

To Inspire Stewardship

Helping people experience the natural beauty of the north coast through place-based cuisine



**By Theresa Myers
The Gazette**

The Gazette initially reported on The Arch Cape Inn and Retreat last spring, as a relatively new business in the area. We checked back to see how they have fared in this current economic climate.

Formerly known as the St. Bernards B&B, the Arch Cape Inn and Retreat opened in May of 2008 with extensive renovating and power-washing to do, but with the initial chateau / castle structure, originally sketched by Sam Steidel, still intact. The

summer was fine, said co-owner Cynthia Malkowski, but then came the "snow-nami" winter of last December and January.

"It was scary," she said. "Even the pre-registered guests couldn't make it." Last winter's weather, in addition to the economic meltdown, was devastating to many in the community.

But the Malkowski's held on to one of their personal goals for the new Arch Cape Inn: to help people experience the natural beauty of the north coast in such a way as to inspire greater stewardship of our environmental resources.

"We had to move into a mode of thinking, though, that was intense marketing and business preservation," said Cynthia. "Fortunately, my husband, Stephen, has a very strong business background."

With a guest profile of adults who are well-traveled, curious, and who want to learn more about the local environment and culture, the Malkowski's knew they had to remain true to their original environmental vision. Through careful planning and determination,

they have found a niche market that is thriving. Instead of large-scale "going green," eco-tourism or off-grid endeavors, Arch Cape Inn is becoming a model for what almost any of us can do.

For example: While Cynthia continues to develop her programs offering ecological tours of the north coast to her visitors, the chef at the Inn, Jonathan Hoffman, presents a tour through the food he serves up for dinner.

"The dinners are really a nature experience, guided by Chef Hoffman," said Cynthia. This was clear in a recent dinner offering of a smoked salmon appetizer and entrée of a skewer of lamb. The salmon was smoked with fresh Sitka Spruce needles and the lamb was circled with a deep red salal berry sauce. Both the salal berries and spruce had been foraged by Chef Hoffman in the surrounding woods.

"I grew up in Independence, Oregon," said Hoffman. "This stuff comes natural to me. I think I knew what the salmonberry was just looking at it when I was a kid. No one had to tell me that it was good to eat. Now I love to go out and see what is available in the woods."

"In addition to foraging for what is ripe in the woods, Hoffman has a kitchen herb garden just outside of the kitchen door. His current menu includes duck in a honey-lavender sauce. Other items on the menu are dependent upon what Hoffman finds on his near daily ventures to the many local farmers markets, farms, and fish vendors.

Cynthia calls the Arch Cape menu a story menu. "Through food," she said, "we provide a nature experience. Even Chef Hoffman's breakfast menu is amazing and edgy." She went on to explain that when they first opened and served up the traditional breakfast, high in fat and carbs, people would find themselves "crabby and tired" by mid-afternoon. Now, the breakfast includes more protein and fiber, so the Inn guests get a healthy and balanced start on their activities.

Another way of carrying out the original environmental dream is by how the staff at Arch Cape Inn heats, cleans, and cares for the property. "I am always asking myself," said Cynthia, "how can we

do this [whatever task is at hand] with the least impact on the environment."

So, for example, instead of cleaning everything with lots of chlorine bleach infused products, the staff is using vinegar. The final clean is then a wipe down with bleach water, in a solution meeting health requirements for disinfecting. The Inn has recently won the coveted Green certification for the Oregon Bed & Breakfast Guild.

The Malkowski's are also studying gray water and its possible use at the site. "Part of our vision," said Cynthia, "is how we can better appreciate and care for our environment, and how is that expressed in our daily lives, in our eating, cleaning, socializing. It is going to be a constant work in progress."

Key to the success of this vision is a staff that is totally on board. From a staff of four when they started up, the Inn now employs 10. Cynthia said that, in hiring, she looks for people with "heart, humility and intelligence." Specific job skills, in themselves, she explained, are learnable tasks. With this spirit, the entire staff is cross-trained. They all help to make the Inn an environmentally friendly place.

There is no recycle pick-up service in the area, so everyone chips in to help haul recycle material to the centers. Everyone can help contribute to the compost pile (although the professional gardener, Roger Barney and local botanist, Hope Stanton, oversee the pile). Keeping in close, daily communication with each staff member, everyone can make contributions for how things can run better.

"It's not a finished project yet," said Cynthia, "but Stephen and I feel happy. We wake up every day happy."