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he is to act as Bernard's alibi for that weekend.

When Jacqueline finds out that Robert is arriving, she decides to stay home, unaware of Bernard's mistress or of her impending visit. Meanwhile, Suzette, a cook who Bernard has hired to prepare a gourmet dinner for Suzanne, also arrives. Bernard attempts to keep his affair secret, along with Robert's and Jacqueline's worries that Bernard will discover their duplicity, makes for a fast-paced frolic on stage.

"It's sort of a commentary on a lot of things," Alderman said. It's primarily an exploration of human nature, he added. "We're laughing at ourselves. The situation is so absurd yet so human."

Playing the roles of Bernard and Jacqueline are Ryan Hull and Jenni Tronier, who are married to each other.

Hull, who has directed and acted in plays at the Coaster, said he was a "fish out of water when it came to the circumstances Bernard faces."

"It's been a challenge to cheat on my acting wife when it's my real wife, which I would never think to do, except when we're on stage. Oh my, this is complicated," Hull said.

Hull and Tronier, who works as public relations and operations manager at the Coaster, co-founded a production company and produced several plays before moving to Cannon Beach.

Jean Rice plays Suzette, the cook who has to pretend she is Robert's mistress, while the mistress, Suzanne, pretends she is the cook who can't cook (as noted, it's complicated). Rice says her character is the only level-headed member in the ensemble. But to prepare for the play, she had to develop two different voices and mannerisms.

"I hope the audience leaves the theater wanting to see more shows because this one was a hoot!" Rice said.

Also appearing in the play are Rhonda Alderman, as the mistress; and Stewart Martin, as Suzette's husband. Local actor Jason Husa, who plays Robert, filled in two weeks before the play opened to replace Richard Bowman, who originally was cast in the part and



Suzette's husband, played by Stewart Martin, third from left, arrives to take his wife home.



Suzette, played by Jean Rice, center, pretends to be the mistress of Robert, played by Jason Husa, left, who is actually having an affair with his best friend's wife, Jacqueline, played by Jenni Tronier, right.

had to drop out following a family emergency.

"Casting is the key element to any play," Alderman said. "There's not a person involved in this play that doesn't have at least a dozen shows behind them. They know very well what they're doing. That's good, since I'm not an acting teacher."

Even the stage set becomes a character in the play. All of the action occurs in a stylishly renovated barn. The kitchen is the former dairy, the dining room is the former hen house and two guest bedrooms are the old cow shed and piggery.

"I wanted to go with the idea that they used everything that had been in the barn," Alderman said.

To create the ambiance, Alder-

man's father, Jerry, gathered up 30 old pallets donated by Astoria Warehousing Inc.

"He spent weeks pulling those pallets apart," Alderman said. "There are 200 planks that make up the bulk of the walls (around the stage). We wanted it to look like old lumber."

Jerry, an experienced carpenter, and Kent Cloyd, from Coaster Construction, put the walls up, and Alderman stained all of them. Jerry also built sliding barn doors leading to the two bedrooms.

Then, Jerry found planks that had been used as benches during an outdoor wedding at a dairy

near Alderman's house. A few of those 30-foot-long planks were cut up to create stairs, a bar and shelves behind the bar.

The set heightens the humor for the audience, a goal Alderman wants to achieve.

"I just want them to laugh," he said. "I can't believe they won't."

**"DON'T DRESS FOR DINNER,"** which opened Sept. 23, runs through Oct. 22 at the Coaster Theatre Playhouse. Friday and Saturday shows start at 7:30 p.m. and the Sunday matinee on Oct. 9 begins at 3 p.m.

The play was written by Marc Camoletti.

"It was written in French by an Italian playwright, translated for a British stage and played by a bunch of Americans," noted Mick Alderman, who directs the play for the Coaster.