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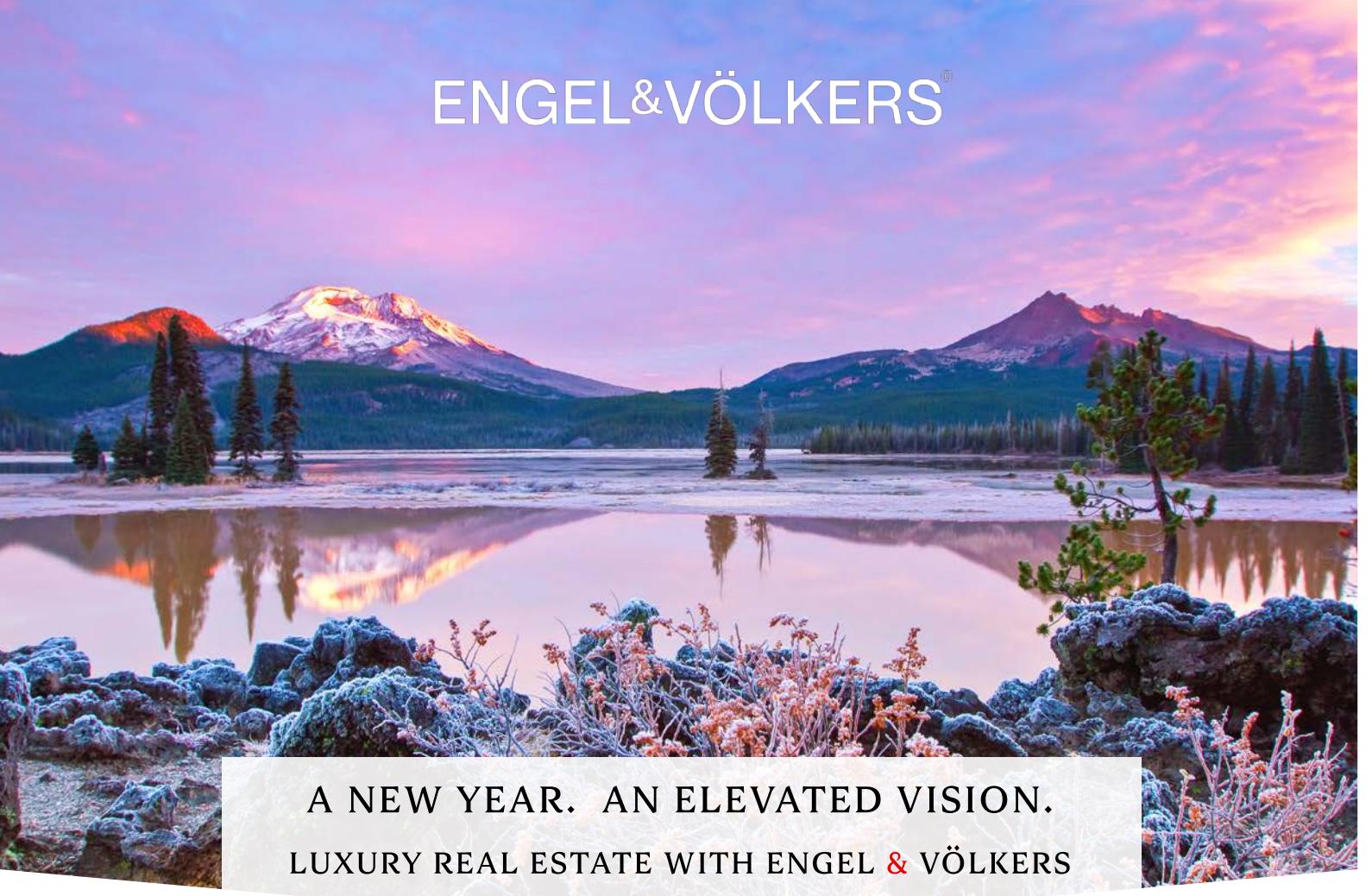
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DIGITAL EXTRAS

Searching for your next best meal in Bend? Search our dining guide to learn more about the top spots at bendmagazine.com/dining-guide.

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FEATURED *stories*



PAGE 80

73

FROM BEND TO CORTINA D'AMPEZZO

For athletes, a path to the Winter Olympic Games means years of effort, determination and community support. Discover how hometown roots have shaped podium dreams of gold.

Written by Annie Fast, with Cheryl Parton.

80

IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT SHOT

Before dawn, a crew takes off for a photography session in Central Oregon's backcountry. Follow their sleds as they apply years of skill to find terrain, and athleticism becomes artistic imagery.

Written and photographed by Pete Alport.

86

RACING UP A MOUNTAIN

Skimo, or ski-mountaineering, is a ritual for this community of skiers who shimmy uphill with fitness and finesse. From pre-dawn ascents to Bend's annual VertFest, discover the uphill climb behind every fast descent.

Written by Tim Neville.



ON THE COVER
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WORDS and PICTURES



PETE ALPORT PHOTOGRAPHER

Born and raised in Portland, Pete Alport grew up enjoying mountain biking, skiing, snowboarding and anything else that kept him outside. He moved to Bend in 1994 for college and to snowboard, and in 1996, he bought his first video camera. Shooting outdoors, Alport fell in love with videography and made his first movie in 2000. After finishing his education in Portland, he moved back to Bend to pursue a career in video. Alport has been shooting professionally, primarily snowboarding and skiing video, for almost 25 years and still photography for more than 15 years. He takes readers along for a shoot on page 80.



IRENE COOPER WRITER

Irene Cooper's poems, stories, essays and reviews appear in *Denver Quarterly*, *The Rumpus*, *Witness*, *Diagram* and elsewhere, and include the poetry collections *spare change* (finalist for the Stafford/Hall award); *even my dreams are over the constant state of anxiety*, and the chapbook *octets*. Cooper is the author of two novels, *Committal* and *Found*. She teaches and supports AIC-directed creative writing in Central Oregon, where she lives with her "people" and dog Roxy. In another life she was a chef. Two lives intersect in this issue where Cooper writes about the hot topic of spicy foods and drinks on page 91.



MIRA HANSEN WRITER

A Bend-based writer and editor, Mira Hansen discovered a love for words and literature after attending her first Shakespeare play at age 6. Her gravitation toward art and storytelling has since turned into a career writing and editing scripts, articles and newsletters for podcasts, magazines and online publications. Hansen adores the Central Oregon community and has focused on highlighting its stories any chance she gets since moving to Bend in 2023. Beyond writing, she dabbles in painting, baking and interior design. Her heart for the community shows in her story on Bethlehem Inn on page 47.



TIM NEVILLE WRITER

A correspondent for *Outside* magazine whose work is included in *Best American Travel Writing*, *Best American Sports Writing* and *Best Food Writing*. Neville has written about everything from student pilots and adventure racing to the crew of Mt. Bachelor Ski Resort and pickleball for *Bend Magazine*. An avid skier, runner, cyclist, climber and angler, Neville has been to all seven continents and speaks four languages. When not traveling, he can be found exploring Bend with his wife and daughter. For this issue, Neville wrote about skimo athletes who race up to ski down Mt. Bachelor at the annual event, Vertfest, see page 86.



CODY RHEAULT PHOTOGRAPHER

A professional filmmaker, photographer and budding writer, Sisters-based Cody Rheault travels the globe telling stories of people and places with his camera. Using a candid documentary style, Rheault's work is inspired by the outdoors. He's spent much of his career honoring the life of military veterans through short films. When not behind the lens, Rheault enjoys time with his family, hiking local peaks, disc golfing or riding his motorcycle on backroads. For this issue, Rheault went below the streets of Bend to capture the Underground Book Gallery, and shows us the School of Rock. See pages 51 and 105.

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OF BIG DREAMS,
SNOW-DUSTED
PEAKS AND THE
UNMISTAKABLE
MAGIC OF WINTER IN
CENTRAL OREGON.”

PUBLISHERS' *letter*

Last spring we headed to Sun Valley for the World Cup Finals, joining a crowd of locals and fans from around the world to cheer on Team USA just one mountain range away from Central Oregon. A highlight was watching Mikaela Shiffrin and Lindsey Vonn make history together on Bald Mountain—two generations of greatness carving their legacies in real time. Standing there reminded us that legends aren't born in a moment; they're shaped by community, grit and countless small steps toward a dream.

We see that same spark right here at home. Central Oregon is full of athletes chasing their own breakthrough, and as Team USA heads to Cortina, we're especially excited to cheer on our local hopefuls who are writing the next chapter of that story. Meet them on page 73.

This issue celebrates the magic of winter in our backyard—from our “Winter Musts” list of 30 things to do this season to an inside look at backcountry skiing by snowmobile, brought to life through Pete Alport's stunning photography. Whether you're discovering a new trail, embracing a fireside ritual or following the journey of an athlete you're rooting for, we hope this issue inspires your next winter adventure.

This year, we also reached a milestone we're incredibly proud of: *Bend Magazine* was honored with both an Eddie

and an Ozzie, two of the most respected national awards in our industry. That recognition belongs to our staff—whose dedication, skill and heart show up in every page and every project, from sales and operations to editorial and design. They're the ones who carry this magazine forward, and we couldn't be more grateful to work alongside such an extraordinary team.

This milestone year, *Bend Magazine*'s tenth anniversary, reminded us that none of this happens alone. To our contributors: thank you for your craft, your curiosity and the storytelling that fills these pages with depth and personality; to our advertisers and partners: thank you for believing in our vision and supporting local storytelling; and to you, our readers: you remain the soul of this magazine—your curiosity, enthusiasm and love for this region fuel every page.

Looking toward the year ahead, we carry that shared inspiration with us. Here's to a season of big dreams, snow-dusted peaks and the unmistakable magic of winter in Central Oregon.

Happy trails,
Heather & Ross

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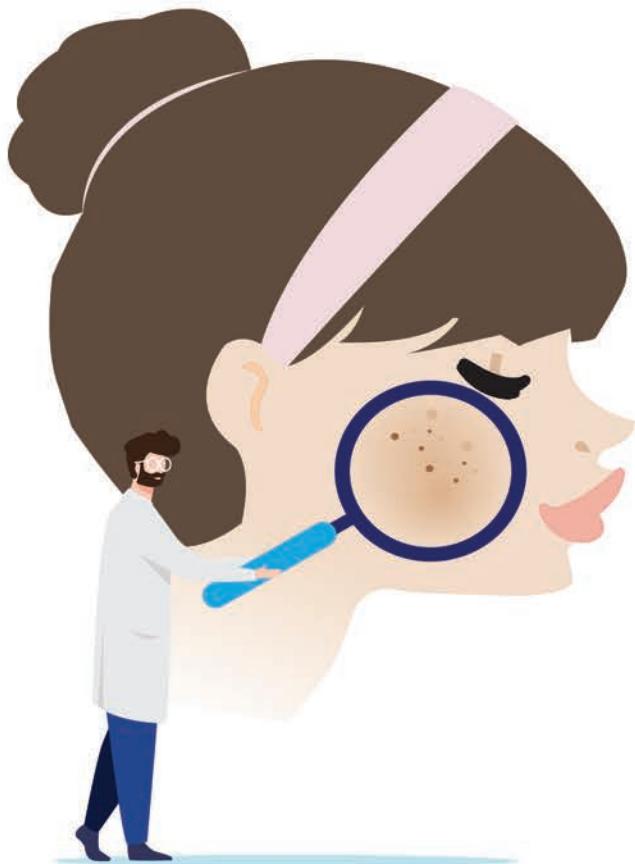


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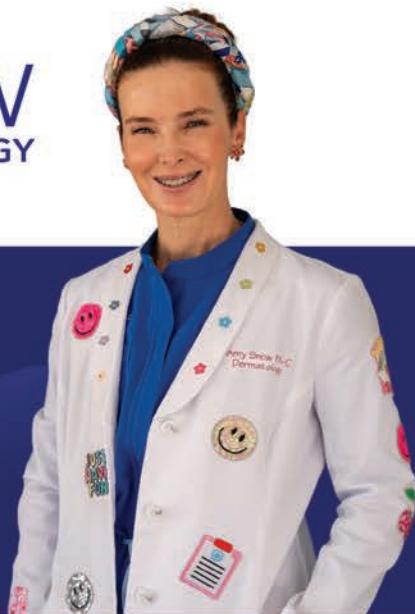


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About Amy Snow, PA-C

Amy Snow is a board-certified dermatology provider and owner of Snow Dermatology and the Founder of Project Happy Face. With over 20 years of experience, she's passionate about helping teens build confidence through healthy skin habits. Most recently, Amy received the Oregon Medical Association's 2025 Physician Associate-Citizen Award for her exemplary dedication to patient care and rural outreach and the Society of Dermatology Physician Associate DermPA of the Year Award for 2025.

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Countdown to Cortina

Celebrating Central Oregon's Olympic legacy

Athletes and spectators from around the world look to the Italian Alps for the 2026 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Milano Cortina. As the Opening Ceremony kicks off February 6, an impressive number of Central Oregonians will cheer on Team USA knowing how it feels to have stood on the sporting world's most prestigious winter stage. Since ski jumper Jim Brennan and speed skater Dick Hunt competed at the 1960 Squaw Valley Olympics, Central Oregonians have graced all but one of Team USA's winter rosters. Other winter Olympians from the past include: figure skater Cindy Kauffman-Marshall (Innsbruck 1964, Grenoble 1968); alpine skier Kiki Cutter (Grenoble 1968); biathlete Jay Bowerman (Sapporo 1972); Nordic skier Dan Simoneau (Lake

Placid 1980, Sarajevo 1984, Calgary 1988); biathlete Rich Gross (Calgary 1988); Nordic skiers Justin Wadsworth (Lillehammer 1994, Nagano 1998, Salt Lake City 2002), Ben Husaby (Albertville 1992, Lillehammer 1994), Suzanne King (Lillehammer 1994, Nagano 1998), Beckie Scott (Nagano 1998, Salt Lake City 2002, Turin 2006) and Patrick Weaver (Nagano 1998, Salt City 2002); snowboarder Chris Klug (Salt Lake City 2002, Turin 2006); halfpipe snowboarder Kent Callister (Sochi 2014, PyeongChang 2018), alpine skier Laurenne Ross (PyeongChang 2018) and alpine skier Tommy Ford (Albertville 2010, PyeongChang 2022). Cheer on Team USA at Mt. Bachelor's Rock Bar viewing parties with themed specials fueled by Olympic spirit. See mtbachelor.com. **IS**

WHAT WE

love



WHAT WE ARE EATING: EMPAÑADAS

On a South American tastebud tour, empanadas are perfectly portable comfort food with regional fillings from *pino* to *picadillo*. Try savory offerings from Hot Lava Bakery (above) or Argentinian flavors at Los Andes, new near the Old Mill District. See hotlavabakery.com, [@losandes.bend](http://losandes.bend).



WHAT WE ARE LISTENING TO: MARIA JACKSON

If it's local music, count us in. If they're Maria Jackson's vocals, even better. She fronts her namesake band or sings solo, leading with a smooth groove-driven sound. See [@mariawiththevoice](http://mariawiththevoice).



WHAT WE ARE WATCHING: SPAGHETTI WESTERNS AT TIN PAN THEATER

W is for "winter" and for Spaghetti Western Wednesdays. The subgenre from the '60s and '70s comprises scenes from Hollywood, with layers of dramatic flair, musical scores, anti-heroes and sometimes dubbed dialogue added by Italian directors. Tin Pan Theater serves a pasta dinner at screenings through April 29. See tinpantheater.com.



WHAT WE ARE READING: TAKE LESS. DO MORE.

Bend writer Glen Van Peski is known by the trail name Legend, with contributions to the backpacking community to match. He created a line of ultralight equipment to take less into the wilderness, but his book *take less. do more.* is about ways to add purpose, meaning and joy to life and lighten the weight of being human. See glenvanpeski.com.



WHAT WE ARE DRINKING: WATERSHED COFFEE ROASTERS

A small batch coffee roaster since 2013, Looney Bean of Bend's brews have warmed us from the inside out for years. When it's sunny, it has our favorite lawn next to Mirror Pond, but on cold days we move into its cozy cafe. This fall, the name transitioned too, now going by Watershed Coffee Roasters. It's not what's in a name, but what's in your mug that counts, so have them pour you a cup and let them know *Bend Magazine* sent you. See watershedroasters.com.

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JAE & JOSIAH CRUIKSHANK

SIBLINGS + YOUTH LEADERS

Elected Western Region Vice President for the National Future Farmers of America Organization (FFA), Bend's Jael Cruikshank follows in the footsteps of her brother Josiah, who held the same office in 2021–2022. The Oklahoma State University student earned the national honor during the 98th National FFA Convention & Expo in Indianapolis, where a record-breaking 73,000 members gathered for the event. Representing more than 1 million students nationwide, Along with five co-officers from across the United States, she will help shape the future of agricultural science education and youth leadership. "I'm excited for the opportunity to serve others and to listen," Cruikshank said, "and to pour myself into a community that has poured so much into me."

LEVI WATERS

YOUTH ENTREPRENEUR
+ ROCK CLIMBER

At age 17, Levi Waters was the first high school student to present in the history of the Bend Venture Conference. A rock climber and self-taught coder, Waters engineered ClimbGrade, an innovative app that uses AI to rate the difficulty of climbing routes. By analyzing photos of climbs along with an athlete's height, weight and wingspan, the app offers a mathematically consistent and reliable rating system. A Caldera High School senior, Waters' idea earned him a cash award from the Economic Development for Central Oregon at the 2025 conference to expand the project. Balancing school, athletics and a part-time job, his goal is clear: to make climbing safer, smarter and more accessible for everyone—one route at a time.



AMY SNOW, PA-C

AWARD-WINNER + VOLUNTEER

After opening Snow Dermatology in March 2025, Amy Snow, PA-C took her expertise on the road, traveling hundreds of miles to offer free acne care to teens in underserved rural towns through her nonprofit Project Happy Face, a commitment fueled by the look on patients' faces after receiving care. "Their eyes show a sparkle of hope," she shared, "and I'm reminded that this work isn't just about access to dermatology, it's about humanity and building community." Snow also partners with OHSU's Knight Cancer Institute to provide skin cancer screenings and is active with Volunteers in Medicine while serving her patients near and far. She was awarded the Society of Dermatology Physician Associates DermPA of the Year 2025 and the Oregon Medical Association 2025 Physician Associate-Citizen of the Year.



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PHOTO OF TULIE BUDISELICH BY MARTIN SUNDBERG

Frosty Miles

Lace up and layer
on inviting winter routes

WRITTEN BY KATIE HENRY

When the snow and ice settle over Bend, those of sane mind and body tuck their running shoes in for a long winter's nap. Those of us who simply cannot not run find any way we can to get those miles. Fearing a slip on the ice? Not in treaded runners (screws placed by the like-minded folks at FootZone for free). See a layer of snow on a favorite trail? Good thing for toothed YakTrax. Feel a chill in the air? Can't touch me with my mitten hands and layers of insulated gear. And when mountain trails require planks instead of tread, head to these locations recommended by Lucas Alberg, author of *Trail Running Bend: Great Loop Trails for Every Season*.

BADLANDS, BEND

The loose sand of summer solidifies into hard-packed running perfection at the Flatiron Rock Trailhead when cold temperatures set. While it rarely snows there, crowds tend to stay away during winter, so trails are quiet and serene.

► Head to Flatiron Rock, a 6.5-mile lollipop loop with little elevation gain for a fast, flat jaunt through old-growth junipers, low-lying sagebrush and rock outcroppings popping out of the volcanic landscape.

RADLANDS, REDMOND

The landscape of northeast Redmond is classic high desert: low scrubs give way to lava rock formations and sprawling mountain views.

Because of the lower elevation there, it has little snow accumulation, and with exposed trails, the winter sun shines with warmth.

► The Bobber Loop is a 3-mile circuit with the option to add length on the single tracks that flow through low-lying brush and over lava rock outcroppings.

MASTON, REDMOND

With nearly 20 miles of trails that take runners along lava-rock-lined routes to views of the Deschutes River, this network of paths is a winter dream. From short loops through junipers to long meandering circuits, the trails here remain relatively snow-free yet cold-packed, the perfect conditions for free-flowing dirt miles.

► From the Maston Trailhead, run the perimeter of the area on a 12.5-mile jaunt that takes you through all the highlights: river views, juniper trees and mountains in the distance.

UPPER SHEVLIN PARK, BEND

Shevlin Park is another year-round, close-to-home option, and with a series of new trails in the upper portion of the park, runners can enjoy their creek and mountain views in one short run. While this area gets snow, the upper trails get less accumulation. Pack traction in case a patch of ice or snow pop up along the route.

► Park at the Shevlin Commons Trailhead, and run into the park via the Discovery Trail. Choose your own adventure on the loops that spread out in front of you, such as Western Larch Trail to Shevlin Loop Trail, which offers open plateau views of the Three Sisters and dips into the forest, a greatest hits of high desert running.





SMITH ROCK, TERREBONNE

The rocky landscape of Smith Rock State Park is a year-round playground, but it's especially sweet for runners in the winter when the Terrebonne location provides a reprieve from snow, while offering climbing options to keep trail legs in shape.

► Misery Ridge to River Trail is a 3.7-mile loop with some serious elevation gain of almost 1,000 feet at the start as you ascend a series of switchbacks and stairs, followed by a measured descent to the river below. **18**

THIS: Smith Rock

OPPOSITE PAGE: Colton Gale and Alli Miles run year-round.





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Ski Anthony Lakes

Laid back, friendly and with plenty of powder

WRITTEN BY **DAMIAN FAGAN** | PHOTOGRAPHY BY **CHRISTIAN MURILLO**



For Central Oregonians looking for a change of pace from the local slopes, and one spiced with some Hollywood history, consider a weekend to the largest ski area in Eastern Oregon: Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort. With a base elevation of 7,100 feet, the resort features sparkling powder, a laid-back vibe and family-friendly prices.



Backcountry skiers and riders can shred untracked powder via guided cat trips, and Nordic skiers have more than 30 kilometers of groomed trails. Top the day off with an après ski stop at the Starbottle Saloon for drinks, live music and a step back into another place and time.

SKI TRAILS AND MOVIE MEMORABILIA

Anthony Lakes Resort opened in 1963 by area ranchers, farmers and business people wanting to carve some turns after their chores were done. Today, the area is owned and operated by the nonprofit Anthony Lakes Outdoor Recreation Association. Situated 265 miles east of Bend, it's well positioned for a weekend retreat.

Within a glacially carved basin in the Elkhorn Range of the Blue Mountains, the resort is surrounded by prominent peaks such as Gunsight Mountain, Lees Peak and Angell Peak—named after Albert G. Angell, a former, long-term U.S. Forest Service manager—that create a spectacular skyline which rims the basin. A triple chair lift rises 900 feet to the summit providing skiers and snowboarders with access to 21 runs and more than 1,000 acres of terrain; the longest run is 1.5 miles long. Small by comparison to many regional resorts, this simple lift contributes to short lines and enhances the small-town feel that permeates the area. Chances are, you'll know the lift operator on a first-name basis before the day is done.

The base has a day lodge, ticket booth, rental and repair shop, and everyone's favorite après ski stop: The Starbottle Saloon, named after the Starbottle's Hotel wooden sign from the 1969 film "Paint Your Wagon" starring Lee Marvin and Clint Eastwood which hangs inside. Across from the saloon, parents can watch their kids in Alice's Wonderland, a beginner ski area featuring a conveyor belt nicknamed the Caterpillar and a handle tow called the Mad Hatter. The saloon is one of the stops on the Oregon Film Trail, a guide to filming locations throughout the state.

In addition to alpine skiing, Nordic skiers enjoy trails which loop through coniferous forests and past subalpine lakes, including Anthony Lake named after pioneer doctor and farmer William "Doc" Anthony. A funky converted shipping container serves as the

Nordic center, selling passes and rentals. Snowshoers can follow a dedicated trail around Anthony Lake, past two overnight rental yurts and the historic Anthony Lakes Guard Station (available for rent through recreation.gov). A more arduous snowshoe trail climbs to the spectacular basin of Hoffer Lake.

SAVE THE DATES

Several special events such as the Starbottle Throttle, a banked slalom race in early April and The Taste of Nordic punctuate the season. "The Taste of Nordic is our big event of the year where we invite local food and beverage vendors to come and set up along the Nordic trails," said Chelsea Judy, Anthony Lakes Outdoor Recreation Association marketing director and controller. "Folks come up and purchase tokens, then go ski or snowshoe the trails and eat and drink what our local vendors have to showcase." The

12th annual family-fun event takes places March 22, 2026, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and includes Eastern Oregon breweries such as Barley Browns, 1188 Brewing and North Seven Brewing, as well as yummy treats by Pier 303 Seafood Market, The Liberty Theater Cafe, Eastside Bakery, Campbell's Catering & Sweets and others.

Lift operations run Thursday through Sunday and everyday during spring break (March 23 through 27) when it offers a special skiing and snowboarding camp for those ages 7 to 18. The cost is \$250 for the week and includes the use of rental equipment and lift passes for the remainder of the day. The resort also offers guided cat trips for intermediate to advanced backcountry skiers and riders to access over 2,000 acres of steep and deep, ungroomed powder. See anthonylakes.com. ■

The trail around Anthony Lake passes rental yurts.





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PHOTO BY MARTIN SUNDBERG

Winter Inside or Out

30 spots to keep spirits warm when temperatures sink

WRITTEN BY **CHERYL PARTON**

Winter in Central Oregon is yin and yang. Under clear sunny skies, you might feel giddy walking the Deschutes River Trail wearing one layer of wool under some afternoon sun, then boom: temps drop overnight, tightening the air until it crackles and pushes mercury toward single digits. But Bendites are resilient and curious. They don't hibernate as much as recalibrate. When the cold settles in and stays awhile, locals lean into rituals old and new: a 6 a.m. yoga class by the light of a Himalayan salt lamp? Yes. Hushed steps for you (and your dogs) on fresh snow-covered trails after a storm? Feels like walking in a dream. People kindle their creativity when daylight runs short and darkness sets in at 4:30 p.m. Bend's winter is about staying connected, and cold can be a catalyst, even if some of the activities sound like a dare.

INSIDE

When the air outside freezes, Bend's indoor culture doesn't just hunker down, it comes alive. For whiskey lovers, **Oregon Spirit Distillers**—Central Oregon's first grain-to-glass distiller—and **Stihl Whiskey Bar** offer flights and education. Taste history, and debate the build of a perfect Old Fashioned.

Hands warm up and get dirty with clay when potters' wheels are in motion. Find classes for beginners or studio space for rent at **Camp Clay, Mud Lake Studios and Supplies**, and **Synergy Ceramics**.

Cold days are for creating a line of specialty mugs or your own version of a "Ghost"-like moment with a favorite partner in pottery.

Morning coffee isn't just a ritual, it may be a wake-up and warm-up necessity. This winter, learn more about what's in that cuppa joe. At **Still Vibrato**, roaster and owner Clint Rowan serves scientifically calibrated coffee and helps customers become





LEFT AND TOP RIGHT:
Café des Chutes

THIS AND ABOVE:
Stihl Whiskey Bar



their own baristas. Learn about grinds, water ratios and techniques for French press, pour overs, Aeropress or espresso from Rowan's brewing notes found on the Still Vibrato website (stillvibrato.com). Watch beans being roasted in real time at **Lone Pine Coffee** or **Thump Coffee's** NorthWest Crossing location.

Escape the bite of winter temps by tucking into an English-style pub, **The Cellar**, serving cask-conditioned ales and meat pies. At **Emerald Loop**, dark green walls, a wood-burning fireplace and Jameson Irish Whiskey-glazed wings complement pulls of draft Guinness stout.

The Olympics aren't the only winter games. **Silver Moon Brewing's Not'cho Grandma's Bingo** hosted by Dusty Riley and Stacia Guzzo serves as both entertainment and a fundraiser for local nonprofits. **Modern Games** offers a full schedule of play, including board game socials and regular Warhammer Wednesdays. Brainiacs and pop-culture savants can find trivia nights almost every night of the week throughout Central Oregon. At **Portello Lounge**, music bingo might include a classic rock theme as owner—and Robert Plant lookalike—Bryan Smith pours wine and co-owner Rachel Fishman plays MC. Happy hour feels like a full night out when dark comes early, and you're home by 7 p.m.



OUTSIDE

Firepit gatherings around artful ironworks or table-top flames dot restaurant patios, city sidewalks and breweries as spaces where stories get longer, and you forget how frozen the world is just beyond the glow. Try a crawl at the **Box Factory** with its outdoor fires at **River Pig Saloon**, **Bledsoe Family Winery**, **UPP Liquids** and **Bend Wine Bar**. Meander the Deschutes River Trail from **Greg's Grill** to **Va Piano** and **Anthony's at the Old Mill District**. Breweries burn wood by the wheelbarrow in glowing centerpieces of courtyards at **10 Barrel** on Galveston Avenue or **O'Kane's at McMenamins Old St. Francis School**. Find gathering spots around the heat of central firepits at **The Barn in Sisters**, **The Bite in Tumalo** or **Cross-Cut Warming Hut** in Bend.

There's no need to put tri-season pursuits on hold for the winter quarter. Keep spokes rolling by fat biking on snow-packed trails. Rent a bike at Between Evergreens, Pine Mountain Sports or WebCyclery, and head out to try one of five new trails as part of the **Wanoga Downhill Trails Project**. There's no need for elevated heart rates, just binoculars, to participate in the annual **Great Backyard Bird Count**, taking place February 13 through 16. During the event, keep an eye out for resident species returning to Central Oregon's treetops, parks or backyards, then report on the Merlin Bird ID or eBird apps.

When the temperatures dip, connect with the community at **Bend WinterFest** from February 13 through 15 as it transforms the Old Mill District into a winter playground. Expect glowing fire sculptures, ice-carving demos, its Hot Cocoa 5 or 10K run, and the crack of boards in a Pump Bump Jam contest. The pump track itself is a work of art. Live music from Brandi Cyrus, Tiffany, Saksquatch and a Blondie tribute band creates harmonized notes of winter, and dancing is a way to keep warm from the inside out. **BB**



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Building Hope

Stability and second chances at Bethlehem Inn

WRITTEN BY MIRA HANSEN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY TAMBI LANE



Chef Bethlyn Rider teaching residents to cook.

“**Y**ou don’t realize how much you take for granted until you become homeless,” former Bethlehem Inn resident Kasey* explained. She had once spent nearly four years without a home, sleeping in her car or on the streets of Central Oregon.

She’s right. For most folks in Central Oregon, a refrigerator, bathroom or roof overhead aren’t considered luxuries. But a surprising number of people in the area go without these necessities.

For Kasey, things started looking up when she first stepped into Bethlehem Inn, Bend's nonprofit emergency shelter, five years ago. "I've struggled with addiction," she confided. "And when I got out of jail, my probation officer forced me to go." But what began as a mandate quickly became a turning point.

"For the first time in so long, I had a free meal, I had a bed," she said. "And anything I needed, they were willing to give...it made me feel human again." More than anything, she said, it is "life-changing to be in a place that accepts you for who you are."

TWO CAMPUSES HELP START NEW LIVES

Bethlehem Inn began in 1999 when several Bend churches opened their doors to people with nowhere else to go. The need was greater than expected, and by 2004, those efforts evolved into a permanent shelter.

Today, Bethlehem Inn has two campuses—one in Bend, another in Redmond—serving approximately 180 people a night. The Bend campus can host 10 families, with beds for 115 single adults. Redmond offers 40 beds for adults over the age of 18.

Bethlehem Inn is a high-barrier shelter, which requires residents to abide by the Inn's policies and to stay sober during their stay. "Not every homeless person is an addict, but there is a strong correlation," Kasey said. "Now, [the Inn] is the first place I recommend, especially for anyone who wants to get clean and means it."

Since its inception, Bethlehem Inn has become more than just a place to sleep or, for some, a place to get sober. It now has a full staff, dedicated volunteers (including Kasey) and about 70 community partners. Each year, the Inn provides more than 100,000 meals as well as individualized case management to help residents find stability and long-term housing.

Still, Executive Director Michael Hancock knows there's more work ahead. Hancock, who officially took the helm in 2025

after serving as interim director, has worked at the Inn for seven years, first as a case manager, then as operations director.

Hancock believes in "doing the work," focusing on what he can do now rather than dreaming about long-term visions. "People keep asking where I'm headed," he said. "Where I'm headed is fulfilling the need."

ADDRESSING GROWING NEEDS

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, most people are forced into homelessness by circumstances beyond their control. "It can happen to anybody," Kasey said. "Everyone has a crazy story. No one chooses this."

In a place like Bend, high living costs render escaping homelessness even more unattainable. "Seventy-five percent of people are actually working more than one job," Hancock said, referring to the Inn's residents. "But even if they saved \$3,000 while they're here, it won't get them far in this town."

To help, the Inn has expanded its work experience program. Participants can learn skills in maintenance, janitorial work and even culinary training led by former professional chef Bethlyn Rider.

But 2025 brought its own challenges, including sharp federal funding cuts through NeighborImpact, the Inn's regional partner. "It hit the whole community," Hancock said. "We're now looking for new funding and revenue streams."

Hancock's current initiatives include partnering with local hospitals to support medically vulnerable residents, opening a small thrift boutique, expanding family programs in Redmond and building a local domestic violence shelter.

Hancock has certainly hit the ground running, but his message is clear: The work is far from over. "Now is the time for us to partner up to fulfill these needs in the community," he said. "Now it's about combining resources and strengths to make a bigger impact." See bethleheminn.org. 

**By request, first name has been used to protect privacy.*

THIS: Resident being fitted with new clothing.

RIGHT: Jon Baker and Michael Hancock of Bethlehem Inn.





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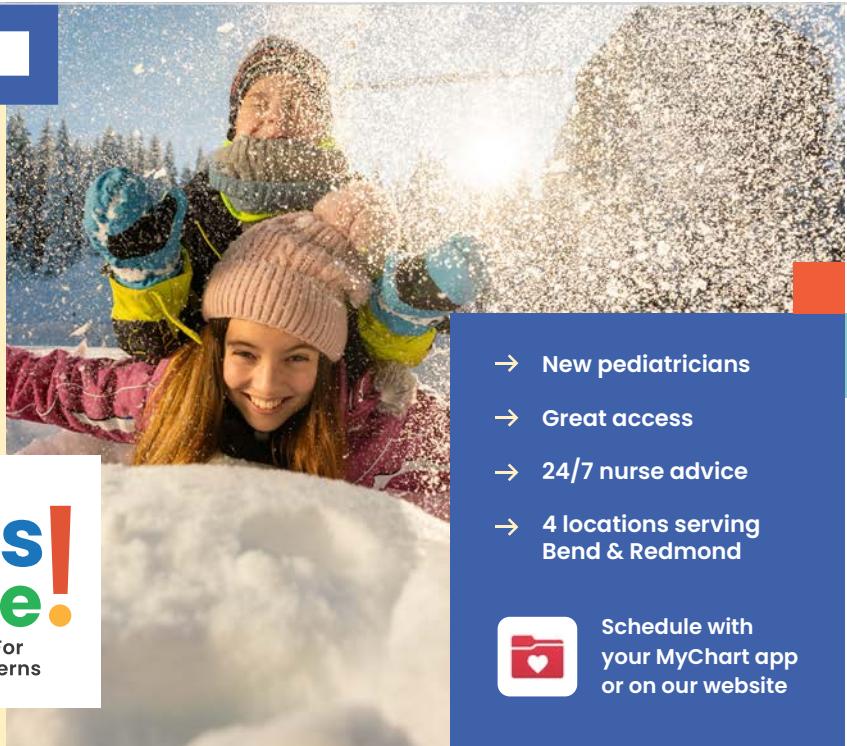


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Photo by Hannah Turner Photography

School of Rock

Creating a community of musicians

WRITTEN BY **GREGG MORRIS**



PHOTO BY DAVID KINDLER

School of Rock brings the study of music to the stage.

The guitarist carries his instrument to the center of the stage. Music blasts as the audience screams. With a determined smile, he raises the guitar above his head and smashes it to the ground with pure rock and roll fury. No, this isn't a 1960s London underground club. It's the grand opening of School of Rock Bend.

Owners Jeff and Niki Reading decided to open the music school after stumbling upon a School of Rock performance in Seattle. Watching their daughter mesmerized by the young musicians showed the pair the true power of music, even though they were not musicians themselves.

"Music is unique among the arts, as well as the most accessible," said Jeff. "Pretty much everyone has music in their lives."



THIS: Back row: Jeff Reading, Kiki Castro and Niki Reading. Front: Beverly Anderson.

TOP: Coaching starts with a song.

MUSIC EDUCATION FOR ALL

In 1998, music teacher and entrepreneur Paul Green opened the first School of Rock location in Philadelphia, with a desire to show children the importance of performing with others. To date, it has spun off more than 400 locations worldwide, as well as a 2003 eponymous movie starring Jack Black. The School of Rock Bend carries the band-oriented tradition by teaching a sense of community in a safe space. The school offers four-month sessions that culminate in a performance at a local venue. Its first event is scheduled for January 2026, where students will perform British Invasion and '90s rock songs.

School of Rock Bend has three youth programs, depending upon children's ages: Little Wing, Rookies or the Performance Program. They also offer classes for adults. Weekly throughout the session, students have one private lesson and one group lesson, plus The Method App provides home practice direction. The school's curriculum begins immediately by teaching a song first, to instill belief and self-confidence in students.

"In one session, kids and adults will learn to perform a rock show with a band of peers on stage," explained cofounder Niki Reading. "It's not just about hitting the notes. We're teaching stage presence, teamwork and connection, confidence and vulnerability, and the historical context of the songs."

"I hope every kid learns what it feels like to make music with others; to listen, collaborate and build something together," adds Music Director Beverly Anderson. "It's not about perfection; it's about showing up, trying something new and realizing you can do it."

SunWest Builders transformed the school's northeast Bend building into a rock and roll studio with two group practice rooms and nine individual instruction rooms, all appropriately named after iconic musicians from Jimi Hendrix and Jack White to Stevie Wonder and Alicia Keys.

Since School of Rock Bend focuses on performance, the Readings placed importance on having an instructor team made up of some of the top performing musicians in the area. In addition to acting as music director, Anderson plays keys and sings with local band Mamas Boy, performs solo, and is an actor—most recently the lead in "Once" at Bend's Greenhouse Cabaret.

"My dad got me into music," explained Anderson. "He'd pull me up on stage with him when I was 5, and that's where I first felt the magic of performing. I didn't have any formal training until much later, so I've always understood both sides of learning—the joy of figuring things out through play, and the depth that comes with understanding theory."

Whether the goal is to grow up to be a rock star or just have fun with friends, the School of Rock Bend helps students discover the wonders of playing music with others. Pyrotechnics and hair spray aside, the school teaches the community spirit of rock and roll. "Music connects people," said Anderson. "It always has and it always will." ■



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Contemporary Views

A reimagined dwelling proves elevated design starts by honoring the terrain

WRITTEN BY **LEE LEWIS HUSK**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **KAYLA MCKENZIE**





When Stacy and Richard Lyon crest the final stretch of their long driveway, they arrive atop a flattened knob of ancient lava. The land drops steeply away in all directions, creating sweeping views across their seven-acre property in rural Deschutes County. They joke that it's the kind of place on which 12th-century Europeans would have built a castle. Instead, a mid-20th-century gem crowns the site, an inspired collaboration between the Lyons and architectural designer Tom Carson, owner of FUSE Design + Build.

On their first visit, the Lyons fell in love with the property. What they didn't know was how much history, and how many surprises, it would reveal. Piecing together neighborhood lore and county deed records, they discovered the first owner was Laura Hill, a writer from the Bay Area, and her husband, who purchased the land in 1964 for "\$10 and other good and valuable consideration." The first recorded structure on the site was a 1,000-square-foot home completed in 1965.

"The single-story was built as a highly specific geometric design, taking cues from Frank Lloyd Wright, with 30-degree angles appearing everywhere," Carson said, "which made it very interesting." One end resembled the bow of a boat, and the other had a massive lava-stone fireplace, anchored to its volcanic base.

In the 1980s, a subsequent owner added a wing at right angles to the south end of the existing '60s home, bringing the square footage to 1,600 and creating an L shape.

Over the decades, other creatives were drawn to the unusual site. In 2017, five-time Grammy Award-winner Brittany Howard of Alabama Shakes acquired the property. A year later, she sold it to an artist who painted the entire interior white.

The Lyons bought the property in 2019. "We spent one night, and I'm like, do you smell that?" Stacy asked Rich. "It was [like the moment in] a horror movie when you realize something is deeply wrong." The next morning, Rich started pulling cupboards and walls apart and discovered years' worth of floor-to-ceiling rat nests. Removing the unwelcome boarders took



months, during which the structure's underside was encased in rat wire and every possible entry point sealed during renovations.

REIMAGINING A LARGER, MORE LIVABLE HOME

Besides eliminating a rat infestation, initial preparations included sandblasting white paint from the beams to restore the original wood and moving an interior wall between the hallway and the adjacent galley kitchen, expanding the kitchen's width by 2 feet.

The Lyons hoped to keep the dramatic floor-to-ceiling lava-rock fireplace, but its massive presence dominated the planned open space stretching from the kitchen to their private quarters. Ultimately, a modern peninsula fireplace divides the living and dining rooms, adding a new centerpiece and keeping the space open.

It would be two years before the couple spent another night in the house. During that time, they worked closely with Carson to plan additions at both ends of the original L. On the short arm, they added a glass breezeway that connects to a new laundry room and garage. On the long arm, they created a dining room linked to a new primary suite by a second breezeway. With these expansions and new energy-saving windows throughout, the dwelling grew to 2,500 square feet, offering unobstructed views from Mt. Hood to Mount Bachelor.

INSIDE THE HOME

The home blends contemporary design with throwbacks to earlier incarnations—like the big wood-carved hand now displayed in an entryway niche. The Lyons discovered it under a bush, one of several curious objects unearthed on the property.

Mid-century modern design dominates the single-story layout with human-scale rooms, generous but not oversized windows and



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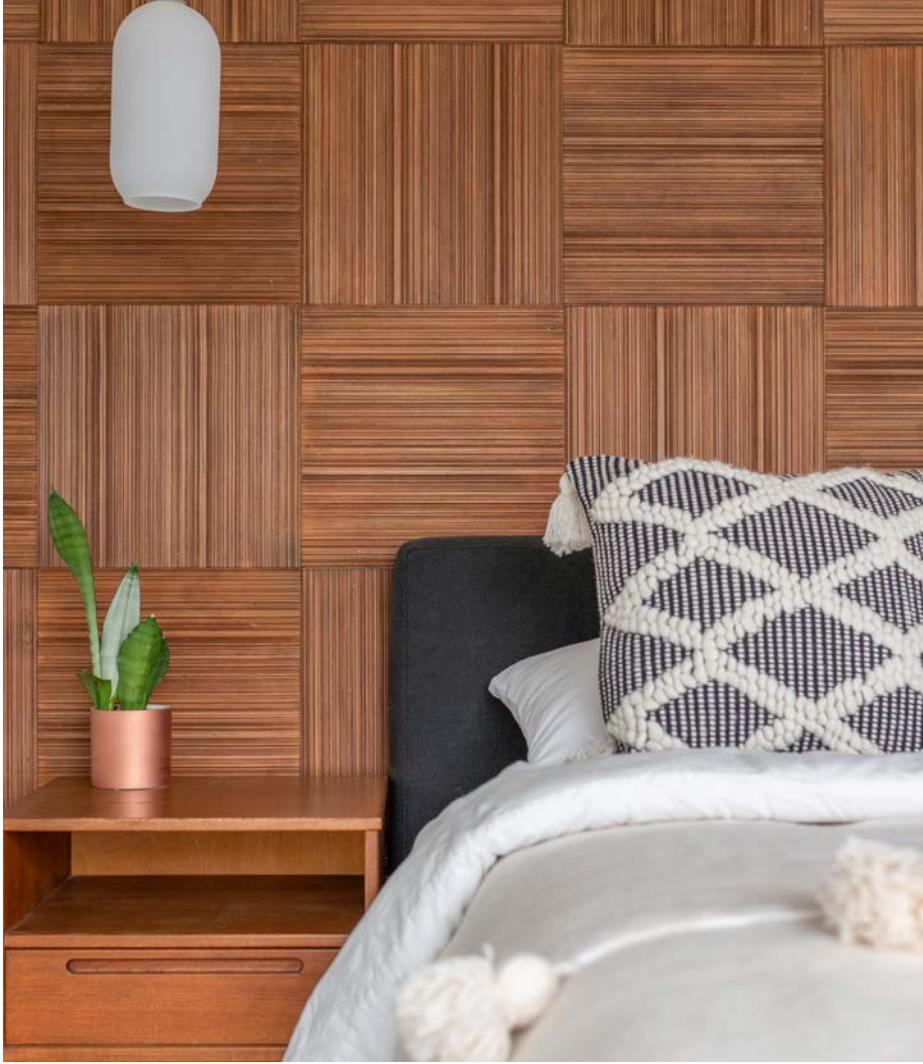
Top Row: John Sorlie, Mark Reinecke,
Melissa Lande, Paul Taylor
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“

ITS BATHROOM OFFERS WHAT THE COUPLE JOKINGLY CALLS ‘THE MILLION-DOLLAR VIEW’—A DIRECT SIGHTLINE FROM THE TOILET TO THE MOUNTAINS.”

natural woods that add warmth to airy spaces with minimal fuss. “I went to YouTube University to decorate the home,” Stacy said of her approach to learning mid-century design.

The kitchen and baths feature classic subway tile, while the kitchen’s vertical-grain Sapele cabinetry adds a warm mahogany tone that carries throughout the house—from a built-in living room cabinet to the Weldtex Monterey pine panels at the original boatlike end of the home, and into the couple’s primary bedroom.

The primary suite is spacious, with a whole wall of windows facing the Cascade Range. Its bathroom offers what the couple jokingly calls “the million-dollar view”—a direct sightline from the toilet to the mountains.

Stacy’s favorite spot is the dining room-slash-breezeway, where sliding doors on both sides open to the outdoors. To the west, a weathered juniper anchors xeriscaped gardens that draw bees and butterflies in the summer. To the east, early light makes it the perfect place for morning coffee.

With the improvements complete, the home matches the potential of its location, proving that thoughtful design can reshape an aging building while honoring its quirky past. ■





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The word is out—Deschutes Public Library announced the 2026 A Novel Idea community book club selections.

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Learn more about the A Novel Idea community read program at dpl.pub/anovelidea.

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Home and Hearth

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ARCHITECTS: Olin Architecture
INTERIOR DESIGNER: Clouz Houz

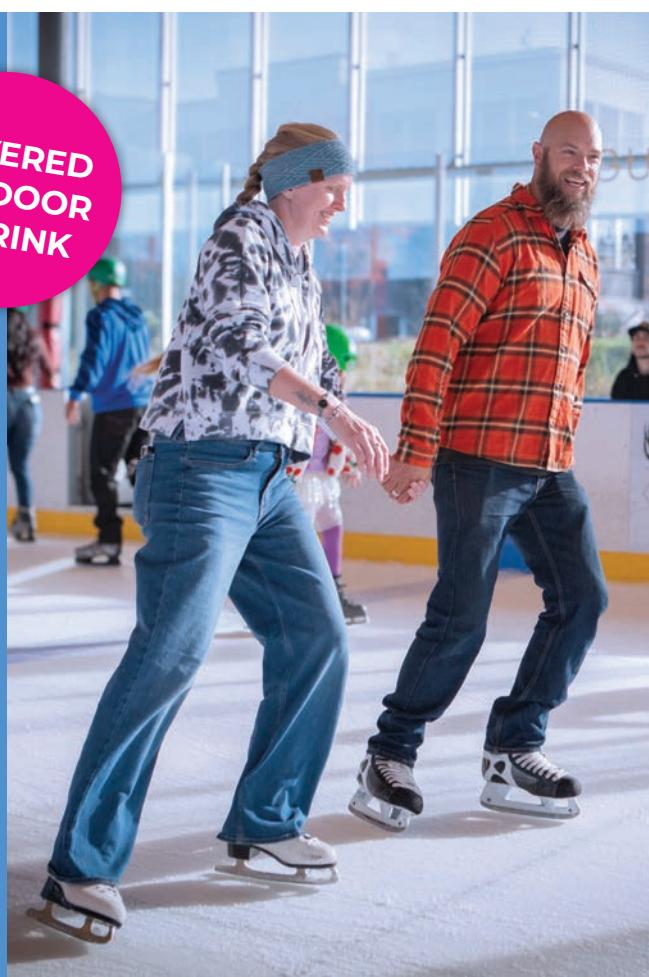


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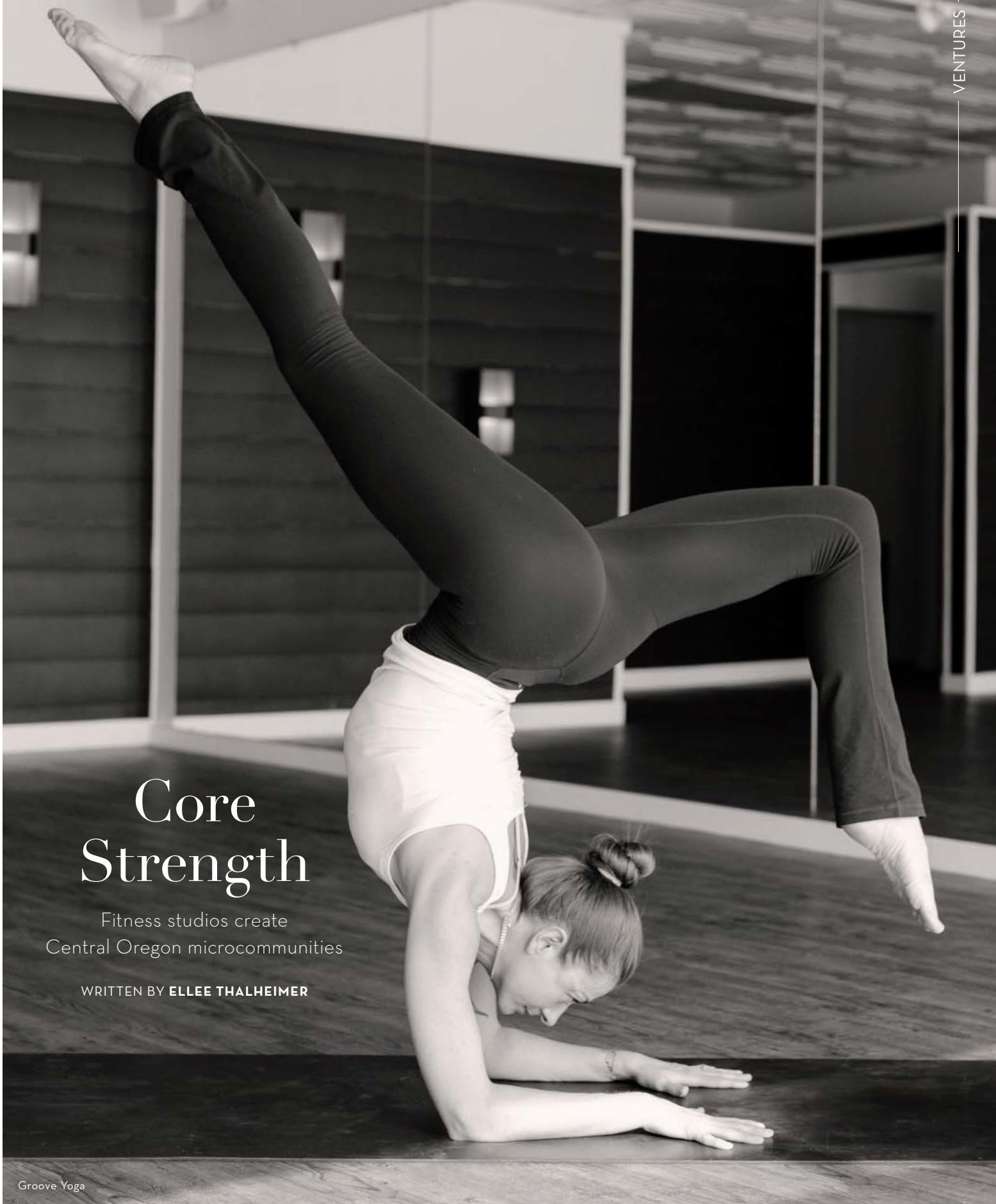


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Core Strength

Fitness studios create
Central Oregon microcommunities

WRITTEN BY **ELLEE THALHEIMER**

“

ONE DAY I HOPE
THERE ARE MORE YOGA
STUDIOS THAN FAST
FOOD RESTAURANTS.”

—SUZIE NEWCOME



“**Y**oga should be a habit like brushing your teeth,” said Suzie Newcome, who was born in Bend and is the owner of Namaspa Yoga Community, Bend’s first yoga studio founded in 2006. She welcomes the recent influx of yoga studios. “You should practice every day for mental and physical health. Meditation is like showering for your brain,” she said. “One day I hope there are more yoga studios than fast food restaurants.”

Central Oregon, especially Bend, is inching toward Newcome’s dream. Especially in recent years, new fitness studios have popped up—whether they be for yoga, spin, pilates or barre. This is in sync with a national trend. Fitness studio membership levels are growing, according to the Health and Fitness Association. In Deschutes County alone, there are 65 registered businesses in the category and even more classes offered as part of community centers or in private groups making the number hard to quantify.

“COVID-19 destroyed all of us,” said Tate Metcalf, board member of the Oregon Health & Fitness Alliance and owner of Sisters Athletic Club. “Studios were the most affected; around 30% permanently closed.” But the fitness studio picture is much

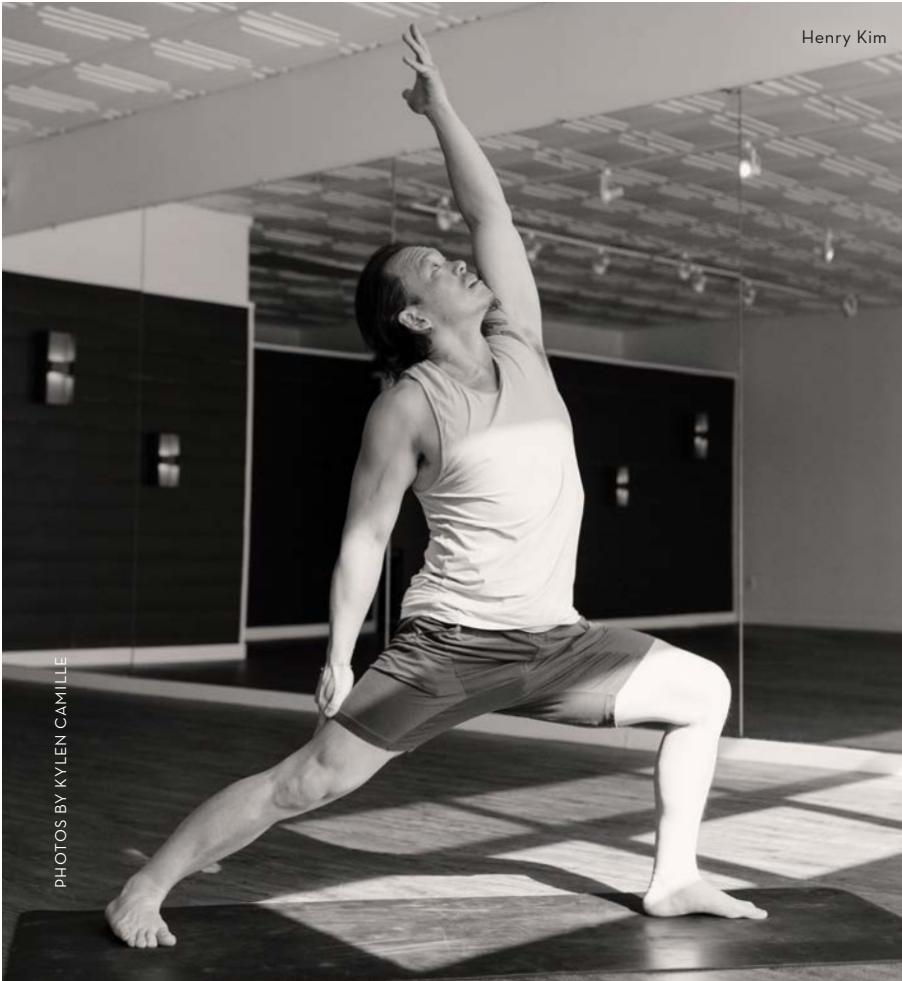
more rosy in Central Oregon. According to employment numbers from Deschutes County, fitness studios have not only made it back to pre-pandemic levels but have surpassed them. Nicole Ramos, a regional economist with the Oregon Employment Department, who specializes in regions east of the Cascades, reported 2024 employment numbers in the fitness studio industry were around 10% higher than in 2019.

In part, that may be attributed to population growth, but also that Bend’s median household income is about 10% higher than Oregon’s average—the number for Deschutes County as a whole is almost the same. But the area was intriguing even in 2008, when Portlanders Sadie and Chris Lincoln founded barre3, a workout system inspired by ballet-barre exercises. They presciently saw Bend’s potential and opened one of barre3’s first franchises in Bend in 2009. Today, barre3 has national locations with 200 studios across 41 states, Canada and the Philippines.

The active, outdoor-oriented culture of the region lays a heavy finger on the scale. Rachel Day moved to Bend from Salt Lake City in 2022 and opened Form Pilates in the



Henry Kim



PHOTOS BY KYLEN CAMILLE

BY THE NUMBERS

7 major energy points in the human body, or "chakras"

108 number of Sun Salutations practiced during solstices

100,984¹ In 2018, number of people participating in the world's largest yoga class in India.

84 Generally agreed upon key yoga poses, or "asanas"

2016² 105°³ degrees (Fahrenheit)—room temperature for the Original Hot Yoga Series at Bend Yoga Center.

40 MILLION⁴ people (roughly 17% of US adults) practiced yoga in the past year.

101⁵ age of the world's oldest yoga teacher: Tao Porchon-Lynch

Sources:

1. Guinness World Record
2. Yoga World
3. Bend Yoga Center
4. CDC, National Center for Health Statistics
5. Guinness World Record

“

THERE'S NOT ONE
KIND OF CLASS FOR
EVERYBODY. IT'S
AWESOME THAT STUDIOS
ARE OFFERING THEIR OWN
SPIN. THE COMMONALITY
IS WE ALL WANT TO
MAKE A DIFFERENCE.”

—AMBER HAYES



Discovery West neighborhood in 2025. Her studio specializes in cross-training, injury prevention, performance improvement and building endurance, especially for people who do repetitive motion sports like running and cycling.

Day recognized the crossover from what much of the population enjoys: hiking, biking, paddling, skiing and running, among other sports. “People want to go outside to work out, but it’s really cool to see people coming into class because they value the three-dimensional fitness you get from pilates, which improves both their performance outside and their overall health.”

STUDIOS FOR STRENGTH AND COMMUNITY

“Studios can be people’s ‘third places,’ like church, where they get to hang out with like-minded people and feel like they are part of something,” said Metcalf. This sense of community is a way to create bonds between people as a different type of “core” strength. Then there’s the health benefit: “[The interest in] yoga is growing because it works,” said Namaspa’s Newcome. “It’s not a fad. It’s entering the zeitgeist that yoga helps with joints, inflammation and imbalances in the body. Practicing yoga extends longevity in the outdoor sports that people love. People are understanding that.”

Amber Hayes has owned Groove Yoga in Northwest Bend since 2013, and agrees. “There’s plenty of room for all of us,” Hayes said. “There’s not one kind of class for everybody. It’s awesome that studios are each offering their own spin. The commonality is we all want to make a difference.” ■

Amber Hayes, Groove Yoga



PHOTOS BY KYLEN CAMILLE



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Holding Space for Creativity

Giddyup Glove is inspired by the thrill of everyday life



Sherrise Erlandson

Connection—to community and to the outdoors—drives Giddyup Glove founder Sherrise Erlandson's entrepreneurial spirit. From her inventive beverage holder to her podcast that encourages young people and adults to embark on listening adventures while finding peaceful moments together, Erlandson has created a community filled with joy and wondrous spirit. As for the glove, what may seem like simply a quirky product is a functional one: a beverage holder that keeps hands toasty and drinks cold. But more than that, it encourages gathering outside in the months when Central Oregon weather might suggest otherwise. At fireside chats to mountainside meetings, this mitten beckons people to mingle and forget the cooler temperatures to forge connections.

What inspired you to create the Giddyup Glove, and how did the initial idea take shape?

It started with a simple winter observation: Good company, cold air and hands that tapped out too early. Someone looked at my early mitten mockups and said, "Why not take it up the wrist?" and that one line unlocked the whole concept. I wanted something cozy and clever that would let people stay outside longer without juggling between warmth and comfort. That's how the Giddyup Glove was born—a mitten with a built-in drink holder that insulates both your hand and your drink.

What is one of the biggest challenges you faced in developing the glove?

Time: I've been developing everything

myself—from design and sourcing to sewing, packaging, marketing and sales—so there's never enough of it. Every improvement, every material test, every stitch has come from long nights and a lot of persistence. Balancing creativity, production and business strategy as a one-woman show has been my greatest challenge and, honestly, my greatest teacher. It's forced me to stay adaptable and resourceful while building something that truly feels like mine. And coming out of the other side of that challenge, I'm now looking toward hiring my first employees. The persistence absolutely paid off.

How has the community responded to Giddyup Glove?

The response has been incredible. People try it on and immediately smile. The most common thing I hear is, "This is genius. I never knew I needed this—but here it is, and I do." You're going to be seeing them out and about more and more now that I've perfected the design for my flagship version. You'll spot them at tailgates at Mt. Bachelor, food cart lots on cold nights, tucked into people's RVs and camping gear. Look for them at RendezVan and other cool-night gatherings. The Giddyup Glove is a staple for anyone who loves staying outside a little longer.

Where do you see the Giddyup Glove brand heading next?

I'm slowly growing the line with new

products and thoughtful iterations, always staying true to that blend of comfort, connection and clever design. Right now, I'm working on variations that help more people with grip challenges, cold sensitivities, Raynaud's syndrome and other conditions that make winters less enjoyable. The goal is to keep creating gear that makes life outside easier, warmer and a little more joyful for everyone.

I'm also looking forward to creating clothing, beanies and ear warmers that pair with the gloves. And even farther on the horizon, but still in the works, are seasonal variations of the glove that might look a little different, but will help to get your giddyup on when floating the river and relaxing lakeside.

What excites you most about the future?

I can't understand how people get bored. There's always so much to do, discover and create. In the future, I'd love to tie together the Giddyup Glove with my podcast, "The Giddyup Guide to the Galaxy," a meditation series for kids and their adults. I've started using some of the names of the gloves in the podcast, but the names are going to be applied to planets and realms within the galaxy I'm creating in the podcast. As I develop more gloves, I will introduce them into the galaxy.

See giddyupglove.com. 



Tune in to the full interview with Sherrise Erlandson on the new "Birth of the Brands" podcast series. Bend Magazine's "The Circling Podcast" with Adam Short can be found on all major podcast platforms.





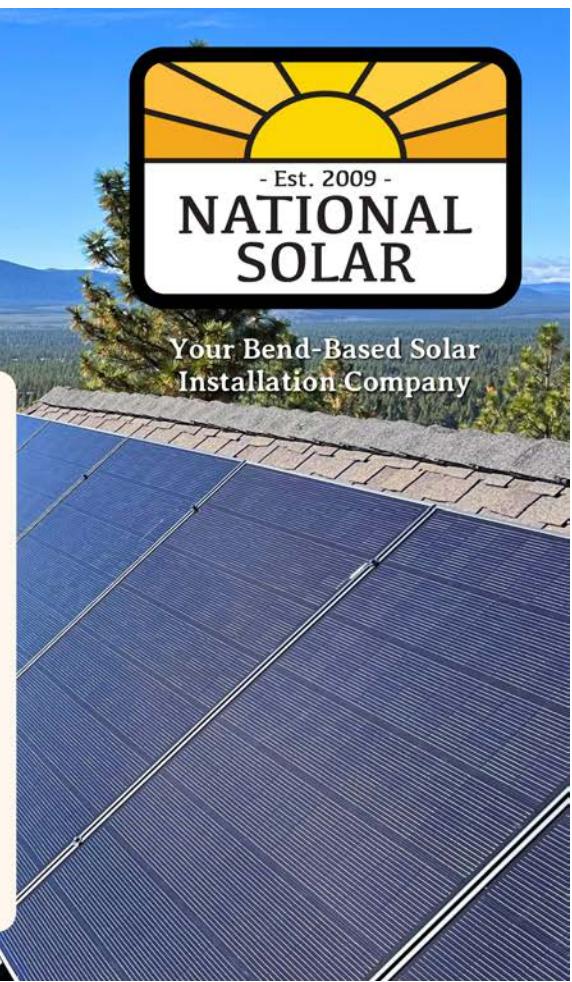
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GOING FOR GOLD

The journey from Bend to Milano Cortina

Written by Annie Fast

Introduction by Cheryl Parton

PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. SKI TEAM

For Bend athletes, the path to the Winter Olympics is more like a steady current of training than a surging pipeline. For some, it's a childhood dream, and for each one it takes a combination of talent, circumstance, sheer determination, community support and dedicated coaching. Every four years, a flow of such athletes converges in one place as they set their sights on sport's grandest reward: a gold medal. In February, the Winter Games return to Cortina d'Ampezzo for the first time since 1956. The homecoming resonates with fans who won't just be watching for medals; they'll feel connected to their Central Oregon home by tracking skiers they once saw grinding out intervals in freezing fog, or cheering for the kids who learned to race at Mt. Bachelor long before they honed timing as precise as an atomic clock. The Olympics command the world's attention, but at its heart are stories of how ordinary lives, shaped by place and people, arrive on the world's biggest stage.



RAVI DRUGAN

Para-Alpine Skiing

Originally hailing from Eugene, Ravi Drugan started skiing in Bend with nonprofit Oregon Adaptive Sports (OAS) after losing both legs in a train accident at age 15. "I'll never forget my first day monoskiing with OAS," he said. "My instructor, Ben Sparrow, shared the love of skiing and gave me the opportunity to ski every day."

Drugan's foundation lies in freeskiing, which he honed carving through the trees, bowls and terrain parks at Mt. Bachelor—now one of his many sponsors—as well as at Hoodoo Ski Area. Once he set his sights on racing, he began training with the National Ability Center in Park City, Utah, focusing on the high-energy monoskier X discipline—a freestyle event featuring rollers, berms and jumps.

His breakout moment came at the 2015 X Games, where he earned bronze in Mono Skier X, a result that helped propel him onto the U.S. Para Alpine Ski Team the following season. At the Beijing 2022 Paralympics, Drugan was the only Team USA para-athlete to race in every event. He posted top finishes of 10th in Slalom, 17th in Super-G and 20th in Giant Slalom.

Now entering his sixth season with the national team, Drugan is competing on the World Cup circuit across Europe—including stops in Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Germany and France—as he works to secure qualification for his second Paralympic Games.

With years of experience and renewed momentum, Drugan is eyeing stronger results in 2026. His goal for the season: "Ski fast, take chances, have fun, and hopefully get some results on the podium," he said as he charges toward another chance to represent Team USA in the Italian Alps.

Photos courtesy of U.S. Ski Team
Portrait: @vargophoto | Action: Marcus Hartmann

HUNTER HESS

Freeski Halfpipe



Bend native Hunter Hess has been a member of the U.S. Freeski Team since 2017, steadily climbing from the rookie team to the pro level. He got his start with Mt. Bachelor Sports Education Foundation (MBSEF) at age 6—launching a career that's seen him progress from local halfpipes to the global stage. Hess narrowly missed qualifying for the 2022 Beijing Olympics, but since then, he's been on a steady rise. With back-to-back X Games bronze medals in 2024 and 2025, plus three more World Cup podiums, Hess has firmly established himself among the world's top halfpipe skiers.

Now based in Park City, Utah, Hess trains full-time with the U.S. team, but he credits MBSEF and longtime freeski and snowboard director Coggin Hill as the foundation behind his rise. "He pushed for us super hard," Hess said, speaking about the crew he came up with including Gabe Ferguson and Jake Mageau. "He got us the coaches we needed and created a system that worked for us."

Outside of competition, Hess channels his creativity into the film series MAGMA, which he produces alongside teammate and Olympic gold medalist Alex Hall. The project follows the duo as they explore unique terrain and push the boundaries of freeskiing both in and out of the halfpipe.

Photos courtesy of U.S. Ski Team
Portrait: @vargophoto | Action: @goodenouf



ZACH JAYNE

Cross-Country Skiing

Zach Jayne grew up skiing with MBSEF, with coaches Bill Hokanson and Olympian Dan Simoneau. At Summit High School he helped the team secure four consecutive state titles, and he was the 2022 Oregon high school state champion his senior year.

Jayne took those skills to the University of Utah Ski Team, which has earned four NCAA championship titles in the past five years. His performance also earned him a spot on the U.S. Ski & Snowboard cross-country development team for the 2024-25 season.

Now a senior at Utah, Jayne competes across all disciplines, but said sprint is his strongest Olympic opportunity. He shared that sprinting rewards power over endurance and comes with a degree of luck and unpredictability that can favor younger athletes like himself.

This winter, Jayne's ambitions extend beyond the Olympic conversation. He's targeting an individual NCAA title or podium, hopes to make his World Cup debut and is targeting a peak performance at the U23 World Championships in Lillehammer, Norway, in March. While Milano Cortina 2026 remains a dream, he frames it with perspective: qualifying would be "amazing," but not making the team "doesn't impact my development" as he plans to continue skiing professionally after college.

Action photo by @untraceableg

ANNA SOENS

Para-Alpine Skiing



A familiar name in Bend's outdoor community, Anna Soens is known for her remarkable athletic feats—including summing Mt. Hood just two years after a climbing accident left her partially paralyzed from the waist down. Since then, she has gone on to master a range of adaptive sports, from mountain biking to sit-skiing. She first discovered sit-skiing at Mt. Bachelor during the 2016-17 season through OAS and quickly became a powerful freeskier. Her talent didn't go unnoticed; local Paralympians soon began "chirping in her ear," encouraging her to test her skills in the competitive Para-alpine world.

Last winter, Soens decided to commit. The 2024-25 season was her first on the Para-alpine racing circuit. She trained with an adaptive program in Winter Park, Colorado, while continuing to work with MBSEF when back home in Bend—all while maintaining a full-time role as a wildlife biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Her debut season was decisive. She earned wins in domestic FIS races, including a sweep of both slalom and super-G at Eldora, Colorado. She also competed at the Europa Cup in Austria, contributing to the U.S. women's team securing two additional Paralympic quota spots.

By spring, Soens had finished the season as the top-ranked women's sit-ski racer in the country, putting her in strong contention for one of the six U.S. quota spots for the Milano Cortina 2026 Paralympic Games. While the ever-modest Soens jokes that her approach has been "faking it till I make it," her rapid rise on the Para-alpine skiing circuit speaks to her inherent athleticism and mastery, giving her a very real shot at these Paralympic Winter Games.

Photos by Robin O'Neill

Olympic Freestyle
Snowboard Coach

DAVE

REYNOLDS

Dave Reynolds enters the Milano Cortina 2026 cycle as one of the most accomplished slopestyle and big air coaches in snowboarding, for what will be his third Olympic Games.

Reynolds helped shape a generation of Olympic talent. He coached Chloe Kim to halfpipe gold at the 2016 Youth Olympic Games. At PyeongChang 2018, serving as the U.S. co-head slopestyle coach, he guided athletes to four medals: Red Gerard's breakthrough slopestyle gold at age 17; Jamie Anderson's slopestyle gold and big air silver; and Kyle Mack's big air silver. That year, he was U.S. Ski & Snowboard Coach of the Year and International Coach of the Year. Under Reynolds, the U.S. slopestyle and big air squad earned three X Games medals, 11 World Cup podiums and an overall World Cup title that season. The team added another Olympic silver at Beijing 2022, courtesy of Julia Marino in slopestyle.

A Bend native, Reynolds first pursued his own snowboarding and soccer career before transitioning into coaching as a cofounder of the MBSEF youth snowboard program with Howard Friedman in 1998-99. Today, he works as an independent coach with a roster of top-level snowboard athletes aiming for Milano Cortina 2026 including Red Gerard who will look to Reynolds as he seeks to reclaim gold on an Olympic podium.

Photos courtesy of U.S. Ski Team
Standing: Sarah Brunson



STEVE PORINO

Sports Analyst + Color Commentator

After reporting on 11 Winter Olympic Games, Steve Porino has become a familiar face. He may be recognizable after living in Bend for 16 years before his move to Sun Valley. Skiing since he was 3, and racing by age 6, he had his own downhill career as a member of the U.S. Ski Team from 1988 to 1990. Porino covered his first Winter Olympic Games as a print journalist in 1998 and has been part of

NBC Olympic broadcasts since 2002. "I've been super lucky to be part of the most-watched moments in sports," he said. "Every four years, the stakes are higher, and you feel it. For me, the joy is the people and the stories you don't get to tell every day."



Photo courtesy of U.S. Ski Team

ANNIE FAST

Journalist + Editor

A writer in the snowboard and ski industries, Annie Fast is the former editor of *TransWorld Snowboarding Magazine*. She has covered freeskiing and snowboarding at four Winter Olympic Games and wrote about the Paris Summer Olympic Games in 2024. This year, Fast will be based in Livigno for a front-row seat to the halfpipe, slopestyle, big air, snowboard cross, aerials and moguls venues. "I take inspiration from these athletes—whether physically pushing themselves to perform, overcoming the challenges to become the best or developing the mental game to quiet their minds, focus and perform under incredible pressure." **IB**



LET'S *Ride*

A dynamic photograph of a snowboarder in mid-air, performing a trick on a dark, craggy rock face. The snowboarder is wearing a red jacket, black pants, and a black helmet. A blue snowboard with a red graphic is visible. A powerful waterfall cascades down the rock face behind the snowboarder, with spray flying into the air. The background shows a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds and several snow-covered evergreen trees. The overall scene is rugged and captures a moment of extreme sports against a natural, scenic backdrop.

IN SEARCH OF SUNRISE, POWDER
AND A PERFECT IMAGE

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED
BY PETE ALPORT



*W*hen snow has begun to fall again after a fairly long dry spell, my heart flutters at the change in weather.

Snow is my love, and I've spent close to 30 years shooting video and photos of skiers and snowboarders in the backcountry.

There looks to be a break in the storm a couple days away with forecasted sun, so I line up a trip with two trusted friends and athletes, Andrew Orlich and Griffin Biancucci, to head into the backcountry and document the day from start to finish. Andrew is a seasoned vet skier—he could've been a pro, but chose otherwise. He is kind, hard working, has a strong knowledge base in snow science, and is highly talented. At just 20 years old, Griff is a young snowboarder, yet we work well together because of his ability to send it off of anything, to collaborate, work hard and have a positive attitude. Shooting in the backcountry isn't easy by any means. The conditions, communication, timeliness and effort go beyond just trying to have a "fun day in the snow." We are out there trying to create incredible imagery together. I work well with others who understand this and want to get after it.

Since 1994, I have been acquiring knowledge about Oregon's backcountry, which has created quite a library of locations to choose from. On this trip, I want to take Andrew and Griff to an area that has volcanic terrain on steroids. The zone has everything from pillow stacks and massive volcanic arch ways to volcanic tunnels, hefty cliffs and tight, technical lines. I call Griff and Andrew, explain the location, time and assignment. They are stoked and are in.



SLEDS BEFORE SUNRISE

At 4:30 a.m. my alarm goes off and I wake up excited, with gear prepped and a bit of nervousness—you never know if the sun will show, how good (and safe) snow conditions will be and how the day will go. The number of times I have been shut down by weather, shitty snow or tricky athlete dynamics—and failed to get a shot—is beyond counting, but I always hope for the best and continue to try. Even “failing” in the snow is where I want to be. I arrive at the sno-park under the star-filled dark sky before the 6 a.m. call time. I am always early. Griff and Andrew arrive early, too—off to a great start. We load the three snowmobiles (or sleds) up with gear, do beacon checks and head out to get our first pre-dawn shots as we head out to the location with incredible snow.

The next step will be punching a trail in on the sleds to our transition point from where we start our touring/splitboarding. Getting there takes effort in skill, guts and navigation. Griff, unlike me, is an animal on the sled and leads the way. We arrive at the transition point as the sun begins to rise, and begin the tour. Vibes are high and the crew is gelling.



“NOT MUCH ELSE BRINGS ME THE LEVEL OF JOY I FEEL BY BEING IN THE SNOW WITH A CAMERA.”

—PETE ALPORT



SETTING THE SCENE

We arrive at the location to set up the angle we will be working from and to dig an avalanche pit. The information from the pit is good, indicating the snow should be stable and give us the opportunity to create the shots we're visualizing. I've witnessed avalanches take athletes out, and I've been hit by avalanches while shooting. Say what you want about my risk taking, but I take precautions and try my best to be safe, but even then, things happen in the snow.

Andrew and Griff attack the zone all day long, totaling over a dozen lines/hits a piece. They love the dynamic range, and I am loving the photos we are capturing. As days like this transpire, I am filled with elation. We are three humans intertwined with the earth, using our passion to experience epic moments while creating beautiful imagery. This was a 10/10 day. Not much else brings me the level of joy I feel by being in the snow with a camera. ■





THE ART OF UP

A COMMUNAL, LUNG-SEARING WORLD
OF SKI MOUNTAINEERING

WRITTEN BY TIM NEVILLE | PHOTOGRAPHY BY BURKS MEDIA



You've probably seen them—those early-morning dots inching their way up Mt. Bachelor while you're still in the parking lot buckling boots. They're the "earn your turns" crowd, the folks who climb Leeway for a little prework exercise or to tag the Cone without using a lift. But look closely and you'll spot the serious ones: with skinny skis, tiny packs and tight-fitting outerwear. They move with quiet purpose, part monk, part mountain goat, and entirely unfazed by the fact that they're skiing the "wrong" direction.

These aren't casual uphillers. They're ski mountaineers, a niche-but-growing group dedicated to endurance, efficiency and the counter-intuitive joy of going uphill fast to go downhill even faster. Once a year, they all converge for a kind of reunion-slash-sufferfest called VertFest, Bend's annual celebration of all things uphill on snow.

"The idea of VertFest was really to get the backcountry community together in a single space," said Trevor Miller, cofounder of the event. This season's VertFest unfolds February 8. It's Central Oregon's yearly dive into "verticulture" and the world of ski mountaineering or "skimo" to those in the know. Part race, part backcountry skills clinic, part block party for people who think uphill is the fun direction, the event raises money for the Central Oregon Avalanche Center (COAC) while giving skiers and riders a safe, structured space to learn backcountry travel skills.

The race features multiple divisions, including the beginner-friendly Rookie Rally, a one lap, up and down of the Cone. The elite course threads its way up Leeway to Pine Marten Lodge, drops into Ed's Garden, climbs back up and descends to Red Chair—twice. Alongside the racing are gear demos, beacon workshops, kids' activities, and a crowd of friendly masochists who show up simply because movement in the mountains feels good.

IN THE KNOW OF SKIMO

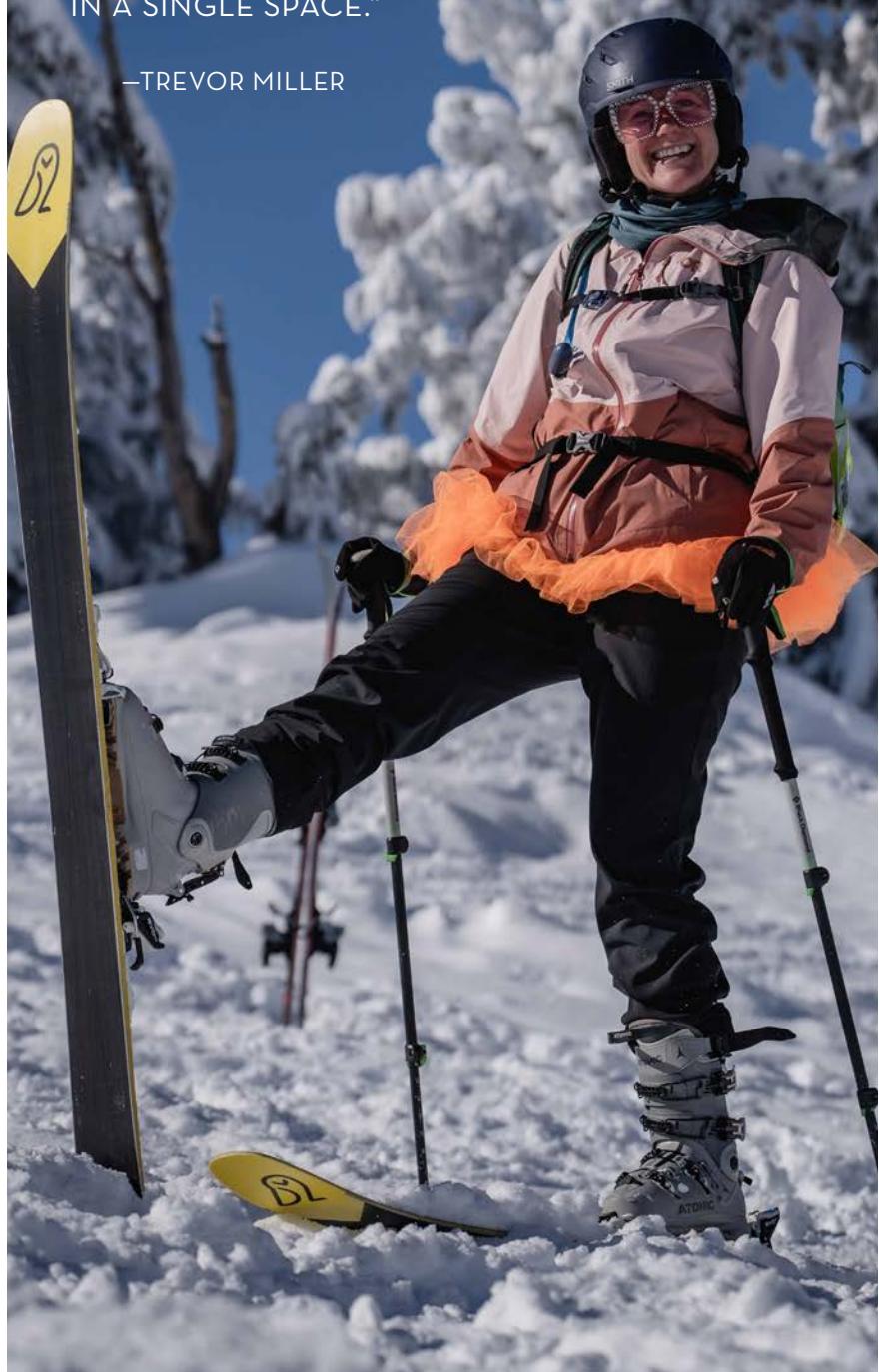
At its core, skimo is backcountry skiing stripped down and sped up. Instead of hunting powder on wider skis, skimo athletes climb on ultralight gear with skis barely wider than a hand, and boots that often weigh less than a pizza. Like backcountry skiers, they rely on climbing skins and walk-mode bindings to move efficiently uphill. At the top, they rip off skins, lock heels, ski down and do it again as fast as their lungs allow. It's part endurance race, part mountain craft and part gear-shaving obsession.

"The smallest detail can make a difference—like how you pack your skins, which line you ski, the gear you choose," Miller said. Even downhill skiing becomes strategic. As elite racer Chris Jones puts it,

“

THE IDEA OF VERTFEST
WAS REALLY TO GET
THE BACKCOUNTRY
COMMUNITY TOGETHER
IN A SINGLE SPACE.”

—TREVOR MILLER



"People think it's all uphill, but a huge amount of time is in transitions and how you ski downhill."

Jones, now in his 40s, made his name as a professional cyclist racing at the national and international level before turning his competitive instincts toward the mountains. When he discovered ski mountaineering, he found a sport that blended endurance, efficiency and technical skill, an appealing constellation after years of structured bike racing. The transition stuck. He quickly became one of Central Oregon's top skimo athletes, made the U.S. National Team and won VertFest in 2024. What keeps him hooked isn't just the competition, he said, but the simple thrill of "going fast in the mountains and trying to be efficient."

Miller sees that same appeal in the people who show up for VertFest every season. While the event attracts a handful of elite racers, he says, "Ninety percent of the people are friends and family who just want to support the backcountry concept."

That communal magic is part of why skimo has taken root in Bend's skin-track culture, where a parade of beanies bobbing uphill at 7 a.m. is nearly as common as a Sprinter van in the West Village lot. For athletes like Jones, that shared grind can be addictive. "It's a lot of fun," he said.

FOUNDING A FESTIVAL

VertFest itself began humbly with roots that go back to the King and Queen of the Cone, a proudly homespun race organized around 2010 by educator and local outdoor fixture Kevin Grove. Around the same time, Miller and his friend Jon Tapper were building what would become COAC, then a volunteer group offering avalanche education and snowpack summaries for backcountry travelers. As the backcountry community grew, so did the desire for an event that blended education with celebration.

The spark to found a festival came from the wider Northwest skimo world.

Grassroots races at places like Crystal Mountain and Alpental Ski Resort enjoyed support from deep-pocket sponsors like Outdoor Research as well as the Northwest Avalanche Center. When Outdoor Research tied those races into a regional series in the early 2010s, Miller and Tapper saw an opportunity for Bend. They brought VertFest to Mt. Bachelor in 2012, and the response was immediate. The series eventually dissolved elsewhere, but COAC kept VertFest going because the Central Oregon community clearly cared.

Today, VertFest feels like the natural expression of Bend's mountain culture: part fundraiser, part workshop, part joyful winter chaos. It's one of those unique events where elite racers and first-timers share at least part of the same course before gathering afterward to trade stories about blown skins, steep bootpacks, and whatever weather the mountain delivered.

And if you expect a podium of superhuman twenty-somethings, you'd be thinking of the women only. Athletes such as Anna Gibson, Sarah Burke and Samantha Marin, who've all shared the podium, were in their twenties when they earned their medals. But VertFest's fastest male elite racers tend to be in their early to mid-40s, and in the 2025 race, a 60-year-old was a top finisher. Along with Jones, ultrarunner Max King and this year's champion, Andrew Parsel—who jumped from fifth to first—have all claimed podium spots. Like high-altitude mountaineering, the best skimo athletes have a lot of experience.

But for all the carbon gear and lung-searing effort, VertFest isn't really about wattage or winning. It's about what makes mountain life in Bend so magnetic: people getting outside together, testing themselves, and sharing something steep and beautiful in winter.

As Miller puts it, "Even if you're slow, there's still an enjoyable element of climbing through the woods under human power with views of those mountains." ■





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Hot Stuff

Cold days call for chili pepper palate heaters

WRITTEN BY **IRENE COOPER** | PHOTOGRAPHY BY **TINA PAYMASTER**



Wild Rose

Wether grown in a humble kitchen garden or contributing to the 2021 Nobel prize, a story of chili peppers is an epic tale of diaspora. The ancient fruit grew wild in South and Central America, traveling to Europe, India and China before flaming culinary passions across North America. Capsaicin is the ingredient that makes eyes and noses run, but it was proven with that global science prize just a few years ago, it's all a genetic ruse. Capsaicin activates a pain receptor intended to protect a body from actual fire. With chilis, the tongue

experiences the thrill without the danger, like a scary movie or the plunge of a rollercoaster. It's not real fire, even if the tears are tangible.

When it comes to culinary adventure, local makers, mixologists and chefs eschew the Scoville spiciness scale gauntlet of the YouTube show "Hot Ones" for the deep flavor and enticing heat of a deliciously balanced dish or sip. There's nothing like a bit of spice to take the chill off a day in winter wonderland, and chili peppers ignite cuisines and melt seasonal ice with the most delectable of fires.

Passion ON A PLATE

HOT, SWEET AND SPICY

Warm up on a cold night with an order of Aguachiles from Simón Latin Cuisine and Margaritas. This traditional dish from the Mexican state of Sinaloa is made with tiger prawns, serrano peppers, marinated red onion, cucumber, lime and cilantro. "The heat of the chilis," said chef and owner Roberto Cardenas, "combined with the crisp bite of cucumber and the sweetness of lime" is best accompanied by a seasonal margarita with fresh pomegranate juice—the perfect picante antidote for winter doldrums.

Simón Latin Cuisine and Margaritas, 221 NW Hill St., Bend



Spirited SPIRITS

TURN UP THE VOLUME

Cocktail menu creator Brian Moe looked to the tradition of Western movies to inspire the spicy libations at The Coyote. True Grit's zip derives from a dried chili infusion into the bourbon, while Blazing Saddle builds its fire from tequila that undergoes a house-made process of infusing the Mexican spirit with cumin and cilantro. The seasoned tequila is combined with mezcal (for a subtle smokiness), fresh lime juice and triple sec, and is served in a rocks glass rimmed with Tajin, adding a salty, citrus and spice flavor to the profile.

The Coyote, 910 NW Harriman St., #100, Bend; Dogwood at the Pine Shed, 821 NE 2nd St., Bend

Another spicy sip: Dogwood at the Pine Shed serves the Beesting, mixed with aged tequila reposado, habanero, honey, mint and lemon on the rocks, making it spicy and bright.



LEVEL UP

The Thai-style Sukiya at Wild Rose can be ordered with a spice level of three, four (very spicy) or five (extremely spicy), and is composed of clear glass noodles stir fried in a spicy fermented chili sauce with garlic, Napa cabbage, egg and Chinese greens with a choice of protein. When it comes to this family recipe from the city of Chiang Mai in northern Thailand, chef Paul Itti isn't pulling any punches. Forewarned is forearmed.

Wild Rose, 150 NW Oregon Ave, Bend

More Fiery Favorites: Spork's Spicy Fried Chicken; Wing Zaab at Sen; Saam lettuce wraps and Tteok Bokki, a spicy rice cake with gochujang (Korean red chili paste) from Yoli.



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POUR ON THE HEAT

Fred Giacomini forged his own chili destiny working in the restaurant business before creating his brand, fRED Sauce. The adventure began in 2018 with a four-ingredient recipe—Fresno chilis, red wine vinegar, garlic and sea salt. He discovered Cherry Bomb peppers at a Portland farmers market and bought 10 pounds. By 2019 his order was upped to 7,500 pounds, then fermented and bottled into 400 cases of fRED Sauce. Today the fRED Sauce lineup includes the original hot sauce, with medium heat at the back of the tongue and sweetness up front. The best-selling Green

Sauce, added in 2021, gets tartness from tomatillos and sweetness from lime, with a whisper of smoke. Habañero Red, introduced in 2022, has "creeper heat," balanced with roasted red peppers, carrot juice and sweet onions to enhance food, not dominate it.

More Local Hot Stuff: Sakari Farms produces a suite of 13 sauces that showcase the supernovas of heat—from Carolina Reapers, Maruga Scorpions to Peach Reapers and Ghost Peppers.

Bend Sauce's new owners David Rabe and Jason Berry keep tongues tingling with Chipotle Hot Sauce and Smokin' Hot Honey. And watch for chili, ginger and garlic-infused vinegar from Cultivate Farms. **IB**

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PHOTO BY ALYSON BROWN



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Lifty's State of Mind

A gathering spot for après anything

WRITTEN BY JEREMY STORTON

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CASCADE CREATIVE AGENCY

There's a good reason why Lifty's restaurant and bar has an eclectic menu: Owner Chris Justema has been feeding Bend for decades and knows the diverse tastes of his patrons. He and his wife, Elizabeth, created it to be an extension of the mindset of Bend, something Justema calls, "Après anything." Lifty's celebrates family, community and connecting through shared passions and experiences. In fact, this is how the restaurant got its name in the first place. "I'm a die-hard skier and have been my whole life," Justema said. "And I have a soft spot for all the lift operators who feed my passion and get zero credit."



On any given day, patrons might be found relaxing around a firepit after burning their quads on hill repeats, tackling a mountain of nachos while watching a game on a big-screen in the dining room or enjoying a drink—alcohol optional. This is exactly the point. After running Cascade Lakes Brewery, one of the first stops on the road down the hill from a ski day, for decades, Justema was ready for the next evolution with an emphasis on local favorites.

The menu reflects the broad tastes of Bend. Head Chef Alan Skelton has been given a clear mission to pull off the culinary trifecta: create unexpected whimsy, offer healthy options and absolutely nail the classics. With full autonomy to change the menu with the seasons, Skelton blends global flavors with Central Oregon favorites. "People come with different tastes, and we make sure not to stick to one type of food," Justema said.

While the burgers, wings and salads are all well executed, Lifty's menu stands out because of the bold, international dishes. The potstickers, for instance, balance lemongrass with savory chicken, and have a crisp crunch. Add a dip into the tangy and spicy Korean barbecue-style sauce with notes of ginger to ignite a gentle burn.

The colorful drunken noodles feature wide rice noodles tossed with peppers, onions, Thai basil and a rich, aromatic drunken sauce. The pork belly adds savory depth, but even without it, the dish would hold its own.

The Italiano sandwich is *molto bene*. Hot capicola and pepperoncini create a little heat between slices of airy schiacciata bread (a cross between focaccia and ciabatta). Order it with fries; they're worth the extra calories.

Lifty's also approaches drinks differently. Bend is a beer hotspot, and Lifty's gives tribute to that tradition with local favorites and a rotating selection for those looking to discover something new. Justema goes a step further, paying equal attention to nonalcoholic beverages. "I feel like a lot of places ignore the NA drinker," he said. "We want to change that. Some people still want to drink, they just don't want the alcohol." The result is a menu that treats NA beers, wines and mocktails with the same respect as any craft IPA or house cocktail.

Then there's the surprise of a sand volleyball court with a very good reason for it—the Justemas are also supportive parents. Their daughter, Harper, was a competitive volleyball player in high school, and they wanted to honor her and the Bend beach volleyball tribe by giving them a place to gather and play.

While Lifty's welcomes anyone from anywhere in need of fuel, it keeps its focus local. "We're not in downtown, we're off the beaten path," said Justema. It's a destination spot—a nice way of saying people are not likely to stumble upon it. But Lifty's is worth seeking out, because whatever Bendites are into, this spot is up for après anything. ■







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Taking Shape

The colorful culinary world of handmade pasta

WRITTEN BY **SIENA DORMAN**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ALYSON BROWN**

Bombaci Handmade Pasta proves that by pairing high-quality ingredients and total attention, pasta becomes its own kind of pleasure. Founders Gabriel Rossi and Annette Solis started the business in spring of 2024 after years of working together in restaurants, from Denver, Colorado to the Australian Outback. The husband and wife team tried many food projects at home, but pasta was the one that stuck. It offered craft, variation and endless room to learn.

Their dough starts with flour imported from Italy, which Rossi trusts for its consistency and flavor. For their stuffed pastas, they add a touch of semolina and use a generous number of egg yolks, making the dough soft but strong. The couple developed the ratio to hold fillings without weighing them down; but, Bend's dry climate forces constant adjustments. Some days require more water, some days less. The dough changes with the weather, and the makers follow its lead. Even with machines kneading their dough, Rossi and Solis finish each batch by hand.

For its stuffed pastas, Bombaci's dough sheets are rolled out on wooden tables and folded individually into their respective shapes. Rainshadow and Godspeed eggs are a staple in the kitchen. Local ranchers and farmers, such as Well-Rooted Produce, Boundless Farmstead, Seed to Table and Pitchfork-T, regularly provide sources for fillings. During market season, each week brings new flavors from the Sisters, NorthWest Crossing and Downtown Bend farmers markets. Off-season, flavors change about every other week. The Bombaci team never feels boxed in when it comes to flavor development: If a creamed corn and braised beef filling feels right one week, they try it.





When Bombaci added an extruder to its kitchen, a machine that pushes dough through a bronze "die" to create noodle shapes that can't be formed by hand, it opened the door to offer pasta variations such as bucatini, rigatoni and campanelle.

"Quality is the absolute top priority; we've obsessed over it," Rossi said. "We use awesome ingredients. We've both lost so much sleep over pasta." Solis added, "It needs to be delicious." It's quality that drives every decision in the Bombaci kitchen, down to the packaging. Rossi and Solis discovered that candy boxes help control moisture due to their hybrid cardboard and plastic composition, allowing Bombaci to deliver fresh stuffed pasta that is tender and never brittle.

Gabriel Rossi
and Annette Solis



Bombaci pasta is meant to inspire the home cook to explore flavor in the kitchen. Stuffed shapes ask for very little—perhaps brown butter, a bit of salt and a handful of grated cheese. Extruded shapes can welcome more, such as a meat ragu or simply vegetables cooked down in olive oil. Rossi often recommends blistered

cherry tomatoes with their mushroom agnolotti: one tomato and one agnolotti per bite, a surprisingly tender forkful that balances sweetness and umami. Bombaci gives people a way to cook at home with minds open to the creative possibilities of flavor—from simple preparations to the most eclectic. See bombacipasta.com. 



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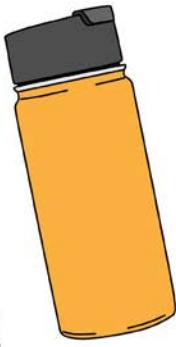
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Art Below Bend

At Justin Schlosberg's Underground Book Gallery,
find anything but the ordinary

WRITTEN BY **CATHY CARROLL**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **CODY RHEAULT**

There's something about an underground space. While others abide by the norm of striding along sidewalks, stepping below street level is a sojourn to discover the hidden, the secret, the unusual at Underground Book Gallery. Descending steps, you find the subterranean world of Justin Schlosberg—artist, writer and curator for the analog soul.

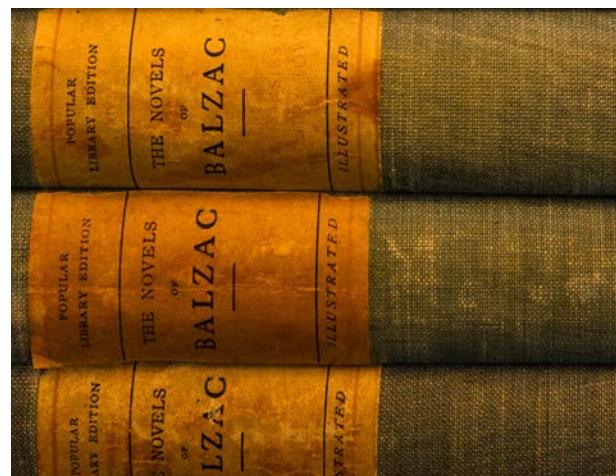




RIGHT: Find a mixture of new titles, used books and bits of history.

THIS: Step into a world of creativity.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Justin Schlosberg; Neil Anderson plays at the shop piano.



The bustle of nearby NW Wall Street fades as you step into the low-ceilinged, 600-square-foot space lined with roughly 20,000 used books, from beat poets and classics to a mass-market sci-fi paperback collection and antiquarian finds. What at first seems like strictly a bookstore quickly reveals its other self: art gallery. Among the shelves, black pen-and-ink works catch the eye. The art depicts the Elusive Taloned Penguin, Schlosberg's spindly-armed take on the Penguin Books icon. On the canvases, the Schlosberg's

Penguin spouts off "factoids"—quirky, satirical musings and mischief, drawn with Ralph Steadman-esque gonzo print, ink splatters and blotches.

To wit: Factoid #557 is mixed media—the penguin strums a guitar drawn as a wedding couple dances under festival string lights, and words reveal that the Elusive Taloned Penguin gigs classical guitar at weddings. "Incidentally," it's explained, "this couple met playing pickleball." Factoid #911 tells us the Elusive Taloned Penguin was fined \$50,000 for betting on

himself in professional laser tag, spent a month in federal prison with cellmate Pete Rose, but "fortunately, it didn't exclude him from being inducted into the Laser Tag Hall of Fame in 2002." Penguin is inked on the glass of a framed 1949 *Life Magazine* cover devoted to French alpine racer Émile Allais who is airborne and leans over his ski tips. A thought bubble over the flightless bird's head says, "Wow, that's photoshopped."

The character came to Schlosberg a few years ago, when he riffed on the



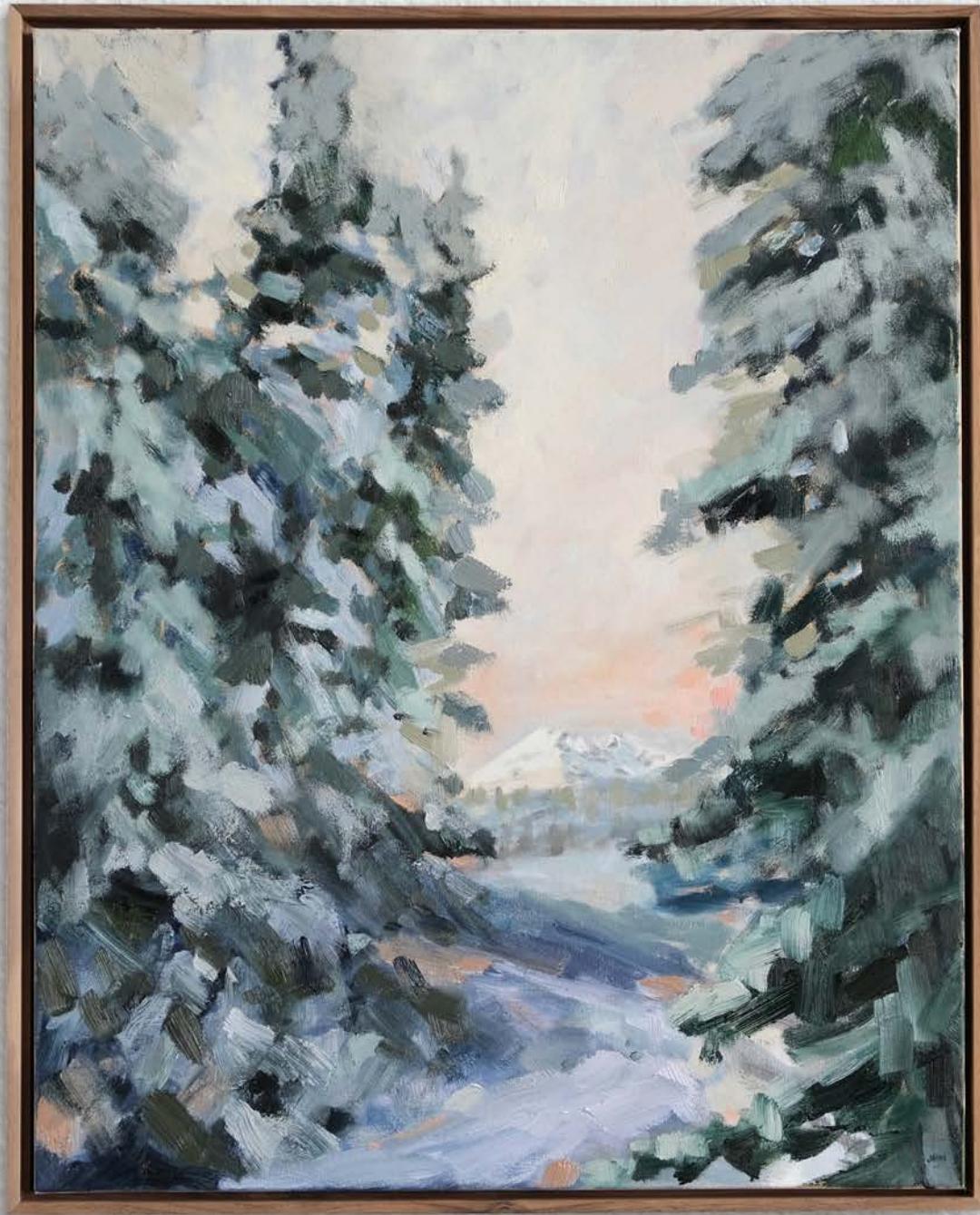
publisher's logo with a nibbed ink pen in hand. "I extended the arms on it and wrote a little story to go along with it, what I called 'factoids,'" said Schlosberg, black ink stains lining his hands. His girlfriend, Bernadette Foley, who cofounded the shop, liked it and encouraged him to make more. "They're kind of like the mascot of the store now—and [the penguin] has all these different adventures." In 2022, Schlosberg opened the shop with mostly art and a few books after operating a bookstore in Breckenridge, Colorado, for 19 years. Underground Book Gallery could be considered out of the box, as could Schlosberg's own books. *My Family Album* began when Schlosberg opened what he thought was a John Adams biography box set and discovered, not books, but a stash of someone's family photos from the 1950s and '60s. Curating the images,

he mounted them on album pages and began layering on his darkly humorous calligraphy.

His next book, *A Peculiar Day in Coney Island*, was a short story that Schlosberg reworked as a young adult book, collaborating with a friend on the art. It tells the metaphorical tale of a boy who wants to be treated like an adult. Things change on a strange day in Coney Island when he meets Mysteriouso, who runs the freak show. The book is an exploration in much the same way a visit to the bookstore is filled with mystery and discovery.

On First Fridays, Schlosberg pours sake, and musicians pull up a seat at the piano. Other nights, the group Upstairs Poetry hosts readings. Any time in this subterranean spot, though, offers a journey beyond the ordinary and into the delightfully eccentric world that Schlosberg has crafted for creativity, humor and serendipity. See @undergroundbookgallery. 





"Warming Hut View"

Excavating Magic

Jennifer McCaffrey paints scenes of serenity and splendor

WRITTEN BY ROSEANN DENNERY



In her studio's top floor perch overlooking the Old Mill District, Jennifer McCaffrey's canvas is situated next to a window framing a dynamic, unfolding sky. It is a setting for daily discovery, a space where she crafts landscapes that capture thematic patterns of land and light.

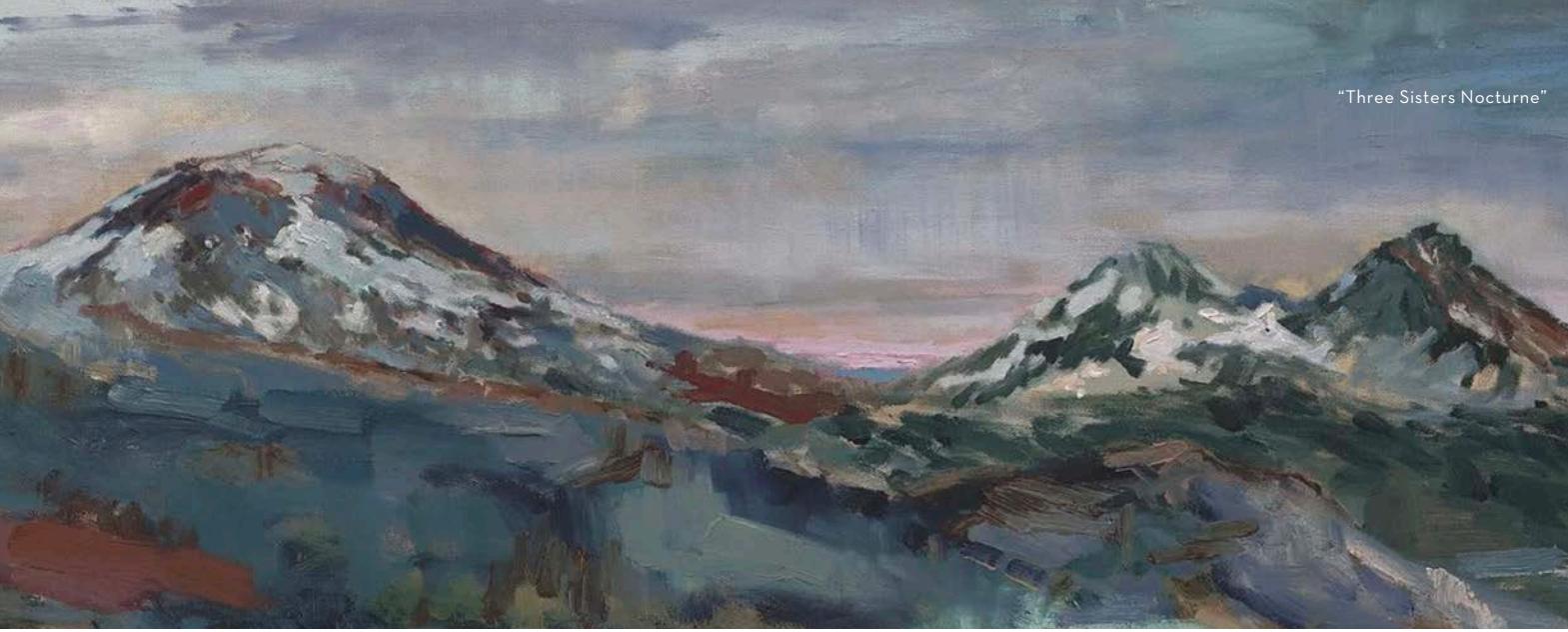
McCaffrey has always been drawn to the sky's endless depth—an appreciation she contributes to growing up in the Midwest. The sky often serves as the mood setter for her paintings, an ever-changing canvas that inspires the connection between the external world and the landscapes within.

From her earliest memories in small-town Indiana, McCaffrey was an artist in a variety of forms such as dance, piano and painting. After receiving her degree as a physician assistant (PA) and starting her family, she found herself craving the "float

state" in the margins of her days—moments she described when time would effortlessly float away.

She recalls experiencing this most when painting during the fringe hours at her kitchen table while her children were asleep. After relocating to Bend in 2018, Central Oregon's poetic beauty became a catalyst for her art. For McCaffrey, this was found among alpine meadows, on the still shores of glacier lakes and in the shadows of jagged peaks. "Part of my creative rhythm is to play first before I can create," McCaffrey explained. "I need to fill up the cup of inspiration by spending unhindered time in these landscapes."

This cup seems to overflow effortlessly into her work as she mixes rich palettes of oil paint to masterfully recreate scenes of serenity and splendor: the billowing clouds of an alpenglow sunset, a winter afternoon's snow-laden silence or the ethereal majesty of Broken



Top's ridgeline. To capture her subject's depth and intensity, she stretches raw linen over canvas with a coat of clear gesso on top to augment the texture and color of the fabric, and then paints directly on it.

"My art tends to be a combination of whatever is going on with me internally coupled with what I see in a landscape," she described. "I'm often trying to create a movement or a mood. Landscapes tend to be a great format to convey that."

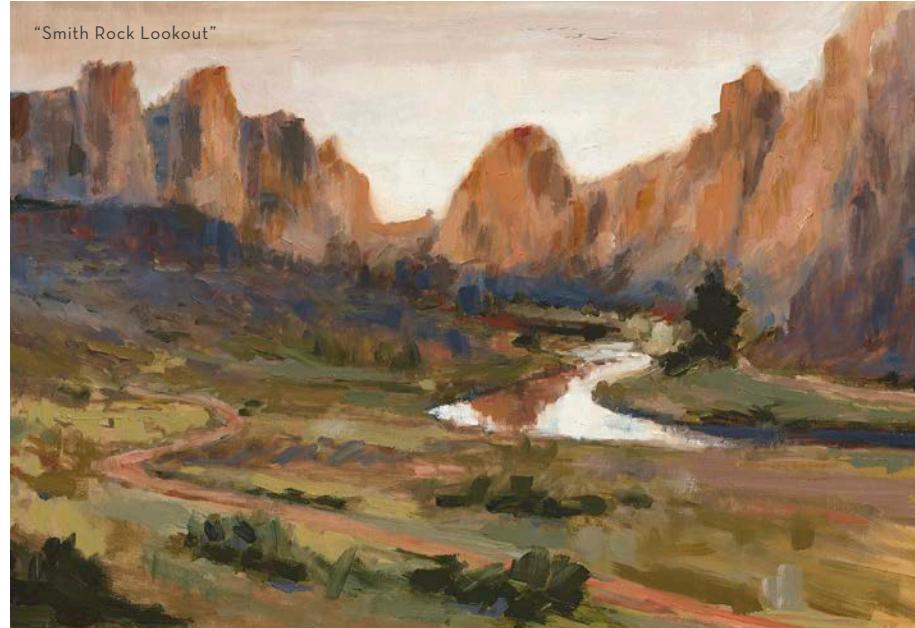
McCaffrey's paintings range in style from abstract to impressionistic, creating moments that are suspended between the perceived and the felt. She believes landscapes are alive within all of us, that the inner and outer are always in communication with each other. This is inspired by a quote from a former professor which guides her creative process: "If you cracked us open, you would find landscapes."

After her third child was born, McCaffrey rented a studio space to put more time toward her painting practice. "Since becoming a mom, my art has become therapy. My goal is to crack myself open to see what is inside of me at the current moment," she shared. "There are still pieces of myself that I need to take out and examine, and art is the way I express that, by putting it into paint and onto canvas to create a composition."

McCaffrey likens this process to a form of excavation—a gathering of inspiration and a sifting before landing on a concept or color palette. Then, the magic begins. Visitors to the Old Mill District will see her work as the featured artist for its Winter Art Series.

"I want consumers of my art to have an encounter, a moment of connection when they recognize something they cherish...whether that is the actual composition itself or just a feeling that calls to something deep within and draws them in." See jennifermccaffrey.com. ■

"Smith Rock Lookout"





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WHAT NEW RESEARCH REVEALS ABOUT HORMONE THERAPY



For years, many women avoided hormone therapy because of the long-standing “black box” warning. In late 2025, the FDA announced it will remove that warning from many menopause hormone therapies reflecting new research showing these treatments may be safer and more effective than once believed.

Research now suggests women who begin estrogen therapy earlier may see up to a 60% lower risk of major conditions like breast cancer, heart attack, and stroke compared with those who start much later.

This evolving science is what prompted the FDA to modernize its guidance.

If you’re noticing changes in sleep, energy, mood, cognition, or your menstrual cycle, this may be the right time to explore your hormone health.

At OnePeak Medical, we believe in personalized, evidence-based care; not one-sized-fits-all answers. If menopause is affecting you, let’s look at your whole story: hormone balance, sleep hygiene, nutrition, and lifestyle, and see whether modern HRT (or alternatives) could be part of your path forward.

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ARTS and CULTURE



BREEDLOVE DONATION EXPANDS MUSIC ACCESS

Breedlove Guitars recently gave the Bend-La Pine School District a major boost with a donation of 75 guitars, valued at roughly \$65,000, in partnership with Economic Development for Central Oregon (EDCO). The instruments will be integrated into music programs districtwide, providing students greater access to hands-on learning. Breedlove will also serve as the district's repair and service partner, underscoring its long-term commitment to Central Oregon's music community. See breedlovemusic.com.

NEW AWARD HONORS VISIONARY LEADERS

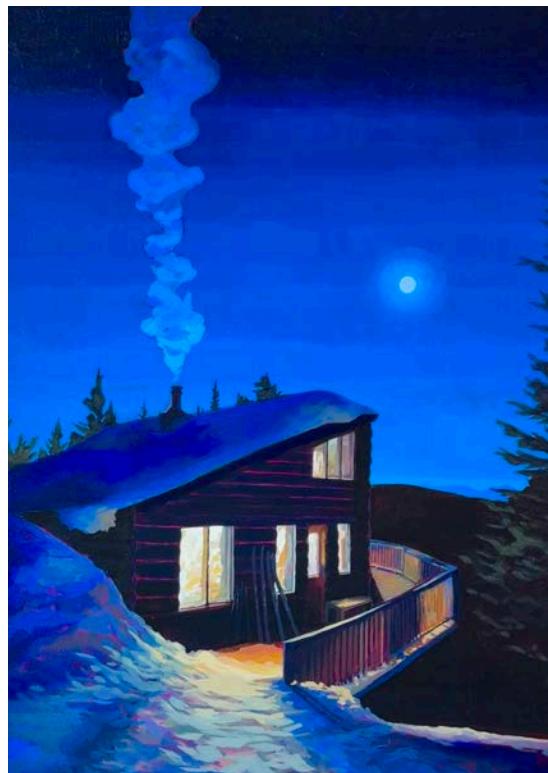
The High Desert Museum hosts the Schnitzer Prize of the West, honoring visionary individuals and groups whose work shapes the region's future through sustainable environmental transformation. Sponsored by Jordan Schnitzer, long-time supporter of the museum, the prize celebrates collaboration and leaders who tackle the West's most pervasive ecological and conservation challenges. In spring 2026, the \$50,000 prize will be awarded in Portland with a prize Reception to follow in Bend. See highdesertmuseum.org.

PHOTO TOP LEFT BY RA BEATTIE



LOCAL AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR EARN NATIONAL HONOR

Good Morning, Mother Nature, written by author Lucas Alberg and illustrated by artist Megan Marie Myers, both from Bend, earned the 2025 Moonbeam Children's Book Awards Bronze Medal in the Picture Book Preschool category. The award spotlights books that spark imagination and nurture a lifelong love of reading. Alberg's rhyming ode to the outdoors pairs with Myers' playful artwork to celebrate creativity, empathy and the wonder of the natural world. The book is the pair's second collaboration after *Goodnight Great Outdoors* in 2021.



GALLERY AT SCALEHOUSE FEATURES HANNAH JENSEN

"Thin Places," an exhibition by Central Oregon artist Hannah Jensen, will be on view in the gallery at Bend's Scalehouse Collaborative of the Arts Gallery from January 9 to February 27, 2026. Jensen explores locations that exist between the material world and the intangible. Her artwork focuses on contemporary western landscapes, drawing on her experience and connection with the outdoors. The viewer is invited to tag along on her winding journeys, layered with deep artistic intention. See scalehouse.org.

“

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ALONE. IF YOU WANT TO GO
FAR, GO TOGETHER.”

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Brooke, Cassidy
and Jen: together at
Hoodoo Ski Area.

PHOTO BY JULIA DUKE

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