



Wanderlust and Lipstick

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Favorite Northwest Getaway: Iron Springs Resort

by Nancy Mueller - WanderBoomer
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"Just make it easy." That's how **Doug True** summed up his family's goal for tackling the restoration of **Iron Springs Resort** in Copalis Beach, WA. "Make it easy for guests to be comfortable, relax and enjoy their stay."

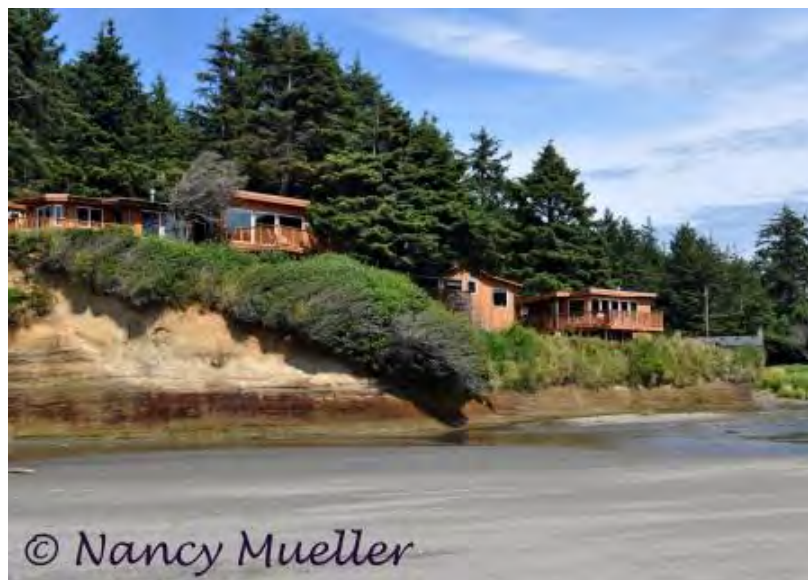


Doug's **wife Janet** adds: "**It's about the memories.** We wanted to preserve a place that has meant so much to generations of families, like our own."

I'd been intrigued by the resort since the '70's. College roommates had described a rust-tinted stream from iron ore deposits that ran through the property . . .



a string of cabins set like individual tree houses on cliffs above the Washington coastline . . .



a vast ocean shore where clam diggers crouch over the sand to scoop up that night's dinner . . .



a site of spectacular Fall and Winter storms . . .

But by the time my own family had paid a visit in 2002, the resort's rustic appeal had worn thin. The cabins and grounds needed a major intervention. Unable to maintain the deteriorating estate, owner **Olive Little**'s daughters later put the site up for sale. When the property lingered on the market, Doug and Janet knew they had to act – either that, or risk losing the **cherished retreat** where they had shared so many summers and special occasions.



With the help of family members, **Bill and Ruth True**, the two couples purchased the resort and set about accomplishing their goals. Over several long, thoughtful conversations, the families grappled with the question of how best to preserve the history while bringing the resort into the 21st century. **"Should we bring in wi-fi or not? What about TV? Do we want to install a playground?"**

In the end, wi-fi and TV made the grade, the playground did not. Site manager, **Dustin True**, explains: "When I was growing up here, I just felt that the ocean and hiking trails *were* my playground. "

We hadn't returned since our first visit, so when family acquaintance, Bill True, invited us to take a look at the renovation, we couldn't resist.



Wow – what a **stunning transformation!** Walking into the cabin felt like coming home to my best self. Gone were the shabby carpets and furnishings, replaced by hardwood floors, cushy beds with down comforters,



and plush, swivel chairs upholstered from vintage Pendleton and East Hudson Bay blankets.



The simple, timeless touches of **Robert Emil Arnesen**'s interior design create a peaceful, restorative retreat. Using reclaimed materials from the property seamlessly blends the past and present. Fallen spruce trees are repurposed as dining tables and knotted benches. Original wood siding is used in side tables and wall accents.

Beyond the structural enhancements and cozy furnishings, the **devotion to small details** in each of the 25 cabins is evident – a 500-piece puzzle depicting a scene from the property on the dining table, functioning



bedside reading lights (thank you!), superb wi-fi access, a flat-screen TV, a leather-bound guestbook for sharing memories of your stay, a wood-burning stove, fully-equipped kitchen – even doggy dishes to welcome faithful canine companions.



The main office doubles as the resort's **General Store** which packs an impressive inventory of goods, including food, wine, non-alcoholic beverages, desserts (always a plus), an extensive lending library of books and DVDs, games and beach toys – everything except dog rentals.



Though co-owner Ruth True had advised me before our visit: **"Bringing a dog here is almost a requirement,"** we came without one. But Dustin graciously offered the loan of his dog Ali if we wanted.



What more could we ask of our time away? Privacy and community, beautiful surroundings indoors and out, and a treasured companion at our heels for the asking. The best . . .

What's your favorite family getaway, Wanderboomers? Tell us why it's so special to you.