

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NAPA VALLEY

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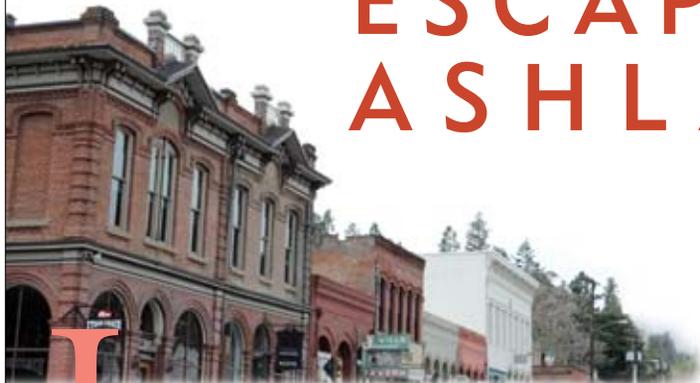
SUMMER FUN



ESCAPE TO ASHLAND



 BY AUTUMN MILLHOUSE
PHOTOS BY LIZA GERSHMAN



Jumping into the car for a road trip is synonymous with adventure. That’s why when the opportunity arose to explore a new city I pulled out my suitcase and started packing. A new destination for me is always a way to refresh, renew, and begin anew. No matter the lure of excitement, or lack of it, traveling is reassurance that viewing new places would readjust my own vision back home.

So, despite the popularity of one-tank road trips at the moment, I would highly recommend the one-tank and a half road trip to Ashland, Oregon. Where California ends and Oregon begins, it is only 15 miles north of the California Border. Ashland, Oregon became our designated hot spot after a friend had extended an invite to visit. I’m happy to report that the five-hour-drive to this enchanting location was worth every mile.

Reminiscent of the Napa Valley wine country lifestyle, Ashland is a small, eclectic town with a larger-than-life personality. Boasting over 72 restaurants, dozens of wineries, host to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (which kicks off in May), and the Ashland International Film Festival in April, this indie town is a mini-Mecca for epicurean and cultural delights.

Popular for the Lewis and Clark Expedition, Mount Hood and the Pacific Railroad, Oregon (Ashland in particular) is rapidly switching gears and is quickly becoming a modern travel destination. Gaining notoriety and winning awards for their Pinot Noir and Syrah, Southern Oregon is a hip up-and-coming wine region. Many people, from the US and abroad, are making the trek. Amazed to discover such a special town, and wondering why I haven’t visited earlier, Ashland was relentless in surprising us from the moment we arrived until the moment we waved good-bye.

Encompassing idyllic sun-kissed vineyards resting upon rolling green hills, local vintners sporting North Face jackets, emerald colored mountain forests surrounding us, hippie-chic artist explaining their breakthroughs, and quaint Victorian homes, Ashland generates and creates a friendly upbeat vibe in this progressive, yet traditional town. “Oregonians”, as they prefer to be called, are friendly, hospitable and are keen on sharing the multiple flavors of Ashland. As cheese creameries, breweries,

wineries, sculptors, actors and writers continue to thrive in this multifaceted town, Ashland will continue to gain the attention it deserves.

Over the course of four days, we elegantly dined on organic local products, such as grilled salmon with huckleberry salsa; drank fruity aromatic Viogniers and toasty cherry Pinot Noirs; chatted and sipped wine with vintners at small family-owned vineyards; lounged in stylish wine bars; got rubbed down and pampered in a spiritually inspired spa; viewed breathtaking and humbling independent films and documentaries; explored an abundance of welcoming art galleries during their weekly art walk and shopped in fashionable boutiques along Main Street. And this was just in four days!

Start packing your luggage, fill up your gas tank, carefully select your



travel music and head east on Highway 80, then north on Interstate 5. Drive safely, stop to explore Mount Shasta if you need a break but don’t get deterred. Ashland is not as far as you imagine, more picturesque and much more fascinating than Californians expect.

There are endless activities in Ashland; however, here are a few of our personal favorites for you to personalize and plan your own one-tank and half road trip.

HOTELS

ASHLAND SPRINGS HOTEL, which originally opened its doors in 1925, is a classic yet newly modernized hotel, perfectly located in the center of downtown. This sophisticated landmark hotel offers an array of amazing affordable getaway packages. 212 East Mail Street (541) 488-1700

WINCHESTER INN, RESTAURANT & WINE BAR is a family run Victorian Inn that offers a wine bar, restaurant and very personalized service. One block above Main Street, this adorable inn is perfect for a romantic and cozy weekend. South 2nd Street (541) 488-1113

ASHLAND CREEK INN is located along the soothing Ashland Creek, and offers a more intimate experience and an off-the-beaten path appeal. Check out the Moroccan themed room (my favorite), or choose from another foreign themed room to enrich your stay. All rooms are suites and offer a full kitchen. 70 Water Street, (541) 482-3315

WINERIES

APPLEGATE VALLEY AND ROGUE VALLEY, the most popular wine microclimates in Southern Oregon, both offer unique wine tasting experiences. Join local guide, Kim Lewis, owner of Southern Oregon Wine Tours, on one of his informative personalized wine tours. Kim is an encyclopedia of Oregonian information, and is eager to ensure that his guest have amazing adventures. Plus, hiring a tour guide eliminates all of the concerns with driving while wine tasting, and the frustration of reading maps. Some of our favorite wineries were Paschal Winery, Weisinger's Winery, EdenVale Winery and RoxyAnn Winery. www.ashland-tours.com

RESTAURANTS

LARKS RESTAURANT, located within the Ashland Springs Hotel, brilliantly creates and serves upscale comfort food. Using local produce and ingredients, this restaurant is a step above the rest. Don't miss out on the heavenly warm chocolate cake with house-made salted caramel ice cream.

WINE BARS

LIQUID ASSETS WINE BAR offers 20+ wines by the glass, and a delectable French-Inspired menu where art adorns the walls, and lively jazz fills the air. This modern wine bar is perfect for an upscale, yet inexpensive, dinner. 96 North Mail Street, Suite 201, (541) 482-09463

EDENVALE ENOTECA TASTING ROOM is Ashland's newest and possibly the hippest wine tasting hot spots in downtown Ashland. With a modern sleek space, free classes and veteran wine staff, there is no doubt on my next trip back to Ashland the place will be jam-packed. 17 North Main Street, (541) 482-3377

SPA

WATERSTONE SPA offers simple elegance, and the best massage I've ever had in my life. Located in a historic building but with modern cozy facilities, luxuriating for the day is a must here.

Enjoy La Stone therapy, Craniosacral therapy or the Great Skin facial. Relax in the hot or wet steam rooms before or after your treatments, which will assist in relieving any stress from the drive - trust me. 236 East Main Street, (541) 488-0325 **NVL**

