

# Unlikely Places

Those who don't believe in magic never find it.

<http://michelleschusterman.com/2011/09/16/old-and-new-memories-at-iron-springs/>

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## Old and new memories at Iron Springs

*Nostalgia is a powerful thing.*

The smell of a crawfish boil sends me straight back to my backyard twenty years ago, on my hands and knees pitting two crawfish together in battle before they joined the others in their jacuzzi tub filled with potatoes, hot dogs and spices. Two seconds of hearing a berimbau and I'm pining so hard for Salvador it brings tears to my eyes.

This week I had the strange experience of feeling nostalgia for a place I'd never visited. My friend Kelly Goodman of Travellious invited me to tag along on a press trip to check out the newly renovated Iron Springs Resort, located north of Copalis Beach.



Our cabin at Iron Springs



Sunset view at the lookout next to our cabin

### **A brief history**

The resort, consisting of 24 private cabins situated on beachfront cliffs so that each has a view, was originally purchased and operated by Olive Little in 1947. Doug and Janet True, Seattle residents, were Iron Springs regulars for over 45 years. In 2010, they purchased the property and started a year-long renovation project with the goal of retaining the original charm of the cabins – each with its own unique floor plan and design – while solving some of the problems that had been making it too much of a challenge to visit the place they loved.

“By the end, it was getting really difficult to come out here,” Janet True told us at the welcome dinner the family had prepared. Over a meal of salmon, watermelon salad and farm-fresh charred vegetables, the Trues explained just what motivated them to take on this enormous project. “We had to pack linens, pots, pans, dishes, food...it was too much of a hassle.” Many other regular guests had the same complaints.



Family dinner



Allie

**The renovation**

The Trues had a lot of ideas in mind when it came to the overall look they wanted, although they weren't all necessarily specific. "I told him to make it 'cabiny', joked Dustin True, property manager and Janet and Doug's son.



Define 'cabiny'

"Him" would be Robert Emil Arnesen, the designer in charge of the renovations who came along on a guided tour we took of the property Wednesday morning. The more Robert pointed out the details and callbacks to the old cabins he'd incorporated, the more I started to feel as if I, too, had spent my childhoods summers coming out to Iron Springs in a car loaded down with clothes, sandals, towels, kitchenware and s'mores supplies.



#### Speaking of nostalgia – s'mores rule

The cabins are modern – granite countertops, hardwood floors, wi-fi, flat-screen TVs. But they're classic too, with many featuring wood burning stoves, Northwest artwork by locals, wonderfully mismatched furniture with clashing plaids and stripes, knotted wood benches made from Spruce trees fallen on-site. Robert paid particular attention to retaining some of the feel of the old cabins; in one, the newly paneled walls had touches of the original seafoam color.



Beautiful fireplace



Love those chairs



Every seat has a view



Wood burning stove



Take a closer look at the paneling



Not a bad place to wake up



I'd rather eat under this table just to stare at it



Lovely color accents inside the lamps

And I can't forget the dogs! Plenty of resorts and hotels claim to be dog-friendly. This place is more like dog-mandatory, from the water bowl and mat placed outside each cabin's door to the paw-printed towel inside for cleaning up wet, sandy paws.



Clearly, the "before" shot

### **New traditions**

Since its grand reopening this past July, most of the visitors to Iron Springs Resort have been long-standing regulars like the Trues. But with kitchens stocked with cooking supplies and bathrooms and bedrooms stocked with linens, getting out to their cabin on the coast is easier now than it used to be.

Like all Iron Springs regulars, the Trues have a cabin that's 'theirs;' the one they rented every year. Doug even told us about a family who'd recently come up only to leave with the promise of returning when 'their' cabin was available, refusing to take another vacant cabin. When I checked into my own cabin, I found a guestbook on the coffee table and flipped through it. "It's even more beautiful now than when I was a kid," one guest had written. "This is OUR cabin, and we can't wait to come back next year!" I hope that guest doesn't mind sharing, because after spending time with this family and hearing their memories of this place, I wouldn't mind making some more of my own here.

