



Oregon Awakening

The Allison Inn & Spa celebrates the flavor and spirit of Oregon wine country

BY MARY MURRAY

Something's growing in Oregon. This Pacific Northwest state blooms with a variety of desirable crops. Lavender paints hilltops purple, producing a romantic fragrance reminiscent of a fine French perfumery. Hazelnut trees line up in perfect order and yield delicious morsels commonly listed on Oregonian menus as filberts. Pinot Noir grapes thrive in the rocky soil and long grow season, when damp winters give way to warm summer days and breezy evenings.

The Allison Inn & Spa is situated amid this bounty in the Willamette Valley, Oregon's largest wine region. Here, the farm-to-table concept permeates all walks of life—not just cuisine—and a passion for supporting local purveyors is palpable across the property. Sculptures by area artists dot an idyllic walking trail. Grape seeds and herbs grown on-site pop up in spa treatments. A snack



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ALLISON INN & SPA

AFTER WALKING THE GROUNDS, KICK BACK IN THE COMMUNAL LIVING ROOM, WHERE YOU CAN SAMPLE THE ALLISON'S LOCAVORE-CENTRIC FOOD AND BEVERAGE PROGRAM.

basket of regional treats (chocolate-covered filberts, anyone?) greets guests upon arrival.

Since opening in September 2009, The Allison has set the standard for Willamette Valley luxury accommodations. Beyond quaint bed and breakfasts, The Allison is the place to stay when sojourning to Oregon wine country—and many valley

vintners praise the resort for helping put the region on the elite travel radar.

A study in understated elegance, the 77 rooms and eight suites all house fireplaces and terraces, where guests can watch hot air balloons rise along with the sun. Most visitors spend their days exploring the roughly 500 wineries that make up the Willamette Valley American Viticultural Area, which is divided into six subregions. These expeditions are made easy by a bevy of transportation services that take oenophiles from one site to the next. The Allison also offers day use of Lexus test cars, so you can winery hop on your own time and in high style.

When in need of a respite between tastings, relax in one of the many modern Adirondack chairs that line the resort's 32 acres or curl up with a charcuterie board in front of the communal living room fireplace. The Allison Spa is another sanctuary for relaxation. The 15,000-square-foot facility is outfitted with multiple sun terraces and designs its treatments around ecological elements. The signature Mimosa massage incorporates a Champagne oil that will leave skin feeling refreshed and effervescent.

Speaking of libations, the wine selection at Jory, The Allison's fine dining restaurant, boasts more than 800 labels, about 65 percent of which are from the Pacific Northwest. Guests can even get to know the vintners behind the bottles at tastings held every Thursday.

Some of the wines come courtesy of The Allison's own vineyard, but the property produces so much more than Pinot Noir. Measuring an acre and a half, the Chef's Garden grows everything it possibly can for use in Jory's seasonal menus inspired by the Willamette Valley's indigenous delights. The garden delivers standard produce but doesn't shy away from more peculiar kitchen requests like oca, an Andean tuber with a sour flavor. Tours of the garden are available by request, and if you hear some buzzing during your visit, don't fret: Tucked away in one corner are five hives that make honey for the whole hotel.

Most of that nectar ends up at Jory. Armed with a résumé that includes stints at Napa Valley's French Laundry and El Bullí in Spain, chef Sunny Jin is constantly updating Jory's offerings to reflect the best of the garden and to highlight artisan items, such as handmade cheeses from Oregon's own Briar Rose Creamery. It all commingles in innovative dishes like wild Oregon king salmon paired with chanterelles, pardon peppers, charred sweet corn, and an apricot coulis. Diners can watch these works of culinary art come together by reserving a seat at the Chef's Table or the counter adjacent to the open kitchen. Here, fires dance and china clings in tune to a soundtrack of epicurean excitement. *(theallison.com)* <<



JORY'S BLACKENED LAMB TENDERLOIN WITH GRIDDLED CORN CAKE, PICKLED STRAWBERRIES, AND EDAMAME



ALL ROOMS FEATURE OUTDOOR SPACE AND A FIREPLACE.



DOMAINE DROUHIN

3 WILLAMETTE VALLEY HIGHLIGHTS

1 DOMAINE DROUHIN: Arguably Willamette Valley's most well-known label, Domaine Drouhin is owned by the Drouhin family of Burgundy fame. A four-level, gravity-flow winery sits amid 124 vineyard acres and is open daily for tastings. Many of its finest varietals are named for winemaker Véronique Drouhin-Boss' children, like the Chardonnay Arthur and the Pinot Noir Laurène. *(domainedrouhin.com)*

2 BRICK HOUSE VINEYARD: Following a former life as a foreign news correspondent, Doug Tunnell returned to his native Oregon to pursue his real passion: Pinot Noir. Schedule a private tasting to savor a few of his finest vintages of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Gamay Noir, and to walk the vineyard with Tunnell and Jewel, Brick House's resident Labrador. *(brickhousewines.com)*

3 RED RIDGE FARMS: In a land of extraordinary views, nothing compares to the vista at Red Ridge, home to Durant Vineyards and Oregon Olive Mill. After sampling a flight at Durant, head down to the farm store to taste a range of extra virgin olive oils in flavors like lemon and blood orange. It's also the prime place to pick up some lavender keepsakes. *(redridgefarms.com)*