

An Arch Cape Retreat

New owners adding some new features.

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Imagine a vacation that begins before you've ever left your house. After making reservations, you are invited to wander through the Web site, a visual feast of images, slide shows and tips on the exquisite coastal region you will soon be visiting. A virtual teaser, or taste, to get you in the mood for the full immersion, which occurs the minute you round the bend on East Ocean Lane and come in full view of the castle that is Arch Cape Inn & Retreat.

From there, the goal, describes owner Cynthia Malkowski, is allowing yourself to be transported. Whisked away by the ornate furniture and storybook architecture, the personalized service and stunning ocean views. An eco-conscious retreat, environmental health is a priority at the inn. So you don't have to feel guilty that your indulgence has consequences on the pristine watershed or wildlife that surround you.

And speaking of the surrounding location, two counties of natural and historical sites await to be explored just outside the castle doors. What if you could be set up with a tour guide, an expert in the field of your interest, who could take you along on an exploration of the geology or marine life or best photography locations in the area? Then, when you return enlightened, a wine social next to the fire or a fine-dining experience prepared by trained chefs at the inn, might fill your evening. Oh, and breakfast will be waiting at 9 a.m. the next morning.

Since purchasing the former St. Bernard's Bed and Breakfast, Steven and Cynthia Malkowski have renovated, redesigned and added to the 10-room property with a mission of creating sustainable, luxury accommodations and an inclusive, retreat setting. Their goal is to provide an experience where guests can detach from their hectic lives and interact with the natural environment in meaningful ways.

"Business is all about meeting an unmet need," Cynthia said. "I see this deep hunger people have for connecting to something

larger than oneself in our country these days. People are wanting a deeper connection to the environment, to community and each other. A handmade, meaningful experience.”

The Malkowskis, who lived part time in Seattle and Seaside for many years, said it is important to them that the inn illustrates what they stand for. Exceptional quality and service, a comprehensive product, a relaxing and civilized experience and fine food and wine all play a part in creating the overall. This includes attention to details, like waste and sustainable practices, and a reduced carbon footprint to show their concern for the physical environment outside.

The Malkowskis (and their staff of 10) continue to work on the inn’s “green” certification, but recently the other practices set in place thus far were noticed by Select Registry’s Distinguished Inns of North America. The Arch Cape Inn & Retreat joined more than 400 other properties singled out for excellence. The innkeeping association noted that the retreat “is committed to being a superlative ambassador for travelers who are visiting the region in order to experience the best of the north Oregon coast’s hospitality, rich culinary and cultural heritage, as well as the natural beauty, while staying in a unique hospitality establishment, unlike any other in the area.”

The honor means a lot, Cynthia said, and is a nice recognition of all the work that has been done. She said the inn’s breathtaking Web site alone took her seven months of more-than-full-time labor. But she had a vision of what the inn could be, and it has grown into an “expanded calling” that they are using the building for.

Cynthia’s original idea, before purchasing the inn, had been to start a tour group featuring members of the North Coast Land Conservancy as guides. Finding a way more could tap into the group’s extensive knowledge of the area’s natural environment, and giving a portion of the proceeds back to the land conservancy to continue their “amazing work.” This concept remains core to what Cynthia calls “tour programs” she is at work putting together for guests since purchasing the inn last year. Personally guided, the tours will be one way of “transferring the focus on sustainability concepts and imbedding them in the private sector,” Cynthia notes.

They will also provide a unique way for guests to truly dive into the coastal destination, each one custom-planned to their desires. Help planning on-your-own outings highlighting local resources, such as birding or kayaking, is also provided to guests.

Another provision at the inn, now open to the public with reservations, breakfast and dinner is prepared each day featuring trained chefs and fresh ingredients. Breakfast menus range from mushroom and goat cheese quiche to Creole shrimp benedict. For dinner, Saturday nights feature a Dungeness crab feed and Fridays a prix fixe is offered for \$88 per couple. The inn also offers a unique setting for special occasions, such as Mother's Day, and a "personal chef experience" is available for those wanting one-on-one interactive time behind the scenes.

"It's got its own life," Cynthia said of the evolving inn/retreat concept. "It wasn't a plan, it wasn't a goal. I feel like my job is to be shepherd of this place. I feel like what's happening here wanted to be. Our job is to let it be what it wanted to be."

For more information, visit archcapeinn.com.