

ROOTS

AT THE ALLISON INN & SPA



THE LIVING ROOM OF THE
Willamette Valley

2016-17

FEATURES

44

JOYRIDING

Oregon's premier destinations – wine country, the coast, Portland, Columbia River Gorge – have always been within an easy day-trip distance from The Allison. But now, reaching them is as painless as slipping into one of the Inn's new sleek, complimentary Lexuses.

BY ADAM SAWYER



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WINEMAKER TO WINEMAKER

If you could drink one wine for the rest of your life, what would it be? How do you celebrate the end of a tough growing season? These questions and more – asked of Willamette Valley winemakers by Willamette Valley winemakers.

BY KERRY NEWBERRY

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CREATIVE CONVERGENCES

The 500-piece art collection, the Austin Knoll wine, the spa's grapeseed cure – none of these unique resort offerings would exist if The Allison hadn't banded with its surrounding artisans to dream them up.

BY CATHERINE SHANNON

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WHY PINOT NOIR IS KING

It's known as "the heartbreak grape" – difficult to grow, thin skinned, and easily susceptible to disease. Yet, there is something about the Willamette Valley that pinot noir loves, leading to some of the world's best wines.

BY KERRY NEWBERRY

OREGON WINERIES WERE FOUNDED ON ROADS LESS TRAVELED



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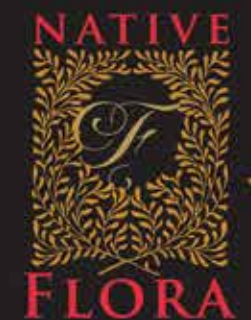
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JOYRIDING

USING THE ALLISON AS HIS ANCHOR POINT FOR A TWO-DAY STAY, PORTLAND-BASED TRAVEL WRITER AND OREGON GUIDEBOOK AUTHOR **ADAM SAWYER** EMBARKS ON THREE ROAD-TRIP LOOPS OF VARYING LENGTHS. ONE FERRY RIDE, THREE BOTTLES OF PINOT, FIVE WATERFALLS, AND 300 MILES LATER, HE TAKES US THROUGH HIS PACES.



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OREGON IS A BEAUTIFUL PLACE.

So beautiful that, about six years ago, I quit my job in IT to explore the state full time. I now make a living as an outdoor and travel writer, focused primarily on the Northwest, penning my experiences for guidebooks and magazines, like *Backpacker* and the *Cascade Journal*. The paychecks may be smaller, but I'm rich in other ways. I've stood in a lava-flow-encased forest, I've sat by a historic lighthouse and watched gray whales migrate north, I've swum under 30-foot cascades.

But not often am I given the opportunity to write about the journey

to reach these attractions. It's a shame; Oregon has some of the most impressive vista-laden byways, flowing like a ribbon through rolling hills and along rivers, and laced with wineries, restaurants, and boutique shops. In fact, all of Oregon's premier attributes, geological and cultural, can be explored and experienced tangibly, within a few hours' drive. From wine country at the northern end of the Willamette Valley, you can get to Portland in 45 minutes, the Columbia River Gorge in an hour and 15 minutes, the coast in an hour and a half, and the Timberline Lodge on

Mount Hood in an hour and 45 minutes.

When road tripping of this caliber, though, you'll require a commensurate chariot. The Allison Inn & Spa has just the thing. During a November two-day stay at the resort nestled on the edge of Newberg, my girlfriend and I were given reign of a complimentary Lexus vehicle (their stable ranges from a RX 450 Hybrid, like a crossover SUV, to a GS 350-F Sport Sedan). The result: three road trips of varying lengths, where the journey, as well as end destinations, makes for a soul-satisfying stalemate. →

LOOP 1

FINDING THE PERFECT PINOT

ROUTE NEWBERG → DUNDEE →
MCMINNVILLE → CARLTON → NEWBERG

DISTANCE 45 miles

DRIVE TIME 3 hours (with stops)

“YOU WANT THE SPORTS CAR,” an exuberant young valet said as we were checking out a car from the front desk. And so it was, we were now the proud temporary owners of a GS 350-F Sport Sedan, a sleek, dark leather-interior ride that looked as if it were constructed for the sole purpose of hugging the winding roads of Oregon wine country.

Leaving the property, we headed down 99W toward the small town of Dundee. The car came with GPS, which would prove handy in getting us to our first destination, the Red Hills Market, an exquisite melding of a farmers’ market and a gourmet food shop. Housed in a modern building with farmhouse flourishes, it has an extensive selection of gourmet snacks, cheeses, charcuterie, local beer and wine, while also producing a number of made-to-order breakfast and lunch items.

Continuing on our way to McMinnville, we passed by the Evergreen Air and Space Museum, home of the largest airplane ever built, the *Spruce Goose*. We would have to save this for another day, as we both had our sights set on the ever-endearing downtown of McMinnville. Boutique shopping, tasting rooms, and eateries all rub shoulders in a Norman Rockwell-tinged, one-mile thorough-

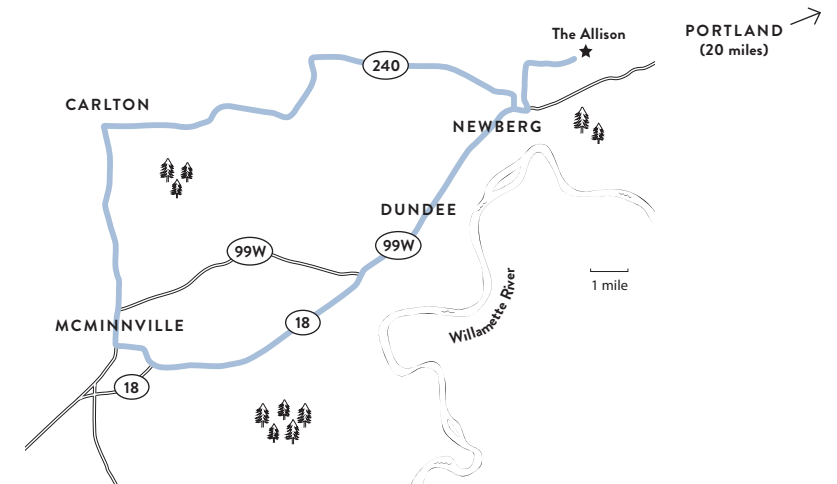


(VINEYARD) JOHN VALLS; (PASTRIES) BRYAN RUPP PHOTOGRAPHY



(Counterclockwise, from above) The Ken Wright Cellars tasting room is also a historic Carlton icon, headquartered in the town's 1921 train depot; with views like these, you might think you've transported to the European countryside; wood-fired crostatas filled with local seasonal ingredients are a signature at the Red Hills Market.

(TASTING ROOM) RJ STUDIO



fare that begs to be walked. Historic buildings from the early 1900s still proudly flaunt the brick and cast iron that were hallmarks of the era. Lunch would be at Nick's Italian Café, an unassuming but cozy eatery I had been to before. I was looking forward to squaring up on their seafood lasagna again, a tangy Dungeness crab-based dish that is equal parts Northwest and Northern Italy. It didn't disappoint the second time around.

After lunch, we drove up to Carlton, and for the first time, the scenery opened up, revealing meadows, farms, and gently rolling hills. Carlton may be small, but as “The Wine Country Capital of Oregon,” it packs some significant food and wine with more than a dozen tasting rooms in less than the half mile of the downtown stretch. Try tastings at Ken Wright Cellars, Scott Paul Wines, or the Carlton Winemakers Studio. If you missed lunch in McMinnville, stop in at The Horse Radish or the Farmers’ Plate & Pantry.

At the Scott Paul Wines tasting room, the 2012 Audrey Pinot Noir won me over. Made exclusively from old-vine grapes in the Dundee Hills, it is what Oregon pinot is all about. Returning to The Allison along Highway 240, orchards and vineyards were watched over by impossibly quaint farmhouses. We might as well have been somewhere in a western European countryside.



LOOP 2

CROSSING THE WILLAMETTE RIVER

ROUTE NEWBERG → WHEATLAND FERRY → AMITY → DAYTON → NEWBERG

DISTANCE 70 miles

DRIVE TIME 4 hours (with stops)

LATER THAT AFTERNOON, starting again from the inn, we cruised the 22-mile segment along Highway 219 – dominated with rolling hills, farmhouses, and an unparalleled growing region in full throat – to the Wheatland Ferry. Only now, they were just foreground elements for a snowcapped Mount Hood rising from beyond the Cascade foothills.

The Wheatland Ferry is a ferry in the academic sense – it holds passengers and crosses water. But not many passengers (a handful of cars at most) and not much water as it crosses just a narrow stretch of the Willamette River in about two minutes as some iteration has been doing since the 1850s. On the other side, where we intersected with 221, it was time to put the Lexus through its paces. This five-mile stretch of highway that leads to the next vineyard was wide open and occasionally winding, accented with a handful of tight curves and engulfed by fields, groves, and vineyards.

About 15 minutes later, a red-roofed building perched atop a hillside lined with rows of grapevines came into view, signaling Cristom Vineyards, home to award-winning wines complemented by views of the



(Left) A bar made of reclaimed wood from the Carlton Grainery punctuates the tasting room at Brooks Wines; (above) just beyond the winery, the Brooks Estate Vineyard is home to 40-year-old pinot and riesling vines, some of the valley's oldest; (opposite) the 11,000-foot Mount Hood, Oregon's highest peak, stands sentinel over Portland and Northern Oregon.

(BOTH PHOTOS THIS PAGE) ANDREA JOHNSON PHOTOGRAPHY

valley and a pair of Cascade peaks. We followed that up with a visit to St. Innocent Winery – another tasting and another bottle of pinot to cellar.

We continued into the charming hamlet of Amity for dinner at the Blue Goat. Locally sourced, fresh, seasonal ingredients, expertly and creatively curated on the plate, the Blue Goat

somehow combines the sort of elevated farm-to-table fare that would be a hit anywhere in Portland with the charm and community spirit that makes it a hub and a source of pride for Amity.

Our final stop of this loop was Brooks Wines. Maybe it was the view, the best of the day, showcasing Mount

Hood in its entirety. Maybe it was the eclectic offering of organic and biodynamically crafted wines, or maybe a combination of both that did it, but we were somehow charmed into buying a few more bottles. I don't think the fact that it was paella night hurt things either.



Bergström Wines is situated in the rolling hills of the Chehalem Mountains, in close proximity to The Allison Inn and Spa.


Our tasting room is surrounded by Estate Vineyards with sprawling views from the Willamette Valley extending to the Coastal Range. Bergström Wines is now recognized as one of the top domains worldwide for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.


On behalf of the Bergström family, we welcome you to visit our tasting room, which is open daily 10 until 4pm.

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LOOP 3:
WATERFALLS & MOUNT HOOD

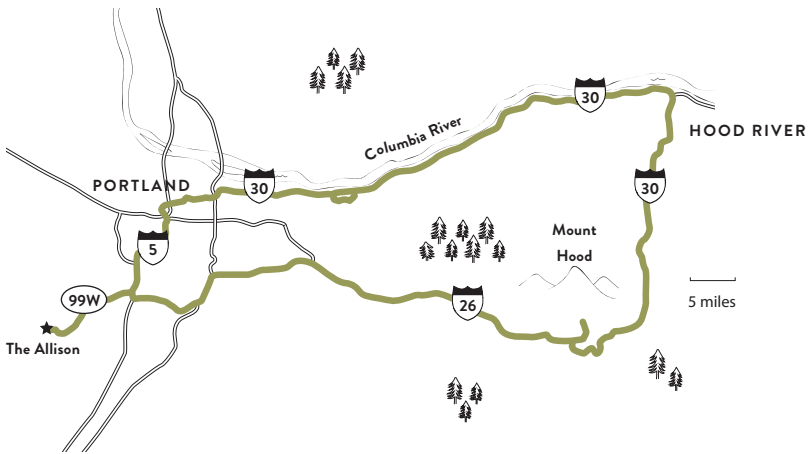
ROUTE NEWBERG → HISTORIC HIGHWAY 30 → BRIDGE OF THE GODS → HOOD RIVER → TIMBERLINE LODGE → NEWBERG

DISTANCE 219 miles
DRIVE TIME 6 hours (with stops)

I LOVE ALL THE SCENIC BYWAYS of Oregon. But if road trips were children, the drive through the Columbia River Gorge would be the kid who was valedictorian and made sure to thank her parents in her commencement speech. It’s my undeniable favorite.

From Newberg, we drove through Portland and onto I-84, paralleling the Columbia River. Taking the Corbett exit, we ascended high above the river and onto the Historic Columbia River Highway (Highway 30). Deemed the “King of Roads” when construction was finalized in 1922, the scenic highway is a nonstop display of Oregon’s best scenery. From the viewpoint at the Portland Women’s Forum, you can gaze deep into the Gorge – miles of high forest-covered basalt walls that squeeze the Columbia River like a vice for roughly 80 miles of its journey to the Pacific Ocean. I

This magnificent view – overlooking the Columbia River Gorge on Crown Point – is only one of many more along historic Highway 30, aka the “King of Roads.”



could spend several lifetimes exploring this area. From the classic viewpoint, the Historic Highway descends down to river level, passing through what is known as “Waterfall Alley,” a stretch that affords views of no fewer than five majestic waterfalls from the car.

A stop at Oregon’s number-one tourist attraction, Multnomah Falls, in the heart of Waterfall Alley, is always in order. The 635-foot cascade is like something out of a J.R.R. Tolkien book, seemingly falling from the sky in graceful ribbons into a moss-lined



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(RESTAURANT) MICHELLE HUMPHREY



(Left) A Belgian-style menu, edgy reclaimed decor, and river views make the Pfriem Family Brewers tasting room one of Hood River's most memorable; (above) framed by pine trees and Technicolor green moss, the two-story Multnomah Falls is straight out of a J.R.R. Tolkien fantasyland.

cauldron. We passed a few more cascades and jumped back onto I-84 toward Hood River.

Arriving in Hood River, we faced some crucial decisions. Which microbrewery do we go to? Should we do some shopping? How hungry are we? In the end, we decided on Pfriem Family Brewers for beer and food. The dining room is based in their brew house, where they craft brews of euro variety (expect lots of Belgian and German styles). We shared a brat and potato croquettes amid exposed beams, reclaimed wood, and stainless steel – clean, simple, modern, rustic, and

elegant all at the same time.

We continued up Highway 35 toward an increasingly imposing Mount Hood. This section of the drive is part of the Hood River County “Fruit Loop,” peppered with fruit stands and tasting rooms. We stopped at Cody Orchards for a bag of apples and pears, which were at their peak this time in November. Back on the road, as the sun began to descend, we began to climb – roughly 6,000 feet in six miles from the valley to Timberline Lodge. It’ll make your ears pop and your eyes widen with every turn, looking out 100 miles to the south with

Mount Jefferson protruding from the landscape. And then there’s Timberline. Constructed by the CCC in 1937, the stone and wood edifice (built almost entirely by hand by legions of laborers and craftspeople) is a true Oregon icon and arguably one of the best spots in the state to watch the sunset.

After a two-hour stretch on the open highway of Route 26, we were back to The Allison. But we had some great souvenirs: three bottles of local pinot, a bag of apples, and a revived appreciation for Oregon’s roadways. A-