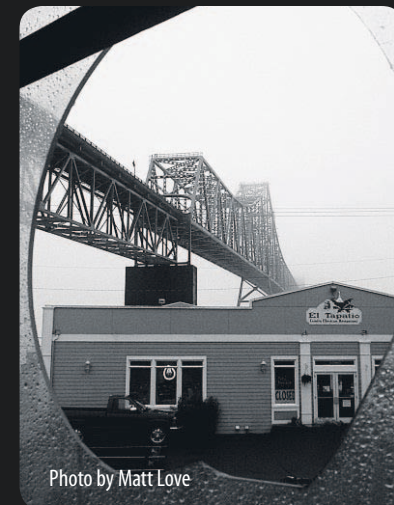


Photo by Matt Love



Photo by Alex Tallman



Photo by Mickey Cereghino



Photo by Henry Meiners