

Daytrippin'

"We came to Corvallis thinking that it looked like a very pretty College town but maybe not a lot to do. We discovered that Corvallis and Benton County offered a wonderfully relaxing vacation all within a short distance from Corvallis." Pete & Carol, California

Day 1

Pete and Carol started their day by enjoying a late and lazy breakfast at New Morning Bakery. " If I hit the jackpot tomorrow", writes Gary Warner, in the Orange County Register, " I'd quit the rat race and move to Corvallis. You'd find me at the New Morning Bakery with a big mug of coffee and a cinnamon roll, scanning the local real estate listings."

After breakfast they visited the Corvallis Tourism Visitor Center and checked out two of the narrated historical walking tour CD players (no cost). From there they walked in the beautiful sunshine enjoying a narrated tour of the history of Corvallis and area.

They especially enjoyed walking along the beautiful Riverfront Park and listening to the recounting of when Corvallis was a thriving river port for people jumping off to the Oregon and California gold rush.

Their historical walking tour also took them past many of the interesting downtown shops where Carol was able to find gifts for the family to take home and Pete found some fishing equipment he had been looking for.

After an outdoor lunch overlooking the river, Pete and Carol took back their CD player and picked up a self-guided tour brochure of Oregon State University and took off to enjoy the beautiful architecture and Ivy school charm of OSU.

An early dinner at Big River was followed by a live show at the Majestic Theatre and then to a deep sleep.

Day 2

Carol is an avid birdwatcher. Pete, although admittedly not knowledgeable about birding, enjoys his time outdoors. So, on day two they decided to enjoy the Peak Experience Loop Tour. (They both also enjoy good wine.)

This tour, which is a self-guided driving tour, features family farms and gardens, wildlife refuge, wineries and the highest peak overlooking the beautiful Willamette valley.

Following the map on the Peak Experience brochure they enjoyed a leisurely drive on country roads stopping in at Greengable Gardens, a ten acre historic collector's garden dating from the 1930s. From there Pete was hungry and wanted to go to the Gathering Together Farm store. The Gathering Together Farm is a certified organic farm in Philomath just outside of Corvallis. The store provides the finest in locally grown produce. The farm kitchens create sweet pastries and savory delight including their renown potato doughnuts. (Pete thought they were the best thing he ever tasted).

After eating his way through the beautiful Gathering Together Farm store, Carol wanted to find out more about the area and so they visited the gracious Benton County Museum formerly a college built by the members of the United Brethren Church in 1867. Both the college and the town were called Philomath derived from the Greek meaning lover of learning.

Next was Carol's main desire of the day a visit to Finley Wildlife Refuge. Located on 5,325 acres the refuge protects examples of many of the Willamette Valley's historical habitats and a wonderful place to go birding.

After seeing every bird in her book, Carol and Pete visited the Thyme Garden. Thyme Garden is an enchanting nursery and herbal display garden hidden away in the Coast Range Mountains. Displaying the Northwest's largest collection of organically grown herbs with over 700 varieties from around the world. They enjoyed the beautiful reflection pond and explored the trails along two mountain streams.

As they headed back, both Pete and Carol, who enjoy discovering new wines decided to visit Tyee Wine Cellars at the Buchanan family century farm. Producing a superb Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir, Tyee is one of the many award winning wineries in the area.

After buying a couple of bottles for consumption and shipping a case back to California and with the day growing late they took the short drive back to Corvallis and enjoyed a wonderful dinner at Le Bistro a renown French restaurant.

Day 3

A more active day was on the books for day three of their visit to Corvallis and Benton County. After renting bicycles from Peak Sports and picking up a quiche and some pastries from Le Patisserie for lunch, Pete and Carol took off for a day of bicycling heading up to Mary's Peak off Hwy 34. Open 24 hours April to November and offering a breathtaking 360 degree view of the Willamette Valley from the highest peak in the area.

A picnic lunch in the beautiful glade overlooking the valley was followed by a much faster ride back to Corvallis, much of it off road.

Realizing that they were going to be a little stiff and sore, Pete and Carol had booked a massage and a little pampering at one of the many luxury day spas in Corvallis after

which, dinner called at Michael's Landing, Corvallis old train station overlooking the beautiful Willamette River and Trysting Tree Golf Course, one of the best Public courses in the country.

Day 4

Day four for Pete and Carol, happened to be a Wednesday and with Pete feeling a little tired and sore from the bicycle ride, he talked Carol into taking an easy day by booking a half day educational tour of one of the beautiful local forests, Starker Forest. The Starker Forest Educational Tour starts at one of the local hotels and is a driven and narrated tour of the history of forest management in the area. Pete had reserved a spot on the free tour through the Corvallis Tourism Visitor Center.

Both decided that it was a wonderful way to finish their relaxing visit to Corvallis & Benton County.

“Corvallis is a place you can go to slow down. The beauty and the pace of life makes it a spot where you can regain your energy,” agreed both Pete and Carol as they headed back to California.