

New Restaurant Located at Lithia Springs Resort & Gardens of Ashland, Oregon

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**By Charlie McHenry**

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Innkeeper Duane Smith of Lithia Springs Resort & Gardens of Ashland has opened a new restaurant, Verdant, serving Southern Oregon Cuisine prepared using traditional European methods, Verdant will feature a Prix Fix (fixed price) menu, changing daily, that includes a variety of roast meats and fresh fish complemented by a number of creatively prepared and presented vegetable dishes.

The new restaurant's lush, European-style desserts and an extensive beer and wine list will cater to the most discriminating tastes. A wine menu chosen by the Sommelier to match dinner will be available nightly. Set in the Carriage House at the Inn at Lithia Springs, located at 2165 W. Jackson where Ashland's Main Street becomes South Pacific Highway, the restaurant seats 40 people. The new restaurant will be open for dinner Thursdays through Saturdays from 5:30 p.m. until 8 p.m. Reservations are available by calling (541) 488-1062.

In addition to Thursday-through-Saturday dinners, Verdant is hosting "Wine Wednesdays," every Wednesday from 4:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. These events will feature special presentations of Owner- or Barrel-Select wines, paired with the restaurant's gourmet fare in an informal setting where guests can eat, talk and sample fine food and wine in comfort.

Helena Darling, Verdant's executive chef, founded Ashland's Prima Vera restaurant in the early 90's, then sold it in 1997. "I am delighted to be working with Duane Smith to provide our region and visiting tourists with a new and different fine-dining experience," said Darling.

"I'm going to ensure that Verdant will be known for its fresh, local ingredients; sophisticated, textured flavors and creative menu options featuring regional favorites. Our cooking is really inspired by what we've got growing outside the kitchen door and the wide variety of very high quality locally-grown organic produce and meat." Darling's style incorporates the use of fresh and rare herbs, like Saffron; flavored oils, like truffle and walnut oils; and aged, balsamic vinegars in the preparation of roasted, grilled and baked meat and fish entrees. Her desserts add Northwest touches to her classic European

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sensibilities to produce menu items like: "Meyer Lemon Custard Cake with Blackberry Puree and Orange Cream Cookie" and "Housemade Spumoni Bombe with Strawberry, Pistachio and Chocolate Ice Creams served with Balsamic Syrup and Anise Biscotti."

After years of promoting and enjoying all of Ashland's fine-dining establishments, owner Duane Smith thought it was time to offer area residents and Inn guests his own vision of Rogue Valley Haut Cuisine. "I've always wanted to try my hand at the restaurant business," said Smith, who has lived in Ashland for almost 40 years. "I remember when the Chateaulin first opened 34 years ago. I hope that Verdant will join the top-tier of fine restaurants in our region - which is home to some of the West Coast's finest dining."

Restaurant Verdant plans to look at expanding their operating days and hours during the height of the tourist season in Ashland. "It will depend on our success and the demand for our services," said Smith.

"We want to keep all of our options open to best serve our customers."

Lithia Springs Resort & Gardens is located in Ashland, Oregon - home of the Tony Award-winning Ashland Shakespeare Festival, Southern Oregon University and the Mt. Ashland Ski Resort. The Resort is privately held. Established in 1991, Lithia Springs Resort & Gardens of Ashland and Waterstone Spa features Ashland's only natural hot springs water in its baths and pool. The award-winning SPA offers facials, wraps, steams and hot rocks massage. The Inn offers guests accommodation in 4 garden rooms; 10 small suites; 8 English cottages; and 3 theme suites. Open year round, the Inn can be contacted, toll-free, at (800) 482-7128; or by email, at: [Lithia@ashlandinn.com](mailto:Lithia@ashlandinn.com). They welcome press trips.

Freelance Writer in Southern Oregon

### **Top Golf Tours**

**By James Rothaar**

Presenting championship-level golf courses throughout the world to our readers is not a task taken lightly at LuxéMont. We know that our readers are luxury purists and demand only the best in all pursuits and endeavors

The majority of recommended places are golf facilities, meaning that there are several great, challenging championship golf courses on the premises such as the Carnoustie Hotel, Golf Resort & Spa on the eastern coast of Scotland. The luxury resort's Championship Course will host the 2007 British Open. It is conveniently located near 200 (Yes, 200!) neighboring golf courses, including the vaulted Old Course at St. Andrews and Kingsbarn. The Greenbrier of Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, is a national landmark with its first course dating back to 1913, while the Broadmoor, which is located in Colorado, Springs, Colorado, hosted the 1998 PGA Cup Matches and has a course with the highest elevation in the U.S. at 6,800 feet.

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There are seven participating luxury resorts surrounding Vista Vallarta, which is located in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. The courses, which were designed by Jack Nicklaus and Tom Weiskopf, feature grassy hillsides, dense forests of palm trees and natural creeks and arroyos. The Barefoot Resort & Golf is located next to the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway of South Carolina's North Myrtle Beach. It has four championship-level courses that are highly ranked by Zagat.com. Another great golf complex in South Carolina is the Sea Pines Resort, having recently hosted the PGA's Verizon Heritage. And for the extremist or purist at heart, there is the rugged Bandon Dunes, which is above the Pacific Ocean along the coastal forest of Bandon, Oregon. Its courses rival those of 15th century Scotland.

The Midwest of the U.S. is represented well by the Treetops Resort. Its five-championship level courses rank among the top three golf facilities of the U.S. A second Midwest recommendation is Destination Kohler of Wisconsin. It has two separate golfing facilities with four championship courses and a luxury resort. No list of great golf facilities is complete without including the site of the 2005 U.S. Open Championship, Pinehurst. However, it is somewhat odd that this legendary site did not even have a golf course on it originally. In 1895 it was a luxury health resort. The landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted, also designed the landscape of NYC's Central Park.

Obviously there are some other courses that also could have made our list, but keeping the list at 10 only required discipline. It also serves as an indicator that more great golf facilities will be conveyed in future reports. All of our recommendations provide luxury accommodations and a wide assortment of amenities. Many of these facilities have more than one luxury hotel on their sprawling resorts. Countless package deals are available for both vacationers and business travelers. A personal golf event or tournament at most facilities can easily be arranged as well as social or business events.

The Luxé 10 Golf Tours is ready to tee-off. Fore!

James Rothaar writes articles on the Luxury Lifestyle for

on topics such as

Golf and Exotic Luxury Cars.



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