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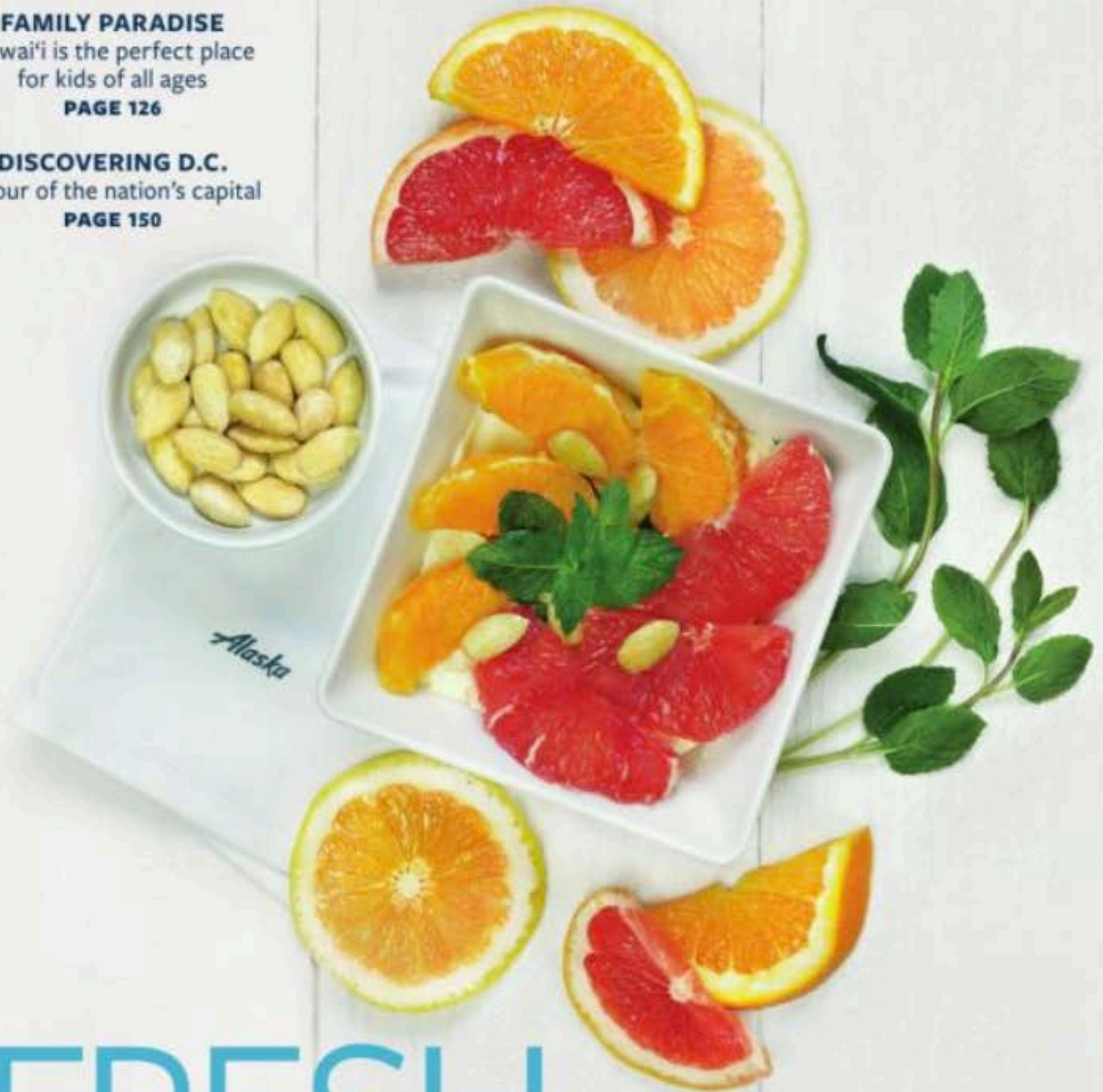
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AN OREGON SOJOURN

Catching a seafood bounty

By Drew Tyson

» It's a little past 5 A.M., and the nine people who are seated with me around a banquet table at the Stephanie Inn, which overlooks Oregon's Cannon Beach, have had enough coffee to start introducing themselves.

I meet a middle-aged couple from Houston—two well-dressed men with laconic drawls who offer up a bit of banter in between bites of scrambled egg and muffin. As we playfully argue over who will catch the first fish or pull up the largest crab, I look out the window and notice the sky is lightening and our adventure is about to start.

The group is participating in one of the luxury hotel's inaugural sojourns, a "guest-experience program" featuring excursions and guided adventures led by the inn's chef, Aaron Bedard, and local artisans and outfitters. The small-group experience we are taking part in is "What a Catch!" in which we will hunt for three

different local delicacies—Dungeness crab, softshell butter clams and Chinook salmon. It's one of the inn's more elaborate outings, with a full day of water activities, including digging for clams, placing crab pots and fishing for salmon in Nehalem Bay.

We climb into a van as bright-eyed cooks in starched whites load matching coolers. I join some of my new friends in the back of the van, hoping to catch a few winks before the action begins. As we drive, Bedard, a native of Oregon, tells us about growing up in La Grande, leaving for culinary school and then being hired by the inn in 2005. Over the years, he's developed friendships with local farmers, local fishing captains and local food artisans.

It's these relationships that led the Stephanie Inn to create the sojourn program—a way for visitors to experience the region's bounty. Upcoming Stephanie Inn Sojourns include a



From top: Stephanie Inn Chef Aaron Bedard and inn guest Jenn Stevenson hold newly caught Chinook salmon. The inn's restaurant offers superior seafood dishes. "What a Catch!" participants enjoy a delicious Oregon coast crab boil.

tour of some of the Oregon coast's finest craft breweries on May 10. Brewer Will Leroux will be the guide as you visit various brewers before ending up back at the Stephanie Inn for a wonderful beer-pairing dinner.

This year's version of "What a Catch!" will be offered on August 21. Participants will travel 45 minutes north of the Stephanie Inn to the mouth of the Columbia River, where they will fish for Chinook salmon and catch Dungeness crab. They will bring it all back for a feast at the Stephanie Inn.

On this day, we arrive at a boat launch at Nehalem Bay, divide into three groups and board three waiting fishing boats. Joining me on my boat is Leroux, a previous Stephanie Inn chef who became the head brewer at the recently opened Public Coast Brewing Co., which is also owned by Ryan and Stephanie Snyder, the owners of the Stephanie Inn. Today, Leroux is enjoying the change of pace of being outside and fishing in the sunshine. Later in the day, he will serve his own beer.

Our first stop in the bay is to drop crab pots. We bait the baskets by attaching pieces of raw chicken to the insides and then lower them to the bottom of the bay. A colorful buoy is attached to each pot so we know where to find it. After placing a half-dozen pots, we head toward a sandbar up the bay to dig for clams, which is as easy as it sounds, but a lot muddier.

Once you spot a "clam show," a hole in the sand where a clam has withdrawn its neck or started to dig, you shovel down beside the clam and try to catch the bivalve before it digs deeper. We all enjoy seeing each other with our arms shoulder-deep in the mud. However, the feeling of victory when you emerge with a clam in hand is well worth the effort.

After about an hour, there are enough clams for the Stephanie Inn staff to send each of us a supply after careful cleaning.

We board the boats again and head out of the bay toward the ocean. It is time to go fishing. The water gets choppy as it deepens and we reach the mouth of the bay. We are fishing for Chinook, but our guide, David Johnson, tells us that if we happen to catch a coho salmon, we must release it unless it



SOCCER AND PORTLAND—A COMMUNITY LOVE AFFAIR

By Jim Moore

Portland residents have a deep and abiding love for professional soccer—in particular the Portland Timbers (the men's team) and Thorns (the women's team). The Timbers regularly sell out Providence Park's 21,000 seats, and a planned 4,000-seat expansion will barely dent the team's season-ticket waiting list. As for the Thorns, they average more than 17,000 fans to their home games, which is one of the highest average-attendance rates among women's soccer in the world.

Soccer scarves for both teams are considered fashion accessories, and fans wearing Timbers jerseys are allowed early boarding privileges on Alaska Airlines flights that originate in Portland.

All this fan love is happily returned. The Timbers and Thorns ownership group, Peregrine Sports, created the Stand Together program that embraces a year-round culture of giving. The annual Stand Together Week (June 9-15, 2018) is expected to bring out more than 1,000 volunteers to join with Timbers and Thorns players, coaches and staff members to work with dozens of nonprofit community organizations, focusing on programs benefiting youth and the environment. Since the Timbers joined MLS in 2011, and the Thorns were formed in 2012, members of the two clubs have volunteered at nearly 200 local projects.

Peregrine Sports has also donated more than \$4 million to local causes, including grants to almost 100 nonprofits and money to help create 15 new soccer fields and futsal courts (small, hard-surface soccer courts) in the area.

The teams name a "Community MVP" each year—the player who has had the most impact in the community. Last year, star players Diego Valeri, above right (the MLS 2017 Most Valuable Player), and Adrianna French, above left (NWSL Goalkeeper of the Year for the league-champion Thorns), were the Community MVPs. Valeri visited foster kids, made appearances at Special Olympics and Children with Cancer events and read to kids in schools. French volunteered with Habitat for Humanity and worked to beautify school grounds and build positive playground culture. "We are part of the fabric of the community in a way very few sports teams are anywhere," says Mike Golub, president of business for the Timbers FC and Thorns FC. "We recognize the responsibility." ✕

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comes from a hatchery. Such fish can be recognized by the small clipped adipose fin. If you fish on your own, check the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife regulations online, as fishing restrictions can change seasonally.

We bob in the channel for a while without a nibble, so we decide it's time to try the beer we've been saving to celebrate the first catch. Leroux opens a growler of '67 Blonde Ale (a nod to 1967, the year Oregon lawmakers decreed that all of its beaches were public) as Johnson begins telling us fishing stories, including the one about the 80-year-old sturgeon he once hooked.

Suddenly, a nearby fishing line starts to flail wildly. "Grab your pole and start reeling!" says Johnson. Leroux takes the pole and starts reeling in the line. We see a giant Chinook salmon leap out of the water near our boat. Leroux continues fighting with the fish for a few minutes as Johnson motors the boat up and down the channel. Eventually, the fish tires, and I reach out with a net to scoop it up. It's a large Chinook that we guess weighs a good 30 pounds. With our clams and salmon in hand, we head back to check on the crab pots.

I volunteer to pull up the first pot. As I heave it, dripping, into the boat, we see that it is filled with Dungeness crabs of all sizes. We open the lid and start pulling them out. One by one, we turn them over to see if they have the telltale "lighthouse" shape on their underside that lets us know they're male. Females are gently placed back in the water. Meanwhile, our guide measures the males with calipers, making sure we keep only those of legal size—at least 5.75 inches across the back. After all the baskets are unloaded, we see there's enough crab for lunch, and for each of us to have whole crabs delivered to our homes.

We motor back to the boat launch and ride in the vans to the nearby Awtrey House—a bed-and-breakfast owned and operated by former NBA center Dennis Awtrey, who ended his career with the Portland Trail Blazers in 1981 and now lives

on the coast. Located on a bluff above Manzanita Beach, the beautiful home has amazing views of the ocean and an open and airy floor plan.

Outside, there is a long table covered in a white linen tablecloth, and Cannon Beach Distillery has set up a bar. As we mingle, eat snacks and admire the view, Bedard shows us how to shuck and eat raw oysters that he picked up in the Oregon beach town of Netarts, located down the coast.

Soon Awtrey and our fishing guides join our party and we all enjoy a late lunch of succulent seafood. The star of the meal is the traditional Oregon coast crab boil, featuring our fresh Dungeness crab and newly caught clams, along with tiger prawns, baby potatoes, corn and kielbasa from Olympia Provisions. The dessert is truly the cherry on top. Bedard serves his famous duck egg ice cream and pairs it with an Oregon Bing and Rainier cherry jubilee that he flambées in kirschwasser to everyone's delight.

Before too long, it's time to load up the vans and travel north about 15 miles along the coast to the Stephanie Inn. We're a little tired, very full and definitely sun-kissed, but we continue telling stories to each other until we say goodbye in the hotel lobby. I take a long soak in the hot tub in my room before enjoying a beachfront sunset. What a perfect day on the Oregon coast.

A couple of days later, a package arrives in the mail. Inside is a healthy portion of salmon, a few whole Dungeness crabs and plenty of chowder-prepped clam meat. Bedard's personal recipe for clam chowder is included, along with a handwritten card explaining that he's also enclosed a bottle of his homemade hot sauce.

Over the next few days, I eat the wonderful seafood. However, I use the hot sauce sparingly, hoping to savor it until I can get back to the coast and pick up another bottle. By the way, it goes great with Bedard's chowder recipe.

For information on future excursions, go to stephanie-inn.com/sojourns/ ✕