



A Life and New Hotel on the Coast

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Back in 1990, Mary Jones and Jeff Schons came from Portland to spend the winter in a tiny fishing cabin they'd bought by the river in Pacific City. They'd been lured in by the exciting sport of dory boat fishing — the town's most revered tradition.

Maybe it was the 24/7 access to the ocean, bays and rivers; maybe it was the small-town life. They never left. Fast forward more than 30 years, and the couple are still chasing their passions on the Coast. They've built a mini hotel and restaurant empire — one that expanded recently with the December 2017 opening of **Headlands Coastal Lodge & Spa**. The 33-room boutique hotel (with all rooms facing Haystack Rock) is bordered to the north by Cape Kiwanda and to the south by Pelican Brewing — the first of three locations, which they opened back in 1996. We caught up with Jones to ask a few questions about their life and livelihood on the Coast.

Q: What did Pacific City look like in the early '90s?

There were no ocean-view hotel rooms in 1990; we developed the first ones in 1998 when we built the Inn at Cape Kiwanda. The best thing about Pacific City is that Highway 101 does not go through town, so we do not have the endless stream of thru-traffic. We have only one traffic light (a flashing red), at the four-way stop in the middle of town.

Q: Tell us about your love of kayaks.

We both have Hobie kayaks, the kind with both pedals and paddle. Jeff loves having the pedals, because he can use his hands to fish for salmon or steelhead (he's kind of a fishing nut). For me, I can go much further on a kayak trip than if I just had a paddle because I can rest my arms or my legs and still keep going. We are now living on the river again, with a dock, so we can take our kayaks out anytime we want (weather and tides permitting).

Q: Tell us about your dory boat, and fondest memory with it.

Our current dory is the Pelican, built by a long-time local dory boat builder, Terry Learned, who has since retired and his daughter is carrying on the business. Pelican is the third dory we've had; the first one was a really old one that Jeff rebuilt and we spent a lot of time repairing it in our early years in Pacific City. We love working together and boating and fishing together. One of my fondest memories is a time that we went tuna fishing with Jeff's Uncle Jim. We spent a whole day out on the boat and caught a number of them, which were delicious to eat as well.

Q: What do Cape Kiwanda and Haystack Rock symbolize to you and Jeff?

From the first moment we looked at the property, it became obvious that we needed to design something worthy of such a spectacular site. We spent the following 20 years designing and redesigning it multiple times. Beyond the physical building; however, it has become even more important to us to provide the ability for our guests to actually pursue an adventure — whether it be an outdoor activity (like learning to surf or chartering a dory boat) or enjoying the outdoor hot tub, a fitness class, meditation class or an energizing facial or massage in our fitness spa.

By Jen Anderson

Photo courtesy of the Headlands Coastal Lodge & Spa