

RimRock Inn reopens after being closed for a year



By Bill Bradshaw

Canyon overlook draws guests from far away

FLORA — After being closed for a year, the RimRock Inn near Flora reopened this past weekend for a unique lodging and dining experience — unique even for Wallowa County.

“A lot of the locals recommend it to the tourists,” said co-owner Cabot Carlston during an interview Thursday, June 16. “They’ve had the TG (Terminal Gravity) or they’ve eaten at the lake. They’ve looked up at the mountains — the Wallowas are there, the Eagle Cap’s there. It’s great, but this is just a different vibe, a different view.”

The experience RimRock offers is a bit different, Carlston said.

“It’s canyonlands, in the mountains. I’d been coming (to the county) for 15 years — Hurricane Creek, Lostine Canyon, the lake, and I’d never come out here for 15 years,” he said. “Finally, we came out here and I was like, it’s cool out here. So we came out here and had a steak dinner and saw the tepees and thought, ‘Oh my gosh, this is awesome. We could stay in a tepee.’ And then we were talking to someone



Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain
Cabot Carlston, co-owner of the RimRock Inn near Flora, opens the smoke flap on one of three tepees at the inn Thursday, June 16, 2022.

in town and learned the place was for sale, so we bought it a year later.”

‘God’s country’

Normally open from Memorial Day Weekend to Labor Day Weekend, the weather slowed this year’s opening.

“It’s a good thing we didn’t open Memorial Day because it’s been raining ever since,” Carlston said.

He said he had guests booked for this past weekend and is usually full all summer long.

“Of course, it’s going to rain again,” he laughed.

But the unique setting

atop an overlook to Joseph Creek Canyon is one of the inn’s greatest draws.

“This is God’s country. Carved right out of the rocks,” he said, looking at the geological formations of the canyon.

He pointed out a windy ranch road to the bottom of the canyon that he said is mostly used by ATVs and horses.

A short hike about 20 minutes from inn gives guests a grand view not only of the canyon, but of much of Wallowa County.

“Once you get to the edge, you can see the river more clearly and the cool

thing is you can see Zumwalt Prairie and the snow-capped Wallowa Mountains,” he said. “It’s the best view of the canyonlands I know of.”

Carlston also emphasized the wildlife, both flora and fauna. Deer are regulars at the inn and they see a few elk. He said they’ve seen one bear and even found a cougar skull.

“There’s fish in that creek, but no fishermen,” he laughed. “I just love the ruggedness of it. Look at the cliffs.”

Carlston is fond of the many species of wildflowers in the area.

RIMROCK INN

What: Lodging, dining

Who: Cabot and Kim Carlston

Where: 83471 Lewiston Highway, between turn-off to Flora and milepost 10

When: Dinner Thursday-Sunday, 5-7 p.m. (reservations only); lodging available Memorial Day-Labor Day

Phone: Dinner 541-880-6806; lodging 541-398-2221

Email: kunahcat@aol.com

Online: www.rimrockoregon.com

cially known as the “honey-moon tepee,” Carlston said. Officially, it’s the Appaloosa Tepee, while the others are the Bison and Dreamcatcher tepees.

For sale

After enjoying operating the inn since 2016, the Carlstons are putting it on the market.

Built in 1940, the inn was originally known as Canter’s Inn. Then it was sold to Loren and Wilma Raymond, who sold it to Rahn and Becky Hostetter, Carlston said.

Now, he and Kim have decided to sell.

“I can’t afford two mortgages and a business lease,” he said, referring to the inn, his wife’s boutique and the business lease in downtown Ashland. “We only opened our business in Ashland because we thought we sold this place.”

But selling has been difficult.

“It’s hard to sell because it’s zoned timber and grazing — mixed use — but it has a kitchen, so any bank or lender says, ‘restaurant’ and they’re not lending to restaurants because they’ve had bad experiences with restaurants because of COVID,” he said. “So we’re trying to find somebody who has cash so we don’t have to deal with bankers.”

Bill Bradshaw is a reporter for the Wallowa County Chieftain. Have a business tip? Contact him at 541-398-5503 or bbradshaw@wallowa.com.

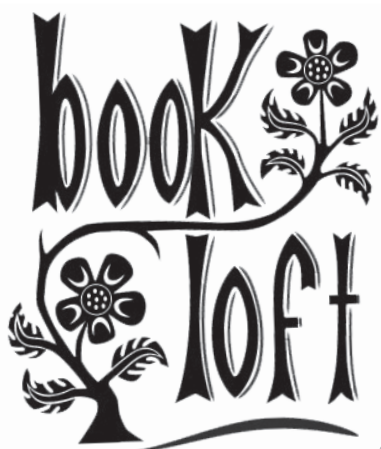
“I’ve identified 22 different wildflower species out here and every year’s different,” he said. “This year, we have more prairie smoke than usual. A few years ago, it was more larkspur. Everything depends on the temperature and the rain, I guess.”

Gourmet dining and lodging

After enjoying the scenery, guests can come in for a gourmet dinner. He’s the cook, assisted by son, Tristan.

Guests are treated to coffee from 7:30 a.m. and breakfast at 8 a.m. They can order dinner from 5 to 7 p.m., as can nonguests who call in reservations.

For lodging, the inn has one indoor suite, three tepees and a trailer. One of the tepees, with its private parking, is unoffi-



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CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Bear feet
- 5 Purple flower, perhaps
- 9 What an arbor provides
- 14 Bickering
- 15 Cranny’s partner
- 16 Knighthood, e.g.
- 17 Family room seat
- 18 Board game involving sleuthing
- 19 Person full of tribal knowledge
- 20 Misrepresent something, say
- 23 Word before “ball” or “stick”
- 24 Pro at filing taxes
- 25 Ocasek of the Cars
- 28 Misrepresent something, say
- 34 Rock with metal
- 35 Korean carmaker
- 36 Stoner’s joint
- 37 Gracefully flexible
- 40 Ale tap’s site
- 42 Like Odin and Thor
- 43 Long gone cold period
- 45 One of the Bobbsey twins
- 47 Blot substance
- 48 Misrepresent something, say
- 52 Didn’t stand for something?
- 53 A white one is very formal
- 54 For each
- 55 Be first to report something ... or what people may do if they 20-, 28- or 48-Across?
- 61 Reason for a beef recall
- 64 Hard to come by
- 65 Clarinet relative
- 66 Find the total of
- 67 Over again
- 68 With 44-Down, body of water by buffalo
- 69 App’s audience members
- 70 Drivers’ aids?
- 71 Like blue hair

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69							70						71		

CLUES DOWN

- 1 Don’t fail
- 2 Situated over
- 3 Internet connection at a hotel
- 4 Position for a golfer
- 5 Under control
- 6 Part in a play
- 7 Poker players’ paper promises
- 8 Line drawing?
- 9 Hotel chain owned by Marriott
- 10 Worthy of worship
- 11 “So ...?”
- 12 Buck’s counterpart
- 13 Make a wrong turn, maybe
- 21 “Tsk”
- 22 Column with a point?
- 25 Set of criteria for grading
- 26 “That’s not the case!”
- 27 Places for quick kisses
- 28 Ice and snow, but not rain
- 29 One of Pat Nixon’s daughters
- 30 Makeup exam
- 31 Large ball-and-socket joint
- 32 Make fun of
- 33 Bouncing baby in Hundred Acre Wood
- 38 Panama, e.g.
- 39 They’re all about you
- 41 Grouch’s exclamation
- 44 See 68-Across
- 46 Jacob and Esau, to Ishmael
- 49 Rip into
- 50 Lawyer’s charge
- 51 Traitor Benedict
- 55 Put out of focus
- 56 “Citizen” in a 1941 film
- 57 Apple or orange source
- 58 Website with auctions
- 59 Socially aware
- 60 Kernel, for one
- 61 It flows in the Seine
- 62 Savings options: Abbr.
- 63 Laudatory poem



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