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Salish Lodge & Spa: A 100 year tradition of Northwest hospitality for travelers

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Salish Lodge & Spa is located at Snoqualmie Falls, approximately 30 minutes from Seattle by car

Photo courtesy of Salish Lodge & Spa, used with permission

There's a definite sense of occasion upon arrival at the [Salish Lodge & Spa](#). A water feature in the circular front drive somehow manages to interrupt the roar of Snoqualmie Falls just beyond the edifice. Stepping through the heavy front door the senses are assailed in the charming lobby, the fragrance of pine, the crackle of a roaring fire, the flute of pink champagne offered at check-in.

"It's almost otherworldly," explains General Manager Rod Lapasin. "We're only thirty minutes from Seattle, but when you arrive, it feels like you're in a completely different place." To be sure, there is a definite sense of serene calm—the edifice seems to radiate quiet warmth, which contrasts the ever-present fine mist of the falls that surrounds the property. The mist itself holds special significance for the Snoqualmie People, who believe it to be the link between the earth and the heavens.

There has been a near-century long tradition of hospitality at the lodge perched above the falls. From 1916 a roadhouse was established as the last waypoint for those traveling over Snoqualmie Pass between the Puget Sound region and Eastern Washington. The roadhouse quickly became famous for a hearty breakfast complete with local honey poured from high above the plate, but more on that later.

In 1988 the lodge was remodeled and expanded into the current 84 unit lodging structure, made famous two years later as a prominently featured exterior shooting location for the cult television classic [Twin Peaks](#). Additional meeting rooms, a spa, and several room and public space renovations followed throughout the next two decades, with the last major refresh in 2013, with a focus on creating a guest experience that is distinctly Northwestern.

Today, instead of being a waypoint for travelers, the lodge has become a popular weekend destination. The public areas and guest rooms seemed to be well-patronized, as did both dining outlets with a good mix of local drop-ins and hotel guests with a diverse appeal, from romantic weekenders to multi-generational family groups.

The first order of business after checking in was a visit to The Attic for Damn Fine Coffee (Starbucks Caffe Verona) and Cherry Pie. The Cherry pie is luscious – still hot from the oven, with quite a bit of citrus tart to cut the sweetness. The pastry has a good, buttery flake and a pleasant vanilla fragrance.

Next on order is a trip to the spa. The spa at Salish is one of five practitioners of treatments from the **Sodashi** line. The practitioner explains how the herbs and botanicals used in the treatments are all natural, and that Sodashi is a Sanskrit word meaning “wholeness, purity, and radiance”. The Sodashi Refining Body Toner includes inhalations inspired by those three principles. Purity is an inhalation of cypress, grapefruit, and juniper berry; Radiance is one of ylang ylang, neroli, sweet orange, and damask rose; Wholeness is one of mandarin, jasmine, and vanilla. The 80 minute treatment includes a jojoba scalp massage and hair treatment, exfoliation, and French pink clay wrap.

Although change and shower spaces are tucked into tight corners the spa’s relaxation lounge, baths, sauna and steam have a modern northwest aesthetic and are well-scrubbed. Large picture windows in the lounge afford views of the surrounding fir trees. For a completely indulgent spa experience, the lodge offers Spa Club rooms on the same floor as the spa facilities which provide additional amenities such as continental breakfast, afternoon hors d’oeuvres, spa shop discounts and extended hours in the soaking pools. Spa Club rooms also include a Salish Bath Butler sampler which contain a body scrub, body butter, bath salts, made with Salish honey and other local ingredients.

Guest rooms are both spacious and cozy, with special local touches like vintage photographs which make the rooms feel like guest bedrooms in a grand residence. Each room also has a fireplace, complete with cut firewood and a Duraflame log to get the fire started. Drifting off next to a fragrant fire and waking up to the sound of the effervescent falls just footsteps away is a gentle underscore to the notion that this is a very special place.

There are some mixed reviews of the dining situation at the Lodge out in the web sphere, but the primary takeaway from both breakfast and dinner is that the aim to provide a unique, sumptuous experience doesn’t disappoint, and the staff’s knowledge about the local ingredients that are featured is admirable. There are local Northwest spirits in addition to wines and beers, and although well-described in the menu, the server was more than ready with several recommendations. The execution on the food is solid, and there’s more than enough whimsical invention throughout to keep diners’ attention.

Salish honey manages to find its way onto the menu in several places, from the Salish Honey Bourbon Bacon Marmalade Brussels Sprouts at dinner to the “Honey from Heaven” poured over biscuits at the insurmountably monstrous breakfast served in the morning. Speaking of breakfast, one would be hard-pressed to find a more side-splitting one: The Salish Country Lodge Breakfast starts with freshly squeezed juice, a baker’s basket with heavy crumbed scones and rich chocolate chip muffins, coffee with chocolate shavings and vanilla infused cream, buttermilk pancakes with seasonal fruit (apples and grapes in February), maple syrup and Devonshire Crème, steel-cut oats with brown sugar and Salish honey poached dried stone fruits, all brought to a close by a stomach-churning finish of three farm fresh eggs, smoked bacon, pork-apple sausage, Salish honey cured ham, hashed breakfast potatoes, and a buttermilk biscuit for \$37 per person, or \$75 for two, which includes two mimosas.

It was necessary to walk off such a breakfast, and Lapasin was more than willing to show off the bee hives, perched on a small hill overlooking the entry of the Lodge. The bees travel five to six miles in search of food, and one year they took to feeding on the sap from the surrounding fir trees, resulting in a dark, pine-flavored honey that was very popular with guests and retail buyers. In a normal year, the color and flavor of the honey changes with the seasons and the weather. In addition to the surrounding flora, the bees also feed on the herb garden that is grown adjacent to their hives; oftentimes the herbs and the honey both end up in the same dishes served at the Lodge.

It’s a good time to head out to Snoqualmie, for *Twin Peaks* is [set to reprise on Showtime this summer](#). The Great Northern Escape Package includes a one-night stay, Cherry Pie & Damn Fine Coffee in The Attic, two Dale Cooper cocktails, a copy of the Twin Peaks driving map, and a \$15 Amazon gift card to stream the first season of the show.

Whether making the short drive from Seattle or a trip across continents, the tradition of welcoming the weary traveler at Salish Lodge & Spa makes for a compelling reason to begin voyaging to “the falls”.

Disclosure Statement: Accommodations, meals, and spa services were furnished by Salish Lodge & Spa in preparation for this article.

Continue below for photos of the experience from the [author’s Instagram account](#).