



GOODBYE STRESS, HELLO BLISS

Port Orford's WildSpring Guest Habitat unwinds the wired and weary.

Stress had been my constant companion for so long that I was beginning to talk to it. As I drove south to the beautiful coastal town of Port Orford, I delivered some news that was hard for my stress to swallow.

"We've been seeing too much of each other," I began. "My birthday is tomorrow, I'm treating myself to a restful stay at WildSpring Guest Habitat and I expect we'll be parting company. . ."

Stress seized me in a panic. I struggled to shake it off as I finished my sentence. ". . . for a long time, I hope!"

The moment I arrived at the woody five-acre resort, stress lost its grip on me. The key to my private cabin, as well as information about the resort and the area, was waiting in a bin under a wooden shelter. After a long drive, I didn't have to be sociable, or even articulate. Phew!

My little cabin embraced me with welcoming warmth. Filtered through towering trees, natural light illuminated



Hot tubbing at WildSpring
has a view of the Pacific Ocean.



WildSpring's cabins are nestled
among 100-foot trees. Clear
views of the ocean is a luxury contrast.

MAURICE BERRY LTD.

a cozy living room with overstuffed chairs and a queen-sized bed, plump with a down-filled duvet.

I wandered amongst the four other cabins and down paths padded with pine needles, keeping an eye out for whimsical statues and spiritual symbols tucked among the leaves and ferns. I paused at a meditation alcove to sit and listen to the ocean, the birds and the wind.

The next morning, my birthday, I awoke alone and unencumbered. Stress was no longer clinging to me. On my way to the labyrinth to slowly walk the circular pebble-lined path, three deer strolled near me. They must have sensed that I was just as peaceful as they were.

I walked up the hill to the Guest Hall that sits high on a bluff overlooking the ocean. At the breakfast buffet, my host wished me a happy birthday and said his wife had offered to lead a guided meditation for interested guests that evening. That, I thought, would be the icing on the birthday bliss cake.

But first things first. I had booked an in-cabin massage from a masseuse who exuded such peacefulness she could pass for a saint. She gently coaxed from my muscles any lingering vestiges of my erstwhile competition, stress.

I spent the rest of the day beachcombing, hiking and exploring Port Orford's many art galleries and antique shops. I toured a myrtlewood gift factory and the Lifeboat Station Museum. After a birthday dinner of fish and chips, I returned to WildSpring.



RENEE PERIN

In Michelle and Dean Duarte's lovely home, near the Guest Hall, I listened with closed eyes and even breath to Michelle's soothing voice as she coaxed me and two other guests to visualize all personal boundaries fading into a serene swirl of consciousness that filled the entire universe.

That night, long after dark, I slipped into the water of the hot tub, just down the bluff from the Guest Hall, and tilted back my head. The Milky Way, stretching from horizon to horizon, cut a swath through the most stars I think I've ever seen. Below, the ocean hummed in a steady, life-affirming rhythm.

The best gift to myself is the ability to revive—at will—that glorious, peaceful feeling. Stress no longer stands a chance.

—SUSAN G. HANSEN

Head On Water Orford



WHAT'S MORE...

WILDSRING GUEST HABITAT

92978 Cemetery Loop, Port Orford
866.333.9453, www.WildSpring.com
One or two guests may in well-appointed cabins for \$198-\$275 a night.

PAULA'S BISTRO

236 6th St., Port Orford
541.332.9378
This superb fine-dining restaurant doubles as an art gallery.

THE CRAZY NORWEGIAN'S

259 6th St., Port Orford
541.332.8001
This is the place for great fish and chips.

JOHNSON STUDIO & GALLERY

930 8th St., Port Orford
541.332.0999, <http://johnsongalleryartpod.com>
This is just one of eight art galleries in town. Sculptor Eric Johnson made the abstract marble Mary sculpture at WildSpring.

PORT ORFORD LIFEBOAT STATION MUSEUM

92331 Coast Guard Hill Road, Port Orford
541.332.0521
www.PortOrfordLifeBoatMuseum.org
Open Thursday through Monday, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., free admission. Learn about the Coast Guard teams who braved storms to rescue people from sinking ships.

PORT OF PORT ORFORD

This is one of the most unusual "dolly" poems in the world, where boats are lured by crane from the ocean's water to the dock.
Port Orford Visitors Center
541.332.4100, www.DiscoverPortOrford.com

Call or Click

Oregon Coast Writers Association
800.628.2101
www.VisitTheOregonCoast.com

For more information, turn to "Planning Your Trip," page 82.