

# Breakfast

## WITH A VIEW

*The views are breathtaking, but it might also be the decadent breakfast that keeps guests coming back to the Heceta Head Lighthouse Bed & Breakfast.*

STORY BY LEEANN DAKERS

ALEC DAKERS



TIM MANTON/HECETA HEAD LIGHTHOUSE B&B



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**F**ORGET FOR A MOMENT the stunning ocean views and quintessential charm of the lighthouse in the distance.

Okay, you can't forget the view, but put it aside for just a moment. At Heceta Head Lighthouse Bed & Breakfast, it's all about the breakfast.

The former lighthouse keeper's quarters that overlooks one of the most spectacular coastlines in the world is certainly picturesque, with its charming exterior and grand Victorian flair, not to mention the beckoning front porch. But the real showstopper at the famous inn is the morning meal. After a night of peaceful slumber with waves crashing below and the most powerful light along the Oregon Coast keeping watch, guests are treated to a seven-course gourmet meal fit for royalty.

When my husband Alec and I arrived at the B&B, we walked through the back gate past cheerful zinnias and an exuberant veggie and herb garden

and rang the bell. We were invited in and immediately shown around the cozy home. The kitchen is for all to use with snacks and drinks in the fridge. An old piano graces the parlor and adds to the historic charm of the place, and books are available to explore in comfy chairs that look out on the garden.

We stayed in the Lightkeeper's Room, the only room with a view of the lighthouse from the bed and a partial view of the ocean. Terrycloth robes are provided for the trip across the hall to the private bath with an old-fashioned claw-foot tub. At bedtime, the lighthouse glows from above and adds a sense of comfort to the night.

Steven Bursey, co-operator and husband of head chef Michelle Bursey, was our host for the morning and what a gracious host he was. He not only served the elegant food, but he described every course, and then he and Michelle indulged the guests with a question-and-answer session after the meal.

Steven has a calm and steady presence and it's clear to see how the two complement each other. Michelle does the food, including menu planning, shopping, and preparation, and Steven cultivates the garden and entertains the guests. He says there was never any question as to who would be doing what. "I've always enjoyed the front of the house," he says. And, being raised by executive chefs Carol and Mike Korgan, the founders of the B&B at Heceta Head, Michelle has the culinary chops to run the kitchen.

"It's really satisfying work," she says. "I grew up in a family business, so it's pretty much what I know." Ironically, at one point she told her parents she would never be in the hospitality business. "I kind of ate my words," she admits. Now she embraces the family business and brings her own unique gifts to the table. Literally.

Steven rings a bell that tells us breakfast is about to be served. Four couples sit down to eat—a nice mix of folks from Oregon, Washington, and California. Coffee is poured and pleasant conversation commences with stories of children and grandchildren, occupations current and past, and travel.

The menu of the seven-course breakfast changes daily and with the seasons, but focuses on Pacific Northwest cuisine made with organic ingredients, grown and purchased as close to home as possible. "I'm constantly seeking out new purveyors and local growers," Michelle says. "I've developed great relationships."

A Pinot Gris fruit cocktail was served first. It's like a party in your mouth, with watermelon, Asian pear, strawberries, and grapes, all soaked in a Pinot Gris simple syrup and topped with mascarpone cheese and roasted, candied hazelnuts. Next, we sampled the Sweet Cardamom Tomato Bread, which is served with the fruit course.

The focus of the second course is



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**TOP LEFT:** Michelle Bursey is the chef at the Heceta Head Lighthouse B&B. **TOP RIGHT:** Oregon Berry Crisp with Wasson Brothers Raspberry Wine. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** The gardens at the B&B. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Eggs Benedict with a special Heceta Head twist—rustic artisan bread and wild mushrooms.

seafood—Oregon lox in this case, with bagels and cream cheese accompanied by thinly sliced red onion, capers, and red and gold heirloom tomatoes, so sweet, delicate, and juicy—that last burst of summer flavor. I saved the second half of my bagel for the marionberry preserves and chocolate hazelnut spread. Wow, what a treat, like a chocolate croissant, rich and decadent.

The third course is designed to cleanse the palate after the seafood course. Cape Blanco Cranberry Passion Fruit Frappe did the trick. It was tart with a touch of sweetness, topped with whipped cream. Steven explained that while the passion fruit was not locally

grown, it was used specifically to cut the tartness of the Bandon cranberries.

Now it was time for the main course, Eggs Benedict with a twist. Instead of the traditional Canadian bacon and English muffins, they use rustic bread and Oregon harvested chanterelle and lobster mushrooms. Dill and nasturtiums were picked from the garden for this dish just before it was served.

For carnivores, Swedish-style potato sausages were offered, custom made by Taylor's Sausage in Junction City using the B&B's own recipe. Since, I am not a meat eater I will have to take my husband's word for it that they were incredible.



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# Pinot Gris COCKTAIL

Pinot Gris has crisp citrus and honey notes that blend well with fresh fruit. If Pinot Gris is not available, other white wines without oak will work. Pay attention to the sugar content of the wine and adjust the recipe accordingly so it is not too sweet.

Prepare and cool the syrup and add the cantaloupe and pear the day before serving.

Wine Simple Syrup  
(recipe follows)

1/3 cantaloupe, rind removed

1 Asian pear

1 pint strawberries

1/2 small or personal watermelon  
or about 2 cups, rind removed

Mascarpone cream  
(recipe follows)

Candied hazelnuts  
(recipe follows)

Cut the cantaloupe into nickel-size triangular pieces and the pear into 1/3-inch cubes. Mix in a container with a lid and pour the wine syrup over the fruit. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Wash and hull the strawberries. About 30 minutes before serving, cut them into spears and the watermelon

into 1/2-inch cubes. Add the strawberries and watermelon to the other fruit and syrup. Mix and set aside.

To serve, use a slotted spoon to drain excess syrup and place the wine-soaked fruit into individual glasses. Add extra syrup if desired. Spoon the mascarpone cream over the fruit and sprinkle with the nuts.

Makes 2 cups or 6 small servings.

## WINE SIMPLE SYRUP

1/3 cup sugar

1 cup Pinot Gris

In a heavy saucepan on medium-low heat, melt the sugar in the wine. When the sugar is completely dissolved, remove the pan from the heat and let cool.

Makes 1 1/3 cups

## MASCARPONE CREAM

1/3 cup mascarpone

2 tablespoons heavy cream

Whip the mascarpone and cream until smooth and fluffy. Add a little extra cream if the mixture seems too thick. Do not over mix or it may turn to butter.

Makes a heaping 1/3 cup

## CANDIED HAZELNUTS

1 cup roasted hazelnuts

1/2 cup brown sugar

2 teaspoons butter

Chop the nuts roughly into quarters. In a nonstick pan, heat the nuts and brown sugar on medium high until the sugar starts to melt. Stir constantly while periodically removing the pan from the heat to avoid burning. Do not let the mixture smoke. When the sugar glistens and coats the nuts, remove from the heat and add the butter to coat. Spread the nuts on tinfoil and let cool. Crumble and keep in an airtight container up to 2 weeks or freeze up to 2 months.

Makes about 1 1/2 cups

Courtesy Michelle Bursey from  
*The Lighthouse Breakfast Cookbook*

Finally, dessert. Don't tell mom, but, yes, you can have dessert for breakfast. We were each served our very own berry crisp—Oregon Berry Crisp with Wasson Brothers Raspberry Wine to be exact. The wine adds depth and a rich sweetness to the classic dessert. Everyone at the table agreed that this was their favorite dish.

As the Europeans do, the Burseys always end the meal with cheese and fruit. We had French Prairie Brie and local apples; the perfect ending to a fabulous meal.

Michelle hasn't let go of her most important culinary connection—her mom. Although technically retired, Carol still bakes the breads and desserts for the B&B. Michelle and Carol also recently released a cookbook of recipes from the seven-course breakfast, *The Lighthouse Breakfast Cookbook*. Published in 2009, it was years in the making, and offers more than 100 recipes, Heceta Head history, and cooking tips.

After breakfast, it was time to check out and say goodbye to our hosts. It was an absolutely gorgeous day, crisp and fresh, with a gentle ocean breeze. We decided to explore the area before heading home and took one more trip up the path to the lighthouse. We stopped to look out over the wild Pacific and to take some pictures.

I asked Michelle about that famous Heceta Head view: "I never tire of it," she says. "It's time to move from the Coast if you start taking it for granted." My guess is that at Heceta Head Lighthouse Bed & Breakfast, people come for the view, but come back for the breakfast. As long as the Burseys are in charge, they will not be disappointed. ■

**FYI:** Contact **Heceta Head Lighthouse B&B** to make reservations (866-547-3696; [hecetalighthouse.com](http://hecetalighthouse.com)). To order the cookbook call 800-504-1060 or order online.