

# LODGING NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE  
OREGON RESTAURANT & LODGING ASSOCIATION

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## LOCAL FLAVOR

Connecting Guests  
with the Real Oregon

*see also*

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RYAN SNYDER  
Martin Hospitality, Cannon Beach

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**ORLA**  
Oregon Restaurant  
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CONNECTING  
GUESTS WITH  
THE REAL  
OREGON

**O**n a spring afternoon outside the Stephanie Inn on Oregon's postcard-perfect north coast, Cannon Beach-combers leave footprints in the sand that dodge the chilly but cathartic Pacific surf. Immersed in sights, sounds, smells, and thoughts, visitors aren't about to let cold feet get in the way of a special day at the beach. Travelers seeking an escape increasingly flock to Northwest destinations to absorb everything from a salty seaside breeze to locally brewed craft beers and a rejuvenating night's rest. Oregon lodging operators like Ryan Snyder, president of Martin Hospitality, are all too happy to accommodate them and help turn their dreams into reality.



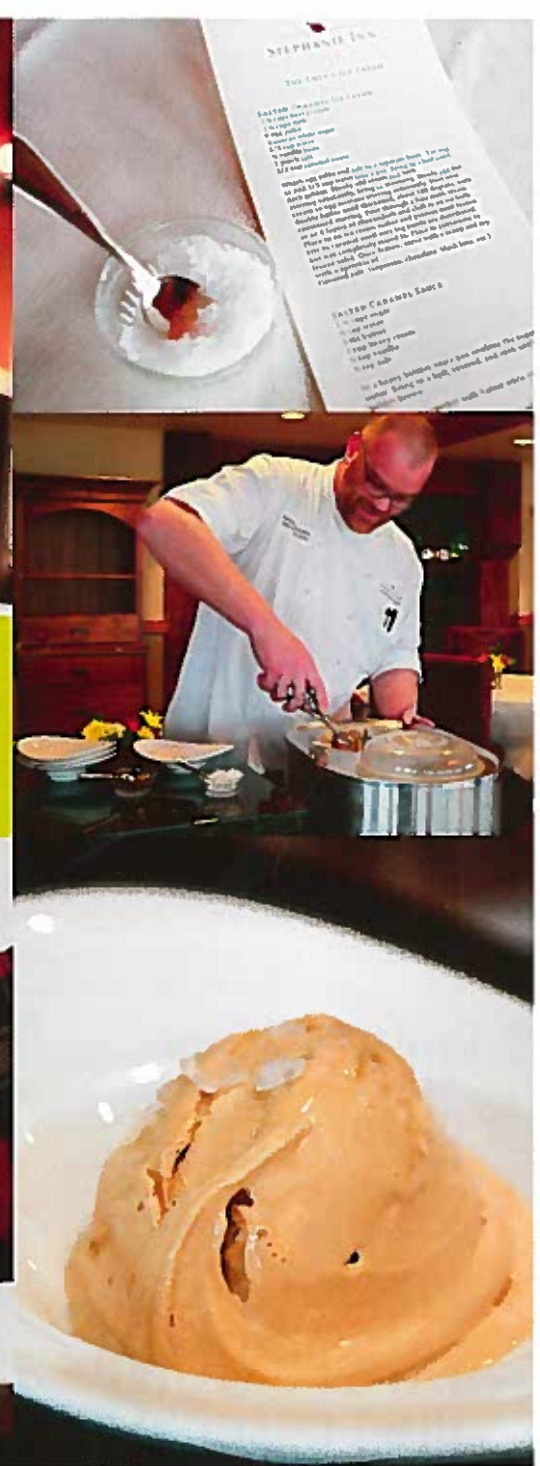
Some of the 'local flavor' being featured at the Stephanie Inn, Cannon Beach

PHOTO BY HEDI JANKE

# LOCAL Flavor



**PRIVATE COOKING CLASS WITH LOCAL INGREDIENTS**  
Executive Chef Aaron Bedard helps guests create salted caramel ice cream with local Jacobsen Salt, one of many "Uniquely Stephanie Inn" opportunities for guests.



Innkeepers like Snyder are looking for more sophisticated and creative ways to help deliver a uniquely regional experience for their guests. By forming strong relationships with local farmers, artisans, tour and activity operators, and culinary destinations, accommodations providers help fulfill their guests' desires for more authentic, differentiated travel experiences.

Snyder thinks that the power of partnerships has amplified the possibilities. "The effects of two companies working together, sharing a

common message, has exponential effects on the returns on the investment," he explains. "The results are exponential when service companies and suppliers story-tell together. I love sharing other people's stories as much as our own when it adds value to our guests' experience. That's the goal. They come here and experience something they want to tell their friends about and long to repeat. It's much easier together!"

Al Munguia, general manager at the Jupiter Hotel in Portland, credits the growing

demand for nearly anything indigenous to consumers craving something worth remembering. "The modern traveler is very focused on experiences, and part of that is the local experience," says Munguia. "They want to feel connected with the local community, and they want a better understanding of local culture. This has made the industry take notice and has resulted in a shift change away from big generic practices to being a gateway to connect with the locals. As more millennials hit the road, we will see

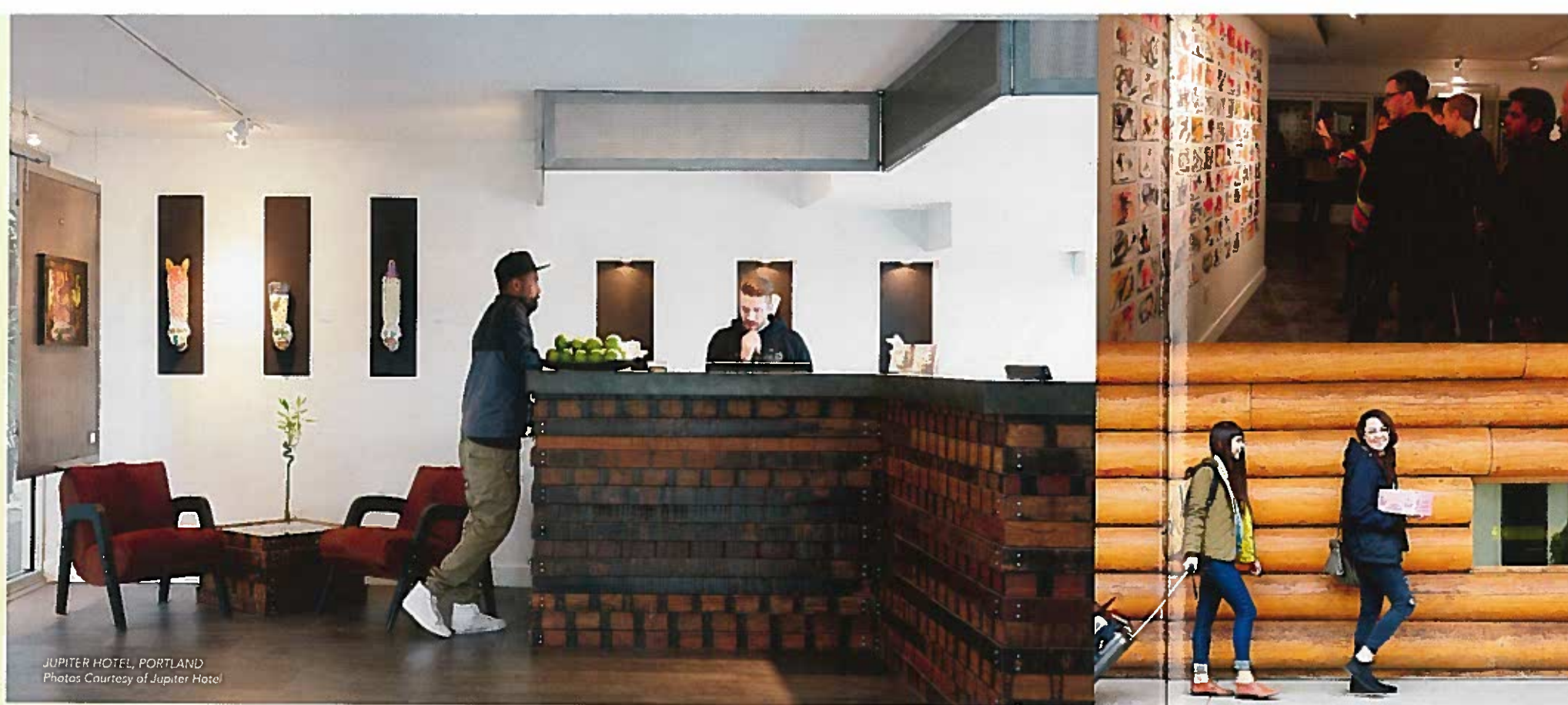
more hotels and businesses really focus on supporting and highlighting the best of their local communities."

Portland hoteliers are on top of the local-centric curve. "At Kimpton Hotels and Restaurants, we're on the forefront of creating a 'lifestyle' experience by branding our products around the local community and experience," shares Ryan Kunzer, general manager at the Kimpton RiverPlace Hotel. "We called it our 'Live Like a Local' program. Many hotels have followed suit

and have begun catering their offerings around their local communities."

Kunzer doesn't see the trend fading anytime soon. "I certainly do not believe this is a fad," he states. "In fact, I am surprised it has taken us this long as an industry to understand when people travel, they want to experience different cultures and experience new things. Adding local experiences and touch points is here to stay, and I believe these types of services and branding will continue to be a major focus for years to come."

Local flavor has always been part of the recipe in some hospitality business models. "When people think of a bed and breakfast, they're dreaming of individual experiences, by and large," believes Heather Tyreman, co-owner of Bronze Antler Bed & Breakfast in Joseph with her husband Bill Finney. "When you stay at a B&B, you're staying typically with the owner, so you're 'living' with someone who is a local. You're more apt to get exposed to those things that are local, as opposed to staying in a more anonymous-type experience.



JUPITER HOTEL, PORTLAND  
Photos Courtesy of Jupiter Hotel

**“OUR GOAL IS SIMPLE: HAVE PEOPLE EXPLORE AND FALL IN LOVE WITH PORTLAND (AND OREGON) AND ENSURE THEY COME BACK OFTEN.”**

Al Munguia, GM  
Jupiter Hotel, Portland

“Besides putting out all of the local tourism information that we get from the city and county chambers of commerce, we make guests aware of local things that are happening. Sometimes we even drag our guests along with us to parties or other local events.” She notes that repeat guests often recount fond memories of those serendipitous encounters with local characters in unique places. It adds texture to a journey.

One of the region’s most influential travel-related websites, TravelOregon.com, has embraced localism and its magnetic influence on tourism in recent years. “Given our record-setting levels –we reached \$10.8 billion as an industry last year– it is clearly a strategy that resonates with travelers,” reports Linea Gagliano, director, global communications at Travel Oregon. “It’s also a strategy that simply makes sense when we think about Oregon.”

Travel Oregon recently unveiled a new creative campaign: “We like it here. You might too.” Gagliano paints a picture that makes it easy to see the organization’s mission to promote this adventurers’ paradise: “The

state is unique in its geography, from a wild coastline to majestic mountain ranges, from lush valleys to sunlit high deserts. Each region and feature offers a certain appeal, and to do them justice, we really need to be able to talk about places on a smaller, more intimate scale.” That kind of focus can work anywhere.

Even lodging properties in larger places, like Portland, have found ways to offer their own brand of local charm blended with city excitement. “The RiverPlace Hotel is located on the banks of the scenic Willamette River, yet only steps away from the hustle and bustle of the downtown core,” points out Kunzer. “It is truly the best of both worlds. Our guests can experience a nature-like setting by enjoying the river activities and views along with experiencing all the great local hot spots that downtown Portland has to offer. We have catered our programming around the idea that our guest can experience our lodge-like setting by taking a kayak tour during the day, and by evening, we are reserving them a table at one of Portland’s James Beard Award-winning restaurants. It is truly a unique experience to be able to offer such a wide range of local activities.”

below their name. This practice has sparked so many great conversations between our guests and staff. I find it important that our staff is knowledgeable and can speak confidently about their local passion. We have running trail experts, local happy hour experts, music scene experts, the list goes on. This program has created some amazing memorable experiences for our guests by getting the inside scoop from an employee that lives and breathes these local interest.”

Snyder regularly provides his teams at the Stephanie Inn and Surfsand Resort with the latest information on current local product offerings, from Vincent Family Farms cranberries and Jacobsen Sea Salt to his own brand new Public Coast Brewing craft beers. “In the hotels, it’s a mass change when an item is revisited in a guestroom, meaning there is a lot of dialogue to implement the change,” he explains. “But on the culinary side, we have new products daily, which is a great opportunity to share and enhance the guest experience through real-time knowledge of the current offerings. With the introduction of the brewery, we are scheduling ‘Uniquely Stephanie Inn’ opportunities for guest tours and tastings with the brewer, which will give us an additional link to the guest through unique interaction.”

Not everyone is into the craft beer scene, so Martin Hospitality makes arrangements with local firms offering enticing alternatives. “When we opened the Stephanie Inn, we introduced the daily wine gathering,” remembers Snyder. “This gave us an opportunity to engage one-on-one with our guests over something we all love – wine. Then we began sourcing local and regional wines for the gathering and shifted the focus to the Northwest. We have partnered with numerous wineries on education for our staff, storytelling about their products, which translates to an amplified experience for the guest.”

The Jupiter Hotel pieced together a special “Distillery Row” tour, its own spin on Oregon’s booming craft beverages industry. “We created this package as a way to offer guests a local distillery experience without a whole lot of effort on their part,” shares

Munguia. “Through the years, we have partnered with a wide range of businesses. There have been no limits. We are currently working on our next package, which features partnerships with local dispensaries and celebrates Oregon’s lead in cannabis tourism industry.” The sky’s clearly not the limit when it comes to what’s on the horizon in ever-dynamic Portland.

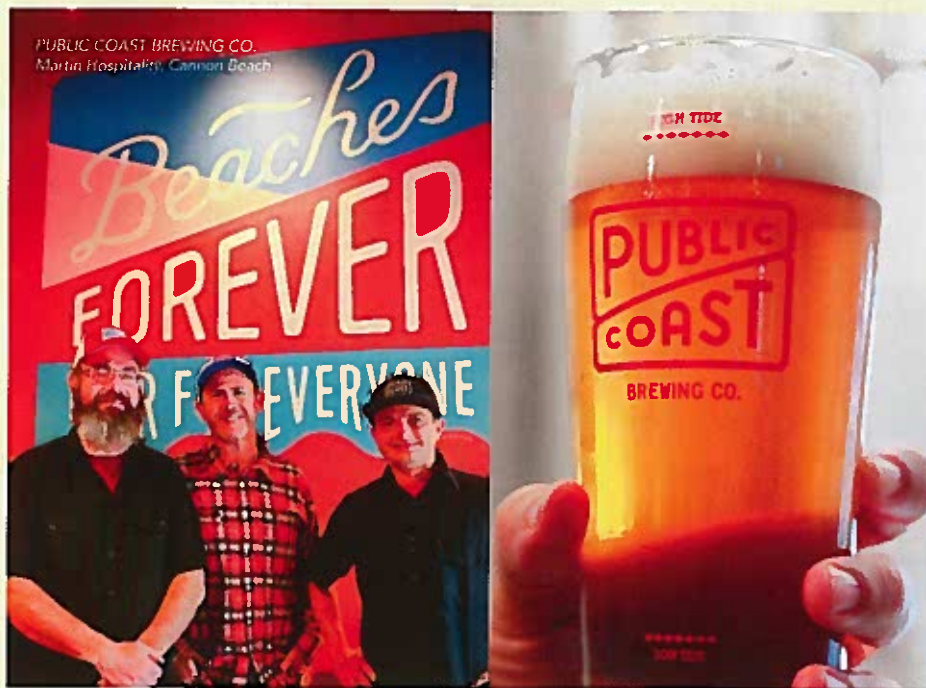
Yet the catering and restaurant menus at the Kimpton RiverPlace along the Willamette remain grounded in traditional seasonal ingredients hauled in from the bountiful fields and barns of nearby farms. “Lately, we’ve have been working closely with Ancient Heritage Dairy, the first urban creamery in Portland, and have four dishes showcasing three of their cheeses,” says Lauro Romero, executive chef at Three Degrees Restaurant adjacent to the hotel. “Most of our product comes from local farms, and in Oregon, you have a wide range of farms to choose from. It’s chefs’ heaven!” The talented Romero and his hospitality industry peers are fortunate to be able to work with so many locally grown and crafted goods.

“Oregon certainly is a hotbed for artisan products and culinary options, but it also has an ethos of collaboration and community,” recognizes Gagliano. “Lodging properties can leverage the local bounty in so many ways. If you look to Portland’s world-class dining scene, hotel chefs as well as area restaurateurs are striking up relationships with their producers and growers and developing menus based on what is in season and what can be sourced nearby. They’re also looking to artisan producers to showcase local products, creating menus that simply can’t be replicated anywhere else because the flavors and the freshness just won’t be there. Hotel restaurants in other regions around the state are doing the same.”

Striving to deliver an authentic, enjoyable experience creates value for everyone involved. “It’s not just about getting visitors into the hotel, but being instrumental in helping them explore a particular region,” continues Gagliano. She recommends partnering with destination marketing organizations to share needs, offerings, and explore a wider range of opportunities.

**"FOR ALL OF US, KEEPING THINGS LOCAL BENEFITS THE ENVIRONMENT, THE LOCAL ECONOMIES, CONTINUES INNOVATION, AND CREATES PRIDE IN COMMUNITY.**

*Ryan Snyder, president, Martin Hospitality*



Although Travel Oregon highlights exciting options like Central Oregon's Bend Ale Trail Beer Tour and the Farm Trail on Oregon's South Coast, the state offers many treasures that aren't quaffable or edible. One such find is tucked into the northeast corner. "We connect people with service providers in the area for the kinds of things that they're interested in... like fly fishing," explains Tyreman. "We also have a large bronze foundry right here in Joseph that is the oldest in the valley, and there are two other foundries located nearby in Enterprise that offer tours too. So if the guests indicate they have a desire to tour a bronze foundry, oftentimes I'm on the phone making reservations for them."

Not surprisingly, Bronze Antler Bed & Breakfast sometimes hosts artists who work with its neighboring foundries. "We have a woman who has stayed with us in the past, who's a regular customer of one of the foundries, and she's going to be featured in one of the galleries," announces Tyreman. "That provides an interesting experience for other guests staying with us at the same time, because undoubtedly, the conversation at the breakfast table is going to turn to

a discussion about bronze foundries and artistic bronze work. The guests will get a richer environment for sitting at breakfast talking with her, and it just drops us back into that local experience. You've got the intimacy associated with staying at a bed and breakfast." Of course, the breakfast table conversation flows even better over green tomato mincemeat made by ladies from Joseph United Methodist Church just across the street from Bronze Antler.

While taste buds sometimes drive a traveler to great lengths, this state offers a feast for one's other senses. "Oregon has so much to offer," emphasizes Kunzer. "From Portland, you are just a hop, skip and a jump away from the Columbia River Gorge, Mt. Hood, Willamette Valley wineries, and the scenic Pacific coast. These great outdoor activities appeal to many travelers that live and work in regions that are not as lucky to offer such scenic beauty. We get a lot of metropolitan visitors from Texas, New York, and the Midwest. No matter where you're headed, it's simply a quick day trip from Portland, so the tour operators can have you back just in time for our evening hosted wine reception and our s'mores hour."

Even business travelers are finding time to dip their toes in, if not fully immerse in, the local scene. "Of course, we still see that hard and true road warrior just going from city to city, and without time to explore. But many others are taking advantage of business travel and extending their stay, or at the minimum, squeezing as much juice out of their stay as possible," observes Munguia. "Travel can be expensive, so people are now focused on getting a fuller experience. They pack a great deal of activity into their travel plans: a daytime coast trip, an evening foodie experience, or a night on the town later. The modern travel is a go-getter, and there is no better place than Oregon for that."

Travelers come in all shapes, sizes, and mindsets focused on different goals. "The beauty of the 'Oregon experience' is that it isn't the same for everyone," reflects Gagliano. "Oregon appeals to a variety of audiences because of its many different draws. We offer adventures for outdoor enthusiasts, world-class drinking and dining for epicures, cultural and creative pursuits for the arts-inclined, tax-free shopping for bargain hunters, and so much more." All of those possibilities provide lodging operators with the chance to forge lasting relationships with customers and make an impact on everything else that their businesses touch.

"There is more to this than bottom line benefit," concludes Snyder. "There is absolutely a premium you pay for working with local craft purveyors, and it's worth it. For all of us, keeping things local benefits the environment, the local economies, continues innovation, and creates pride in community. Ultimately, it's great for the consumer. They have a quality product that has been cared for all the way to the table. Great experiences that they want to duplicate and share – that is what we aim to achieve, and that is what is possible together." **LN** KIRK RICHARDSON

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