



LUXURY IN LEAVENWORTH

Washington's Alpine Wine Region

| BY PAMELA & GARY BAKER

Resembling a Bavarian alpine village, gently sloping Swiss chalet roofs cover Leavenworth's buildings, their exteriors decorated with colorful paintings. Baskets and window boxes full of fuchsia flowers hang everywhere. Locals dress in colorful dirndls and traditional lederhosen as they entertain visitors in the town square or serve schnitzel and sausage in German themed restaurants. Surrounded by Washington's dramatic Cascade Mountains, outdoor enthusiasts are drawn to year-round activities including hiking, rafting, skiing and sleigh rides. And every year, for three weekends in October, the town's lively Oktoberfest draws thousands of beer lovers. Bratwurst, beer and sounds of German oom pa pah music are plentiful here. But there's another side to this fun-loving town. Visitors looking for a pampered weekend getaway in this alpine village will find plenty to choose from.

The Post Hotel, a five-star luxury retreat in the center of town welcomes guests to its adults-only, 55-room resort. Known for its European hydrotherapy, the Post Hotel brings unique traditions and methods found in the Alps dating back hundreds of years to its modern Wellness Center. An array of steam baths and saunas, soothing saltwater hydrother-

apy pools, cool plunge pools, and the unique Kneipp stepping pools are all part of the indulgent and restorative spa available to all guests. Around the swim-out saltwater pool, lounge beds are scattered about, perfect for napping or relaxing. Views of the gently flowing river below and surrounding mountains provide a tranquil setting. Other spa services including massage therapy, salt scrubs and skin care are available at an additional cost.

Breakfast and lunch, included with the cost of accommodations, are served in a restaurant open only to guests. Dining in your bathrobe and slippers is not only permitted but encouraged and the breakfast offerings are staggering. Each morning guests can choose from one of three menu items plus the buffet. Picture an omelet with buckboard bacon, roasted peppers, fresh spinach and feta cheese, served with chicken apple sausage and smashed herbed potatoes. That's in addition to a wide variety of fresh fruit, granola, European deli meats and cheeses, scones and Devonshire cream, yoghurt, nuts and pastries. At lunch, sit and repeat, choosing from an expansive array of salads and a choice of three entrees from the daily changing menu.

Our quiet and comfortable room, with a gen-

erous sized bathroom and inviting standalone granite bathtub, affords a perfect place to relax in the afternoon and sleep like a baby at night. The separate sitting space is a welcome spot to read or drink in views of the Cascade Mountains. French doors open to the balcony where we watch rafters float gently by on the river below us. The subtle earthen and clean white linen tones give the room a soft and warm feel.

WHERE TO TASTE

Growing more popular with each year, wine tasting is big here. With more than 20 tasting rooms scattered throughout the city center and a half a dozen stunning wineries on the outskirts of town, there's plenty of wine indulgence. Just steps from the Post Hotel, we love the Boudreaux wine tasting room, Patterson Cellars and Goose Ridge. On the outskirts of town, Silvara Cellars, Icicle Ridge and Eagle Creek are well worth a visit.

BOUDREAUX

Boudreaux Cellars' downtown tasting room, with its shared space, sleek bar and shiny suspended canoe, is a popular spot for wine lovers. Known for making award-winning cabernet

sauvignon, Rob Newson and his daughter Keely, also make several other delicious varietals with grapes sourced from Yakima, Walla Walla and Columbia Valley.

GOOSE RIDGE WINERY TASTING ROOM

[Goose Ridge Winery's](#) tasting room has a casual open airy feel and its friendly, knowledgeable staff make you feel right at home. With wine bottles stacked decoratively in diagonal shaped wooden racks behind a low-slung bar, you can stand to taste, or sit comfortably in leather chairs or at spacious high-top wooden tables and chairs. An outside patio opens to Front Street, where, if weather permits, you can sit at small tables and taste wine while people watching.

Dedicated to handcrafting limited quantities of exquisite Bordeaux and Rhone varietals wines from the winery's vineyard in the Columbia Valley, Goose Ridge is a small, family-owned and operated estate winery.

PATTERSON CELLARS TASTING ROOM

For an exceptional experience, [Patterson Cellars](#) offers wine-tasting paired with your choice of culinary inspired chocolates or artisan cheeses. Or a deluxe charcuterie board, prepared by [Cured](#), the local sausage and salami store, is available with 12-hour advance notice.

Winemaker John Patterson strives to produce approachable new world wines that appeal to all palates. He makes single varietals and blends of whites, reds, and roses plus sparkling and dessert wines. We sampled the sparkling blanc de blanc, the Melange Blanc – a white blend, a Petite Verdot and a Syrah, both from Columbia Valley, and a Red Mountain cabernet-Malbec. With small bites from the charcuterie board, we found the sensory tasting experience to be educational and enjoyable.

SILVARA

At the top of the hill and just a short ten-minute drive from town, [Silvara Cellars](#) offers stunning views of the Wenatchee River and Cascade foothills. Throughout the year, Silvara hosts plenty of events to welcome wine loving visitors. But the music on Friday nights during the summer is popular with locals. Visitors can purchase food on-site or bring their own picnic dinner.

Owner and winemaker, Gary Seidler, produces limited batch Bordeaux style wines, including Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, and Merlot, by sourcing his grapes from the best vineyards in Washington.

ICICLE RIDGE WINERY

Fashioned from a dramatic "log cabin" home built by Louie and Judy Wagner, the [Icicle Ridge](#) wine tasting room provides plenty of seating. It features a massive hand-built, river stone fireplace, large, glossy hand-crafted log tables in the kitchen, and a view of Icicle Ridge Mountain from the window of the tasting room. This is not a "belly up to the bar" kind of place, but rather an exceptional winetasting experience as you're seated to sample their hand-crafted wines.

Don't be surprised if third generation owner, Kristin Collier, joins you for a tasting. The popular Blondes white wine, named after Louie and Judy's three daughters, is produced from the estate's vineyards. Their events are unique and engaging, like the wine hike with gourmet lunch or the midwinter snowshoe hike lit by tiki torches.



EAGLE CREEK

You'll feel like you stepped into a Tuscan winery when you visit the tasting room at [Eagle Creek](#). The barrel aging cellar reflects hand-painted walls, wood carving on barrels and smells like the ancient wine cellars of Europe. Outside, a curious treehouse and shaded patio overlook the vineyard and mountain view. One of the few outside Leavenworth that has been successfully growing Chardonnay, Riesling and Cabernet Franc in their river basin vineyards, Eagle Creek's exceptional, artisan crafted, estate bottled wines are made from their estate grown grapes.

One of the oldest wineries in the Leavenworth area, Eagle Creek was founded 26 years ago by Ed Rutledge. Today, Ed's stepson, Paul Sharpe, is the owner and winemaker. This fall, Paul released "Ed's Red," a mon-tage of merlot and cabernet franc, and special tribute to his stepdad, Ed.



WHERE TO EAT

We love [Mana](#) for its fresh cuisine and creative offerings. On Friday and Saturday nights, Mana serves a single seating, eight-course, three-hour eating extravaganza. The cost is \$85 per person. The wine pairing option, which we highly recommend to fully appreciate the gourmet dishes, is just \$29 per person. Reservations are a must. Sunday's option is a little more casual with a five-course dinner that costs \$65, optional wine pairings extra.

[Visconti's](#) trumpeted Italian cuisine matches its award-winning wine list and attentive staff enhance the dining experience. If the weather is good, ask for a table on the patio with a view of the town and surrounding mountains.



When in “Bavaria,” you must try a sausage and beer in [Munchen Haus](#). Apple cider sauerkraut, dill relish, sweet relish, diced onions, cucumber relish, sliced jalapenos and a staggering variety of specialty mustards are available to top off your bratwurst, chicken sausage, turkey dog or veggie wurst. There’s something here to please everyone. We enjoyed the German potato salad and a pint of beer with our scrumptious lunch while sitting in this shaded, lively spot. Beer choices range from pilsner to German chocolate cake ale. Icicle Brewing Company also supplies rotating specialty taps.

IF YOU GO

Most people travel over the Cascades from Seattle to partake in the beautiful drive. But a flight into Wenatchee Airport, just 25 minutes from Leavenworth is also easy to do on Alaska Airlines. Regardless of how you get there, you won’t regret your decision to indulge and relax in beautiful [Leavenworth](#). ♦

