



## weekend escapes: iron springs resort in copalis beach, washington

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What does it mean to go to the beach? As you move across the globe a trip to the beach can conjure up many types of memories. Deserted ones in Hawaii, boardwalks and caloric snacks on Coney Island, Caribbean resorts with rum drinks just steps from the ocean, and well groomed Italian beaches where you pay for your own cordoned off section to bronze.

Regardless of their incarnation, my favorite beach experiences, however, are those where the context remains. Where my experience feels just as similar as those who have come years before to get away, to hear the ocean, smell the salt air, and enjoy the natural beauty that surrounds them. In the Pacific Northwest, I recently discovered [Iron Springs Resort](#), a place that allows you to experience a trip to the coast in the way it has been done for decades. Where you can retreat into nature and enjoy the relaxed Pacific Northwest spirit.



Iron Springs Resort in Copalis Beach, Washington has been in operation for over sixty years. It was a spot where families would pack up the kids, the dog and supplies for a week away from it all. Where they could wake up each morning to a foggy mess, head down to the beach to fish or clam or just wander, or stay up on the hillside amidst the windblown trees with a view, a book, and some time by the fire. As Iron Springs' proprietor, Olive Little, aged, so did the cabins and until recently had fallen into disrepair. In 2010, however, it was purchased by the True family from Seattle, who had been visiting the spot for generations. Undertaking a massive renovation and just reopening in the summer of 2011, they've brought the cabins into the 21st century, while retaining the spot's original charm.



Snippets of the past echo throughout the current property, including an upside-down boat that ushers guests in from the highway when they arrive. This boat has been an iconic greeting for visitors and one that was restored as part of the property's face lift. The boat theme echoes throughout the property, even down to the cabins' numbers.



Image: .

In the past, when guests arrived at Iron Springs, Olive would take your order for cinnamon rolls and chowder needed for your upcoming stay. Janet True recalls fondly "Olive didn't ask you *if* you would like to order cinnamon rolls and chowder, she simply asked how many you wanted." The True's have kept the tradition alive by offering cinnamon rolls prepared by Seattle's Parisian-style bakery, [Belle Epicurean](#) in the resort's store for you to bake up fresh each morning. I can report that they were a decadent and deliciously sweet way to start the day. A tradition well worth carrying on.



The resort consists of 24 cabins perched on the hillside overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The cabins, while newly restored, remain on their original footprints with panoramic views of the ocean. There's truly not a bad view in the house and with ample windows you'll get to sneak a peek at the ocean whether relaxing in front of the fire, on a private deck, or preparing dinner in the kitchen. After dinner one evening, I lingered on the deck to catch the last few minutes of daylight. Crabbing boats put on quite a show with their sodium lights appearing from behind the bluff.





The interior of the cabin made it difficult to want to leave. The natural palette and reclaimed materials made an environment that was cozy, comfortable and well-suited to its surroundings. The cabins house unfinished wood floors, textured reclaimed paneling, chairs upholstered with vintage Pendelton wool blankets and tables created from fallen wood on the property. Whether I was cozying up on the sofa or catching up on emails in the morning, ample windows allowed me to enjoy the surroundings. (There's fast T1 internet piped in for those of us who need to get away, but just can't quite do it.)

Interior designer, [Robert Emil Arnesen](#) created well thought out spaces that brought the outdoors in and harmonized with the natural beauty of the setting.



Creative reuse of the former cabins' siding become the walls and trim of its reincarnated form. My favorite appearance is the blue panels utilized in several of the cabins. A questionable color choice from an era long ago now reads as timeless and your attention is drawn to the texture of the surfaces and contrast of color, just as it is on the beach outside.



Natural elements are brought inside, as well, with unique pieces of furniture. This table in the honeymoon cabin is supported by tree branches and reminds you of the trees you see directly out of the cabin's windows.



Another layer of nature was added by the incorporation of lithographs from the 60s and 70s by local artists, [Walton Butts](#) and [Elton Bennett](#) in almost every cabin. I think that seeing nature through the filter of an artist's interpretation adds to your appreciation of the beauty that surrounds you. What the artist noticed may have escaped your own experience and lends itself to new discoveries as you explore the world around you. I wasn't familiar with either artist before this visit, but think both are unsung heroes who recorded the beauty of the Pacific Northwest.



Once out of your cabin and its glorious view, Iron Springs Resort is a beautiful spot to enjoy nature. Whether from one of the viewpoints overlooking the ocean, on a walking trail or tromping through the

water to get down to the beach to dig some clams. On a foggy morning, I found myself alone on the beach with the sound of the waves as my soundtrack and a gaggle of seagulls my only companion.



To fuel your visit, stop and pick up some supplies from [Voss Acres](#), a produce stand with a lovely garden and barnyard animals to peek at. If you're not in the mood to cook, the local watering hole, Green Lantern, has huge hamburgers, baskets of fried seafood and an impressive tap list. Time your visit right and go during [razor clam season](#) and you'll be able to procure your dinner on the beach itself.



I can't wait to go back during clamming season to catch my share and make my own chowder on a cold fall night. To while away the evening by the fireplace with a glass of wine and a puzzle or watching a storm roll in off of the ocean. There may not have been a wifi connection or a microwave there sixty years ago, but the desire to slow down and get away from the hustle and bustle still remains.