



TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2012

## Washington Wednesday: Iron Springs Resort

The brochure for *Iron Springs Resort* on Washington State's *Copalis Beach* says it's the place, "*Where Traditions Begin*".

It's certainly true for us.

A tradition has begun: we were checking available fall dates at this wet, windy, wonderful place high on a ridge overlooking the *Pacific Ocean* before we'd completed our first stay here last weekend.



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That in itself says a lot about the appeal of this mid-century resort turned new again by owners, the True family of Seattle.

The Sun-seeking Smiths have long avoided the Washington Coast for being too wet. . . too cold. . . and too gray.

And it was wet, cold and gray with cameo appearances of both the sun and moon. Yet, there was also a certain *spirit of place* here; and it didn't take long to be caught up in it.

Hours slipped past as we sat in those two chairs pictured above. The flat-screen television and free in-cabin Wi-Fi couldn't compete with watching the pounding surf through our rain pummeled floor-to-ceiling windows.



We sat in front of the fireplace each evening sipping our glasses of wine as firs swayed outside our cozy one-bedroom, one-bath cabin to the wind's haunting melody.



It was wild. It was magical.

Although new to us, **Iron Springs Resort** has been around since the 1940's. Comments in our cabin's guest book told the stories of loyal guests who returned each year, despite the aging decline of both the former owner and her cabins.



Many of those same loyal guests have penned notes of delight about the renovation and modernization of the cabin interiors by new owners, (brothers and their wives), Doug and Janet, and Bill and Ruth True, who purchased the resort two years ago; then closed it for a year-long refurbishing that included new floor to ceiling interiors: bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchens, furnishings and décor.

We were guests of the True's last weekend and while we had neither dogs nor family with us, both are welcome at this 24-cabin resort that reopened last July.



During a break in the rain, we bundled up against the elements and walked for miles on the flat, hard-packed sand. Beach access was easy – with proper wading boots we could have cut across nearby Boone Creek, but we opted for a well-maintained access trail through the forest not far from the resort office (it helped us keep our city slicker shoe-clad feet dry).



The beach surface is so firm that portions of it are a state highway, open to vehicles, as well as, an airport landing strip in the summer months.

Our two-night stay gave us time to explore other small towns that are within an easy drive of the resort. I'll tell you about them next week in ***Washington Wednesday***.

***If You Go:*** ***Iron Springs Resort***, 3707 Highway 109, toll-free 1-800-380-7850, phone 360-276-4230, [info@ironsprings.com](mailto:info@ironsprings.com)  
Seasonal rates range from \$169 per night to \$269, plus tax. There's a \$20 fee per dog per night for the first five nights. (Three dog per cabin limit.) Each cabin has a different floor plan (they are shown on the resort website - just click the link above). One-bedroom cabins are perfect for couples or small families. A few adjoining cabins on the property are perfect for large families or groups of friends who want to be together, but still have some privacy.

Check back here on ***Travel Photo Thursday*** to come along on a ***Razor Clam dig*** at ***Copalis Beach***, (that is *koh-PAY-lis*, by the way).



<http://www.travelnwrite.com/2012/03/washington-wednesday-iron-springs.html>





THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 2012

## TP Thursday: One 'clam' good time at Copalis Beach

In the early morning darkness they began arriving. From our cabin we watched dark silhouettes armed with 'guns' and shovels wade quickly across Boone Creek toward the ocean's receding surf. Others arrived in cars and trucks; a scant parade of vehicles easing into position on the hard-packed sand. . .



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The ever-so-brief **Pacific Razor Clam** season had arrived on Washington State's wet, windy, and oft-times wild **Copalis** (*koh-PAY-lis*) **Beach**. The morning's flurry of activity felt like a salt-sea version of "*Brigadoon*" – the musical in which a place and time came to life for a matter of hours then disappeared as though it had never existed.



© 2012 Joel Smith photo

We city slickers, with mere rain coats, gloves and jeans but sans heavy duty rain gear, opted to be spectators during the search for this most sought after shell fish in Washington State.

Its popularity in past years has attracted some 300,000 people, who've made nearly a quarter million digger-trips to the ocean beaches and harvested

between 6 - 13 million razor clams.

As we strolled the beach, we learned to look for three types of 'clam' signs. One, like in the photo, is the donut hole in the sand. . . it *could be* an indicator of a Razor Clam below . . . or of a shrimp. . . it takes practice to know the difference.



Sometime you just need to dig and find out. That's what the clam 'gun' or shovel is used for:



But only to a point. Then it is time to roll up the sleeves and really 'dig it':



The beach was alive with diggers. There are five Razor Clam beaches in Washington and it is not unusual to have as many as 1,000 people per mile on those beaches on a spring clam dig day.





***Step Two: Cleaning the Clams***



First a dip in the hot tub. . .



Then a bit of a scrub . . .



And then the little critter was ready to cook.



### ***Step Three: Eating the Clams***

We celebrated the harvest at a Saturday night feast which included [Razor Clam chowder](#) with our hosts at ***Iron Springs Resort***. (The link above will take you to the recipe they used – if's courtesy of Kevin Davis of ***Steelhead Diner at Seattle's Pike Place Market***.)





Gathered around the table with *Doug and Dustin True* (owners of *Iron Springs Resort*) and an assortment of their clam digging friends we shared food, wine, stories and laughter.

It was ***Pacific Northwest*** life at its finest.



***A few afterwards:*** Razor clam season comes in one- or two-day spurts each year; sometimes the season can be as few as 15 or as many as 35 days. Clam diggers are required to purchase a state license and are limited to 15 clams per person per dig.

The clam cleaning station is one of the new additions at *Iron Springs Resort*, the mid-century resort that re-opened last year after a years worth of renovation and modernization. (See yesterday's ***Washington Wednesday*** for more on the resort.)