

Iron Springs Resort Gets Major Update, But Keeps Charm by Cary Ordway

Sometimes the best resort locations have old weather-worn buildings and out of date facilities because the best property is built on first. So you don't necessarily get a great location and a great facility.

With Iron Springs Resort in Copalis, Washington, happily you don't have to choose. Yes, the resort was aging at one time, but that has recently been remedied by Dustin True and his family who have transformed 24 weathered cabins into 24 private retreats with all the modern fixtures and conveniences you'll require.

The Iron Springs Resort has been a favorite with many Northwest residents who, for decades, would plan regular family outings to one of the best beach locations on the Washington coast. The cabins are spread throughout 20 acres of hillside property with every cabin having its own dramatic view of the Pacific Ocean and the wide, flat beach below. The heavily wooded property is like staying at the edge of a forest, where you look out on a long stretch of coastline and a vast Pacific that stretches into infinity.

The True family, who live in Seattle, vacationed here for many years and knew firsthand the particular charms of this special piece of property. Over the years, the cabins fell behind in their battle with Mother Nature, the elements taking their toll on the buildings. The Iron Springs Resort became known as a great place to go if you liked rustic accommodations in a premium location.

So when the property went up for sale in 2010, the True family could immediately see the potential. But they weren't just going to buy the resort and run it in its dilapidated state - they were going to close the property down for more than a year to allow time to come in and completely re-do each of the cabins. There was some thought given to staying open during construction but ultimately it was decided that customers during that period would be disappointed with so much noisy construction going on during their vacation.

Having been hands-on during that year of construction, Dustin True today is in a unique position to manage the resort. Still living in Seattle, True spends several days each week at the resort making sure that guests get the vacation experience they expected. And so far, the reviews are overwhelmingly positive.

We can see why. During our brief stay at the resort we were able to completely escape every-day life and appreciate the wonders of nature as we spent our time beachcombing, hiking and just sitting back enjoying the unbelievable coastal views.

The cabins at Iron Springs Resort are situated in such a way that there is more than adequate separation from your fellow resort guests. Some of the cabins are completely by themselves, while others may be clustered in small groups that still have decent space between them. Much of the wood from the original cabins is re-used in these cabins, and that helps the cabins retain a somewhat rustic feel.

But inside the cabins, there is great attention to providing the amenities that travelers nowadays expect in a cabin that rents for a little more or less than \$200, depending on the time of the year. Our cabin had a full kitchen with a stove, refrigerator, microwave and counter and cupboard space. It was an open design with a six-person dining room table in

the middle of the room and the kitchen at one end. At the other side of the room was a couch, coffee table and easy chair, with the two bedrooms and bathroom set off to the third side of the great room. On the fourth side was the outdoor deck - although the ocean-side windows are so large that you feel like you're on the deck even when you're in your cabin.

Inside the freezer was a package of cinnamon rolls that are prepared by a bakery in Seattle and, when baked in your cabin, turn out to be the best cinnamon rolls you'll ever have. This is continuing a tradition of the former owner who handed out cinnamon rolls and chowder to all the guests - whether they wanted them or not.

If you started out from scratch to design a resort that was going to offer a cabin-in-the-woods feel in one of the most beautiful settings you can imagine, you couldn't have done better than what the True family has come up with at Iron Springs. The basic ingredients were already there, but the Trues took that two or three steps further to combine that cabin-in-the-woods with a new kind of rustic - a more upscale experience that does not take away any of the charm of the previous resort, but rather builds upon it.

Part of the charm is owing to the fact that Copalis Beach is a quiet area with few people living nearby. The town itself is under 500 people and the resort is a mile or so out of town. The name of the town comes from the Copalis Indian tribe that occupied this area - about 200 of them back when Lewis and Clark visited in 1805.

The area eventually became known as the "home of the razor clam" which gives you an idea of one of the most popular activities for visitors to the area. Some say Copalis has the greatest razor clam bed in the world.

Visitors to the area also can drive the 13 miles to Ocean Shores, a more developed resort area south of Copalis. A favorite of Puget Sound residents, the Ocean Shores area boasts several major hotels and restaurants, tourist shops and other facilities in addition to a wide beach where you can drive your car right onto the beach. A popular activity on the beach near Ocean Shores is horseback riding with small groups of riders paying \$20 apiece for an hour ride along the coastline.

AT A GLANCE

WHERE: The Iron Springs Resort is located just outside of Copalis, Washington, which is about a 2.5-hour drive from Seattle. Puget Sound residents drive south on Interstate 5, then head west from Olympia on Highway 8 and then to the coast on Highway 109.

WHAT: Iron Springs Resort is an unusual combination of the "cabin-in-the-woods" experience with a spectacular location offering picture-postcard views from your cabin living room. While many resorts of this type feature older cabins, Iron Springs cabins are completely rebuilt and updated with all the conveniences that any family would require on this type of getaway or vacation at the shore.

WHEN: The best time, of course, is summer because of warm temperatures and a better chance of sun. However, the shoulder seasons offer a temperate climate and the winter season has an attraction all its own: storm-watching.

WHY: You go to Iron Springs Resort to enjoy a quiet vacation or getaway with lots of beachcombing, hiking and a great environment for simply sitting back and reading a good book. More activities are just 13 miles away in Ocean Shores.

HOW: For more information on Iron Springs Resort, please phone 1-800-380-7950.