

Title:

Oregon Coast Inn Provides Fun & Funky Amenities

Word Count:

743

Summary:

In mysterious Manzanita, on Oregon's north coast, a unique, fun, funky, pet friendly and quirky little motel called San Dune Inn offers something a little different.

Keywords:

oregon coast, San Dune Inn, nehalem bay, manzanita, lodging, family, beaches, pet friendly

Article Body:

Oregon's coast is known as a treasure trove of pristine beaches - some of the cleanest in the world. Then there's the Nehalem Bay area, on the northern coast, with its legends of buried treasure around tiny Manzanita, possibly sequestering the real thing in its thick envelope of slightly mysterious forest. It's an area that seems to never cease in its revelations and hidden delights. No matter that you may be a frequenting regular, the beaches, Neahkahnie Mountain and the three tiny towns of Nehalem, Wheeler and Manzanita which comprise the bay area always yield new discoveries.

The San Dune Inn is one of those, even for addicted veterans of the area like myself, who visit here almost every week from the metropolitan area of Portland, some 100 miles away. While there's a lovely little local nightlife hotspot called San Dune Tavern just stumbling distance away, the San Dune Inn - a very family-friendly motel - is one of those lurking surprises awaiting.

Not many lodging spots can claim to have a vast array of freebies like bikes, game equipment, popcorn and movies. But San Dune does. Stay at this charming, unassuming place just steps away from Manzanita's main drag - Laneda Avenue - and you'll find stuff for volleyball and other games suitable for the sand, as well as beach balls, bikes and simple sandcastle-making gear like buckets. It's a kid's dream come true.

At 41, and a kid at heart, all these playthings are a dream come true for me as well.

Perhaps what charmed me the most about this place upon my first few visits was

the thick London accent of owner Brian and his down-to-Earth approach, as well as the kids' stuff available for play. And then there was that really adorable dog: Buddy. This tiny little pup was so fluffy and soft he felt more like a stuffed animal. But he was the real deal, and loves greeting guests as they come in.

On this stay, Brian's wife, Billie, hooked me up with a lovely little room on the westward end of the motel. From here, you could just barely hear the waves of Manzanita's beaches in the middle of the night, lulling you to sleep. The room is immaculate, with a color theme of blue, coming complete with a coffee machine, VCR and TV, a blow dryer hooked into the wall, a small fridge and even a shower cap.

The San Dune Inn has 14 such cozy rooms, all of them with VCR's, cable TV, the small fridge, microwave and access to all the cool freebie amenities for sand play, as well as free movies, games and even books. Six of the rooms feature full kitchens with separate living room and bedroom areas. Plus, the place is pet friendly - and there's this nifty little barbecue area out back with a tent next to it.

For me, as the middle-aged kid with a surreal sense of exploration, I was interested in playing with the bikes. After a party at a friend's house nearby, I took one for a joyride on the beach. I'm not sure zipping around at three in the morning is what the Hines had in mind for these, but I was filled with a load of childlike joy. It's been perhaps 20 years since I rode one, and I discovered the old adage is true: you never forget how.

Subsequent visits found me reveling more in the slight kookiness of this place. Brian has quite a raucous sense of humor, and is great for a fun spot of conversation. I've gone on late, nocturnal bike rides with regularity now, thanks to Brian and Billie. Sometime in the last year, they acquired a somewhat wacky statue of a heron made from found junk. Intriguing, pretty and yet delightfully off-kilter.

I've also found myself going through their extensive library of flicks, taking in all the M. Night Shaliman movies they have.

In the end, I discover the San Dune is perfect for families with kids - or adults who act like kids. Next time, perhaps I'll take the more grownup route, take a friend and we'll stay in and enjoy one of their fairly large selection of movies. Or maybe we'll both act like kids and play with the beach toys and bikes again. You'll find it about a block away from Laneda, at 428 Dorcas Lane.