



Raspberry Island Remote Camps 1st Annual Newsletter!

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Many Thanks

Well the New Year is upon us, 2009. When Tiffany and I were weighing the pros and cons of uprooting our young family to leave the security of a 'real job' and life in the city to purchase and take over my parent's lodge on Raspberry Island, we wished we could fast-forward to this day, at the end of our first year, to see how our first chapter would end. If we could have, we would have made that monumental decision with more confidence and piece of mind! We had a wonderful first year and want to thank all of you who trusted us with your time, money and opportunity this year and chose to spend your Alaskan Vacation at Raspberry Island Remote Camps. Thank you! You have made our first year here a success, both as a business and as a family. We are already looking forward to next year!



New Name

We have decided to change our name, at the advice of many of you who visited us this summer, to Raspberry Island Remote Lodge. It is our hope that it is still easy for you to find us and refer us to others, yet add the more descriptive "lodge" vs "camps" to our title. Everything else will remain the same: same website, same e mail and same PO box in Kodiak (we DID change our e mail address in 2007 to vacation@raspberryisland.com, different from my parent's e mail address. We also changed our phone number, but e mail is always the best way to communicate with us due to poor phone reception out here at the lodge).

Gemini

Throughout the summer we considered selling our boat, the *Gemini*, and having a new boat



built in its place. We discussed the idea with a number of you, and most of you suggested we keep her. We have reached the conclusion that we will! She truly is a wonderful boat, and the sacrifices to make a new design work couldn't justify the switch. Throughout the summer we added several coats of paint, and tinkered here and there customizing her to my styles of fishing. Shortly we will take her out of the water in Kodiak for the winter, where she will be safe from our frequent winter storms and ready for our pre-season maintenance this coming spring.

New Fishing Gear

We will be upgrading our fishing gear for this coming summer to AVET lever drag two speed reels on the short, stand up Lamiglass halibut rods we bought this summer, and will switch the trolling reels to AVET lever drag also. We are still considering new spinning gear. Fly fishing gear will remain the same with our "Kodiak Series" M. Handy rods and Okuma reels, wound with the proper line (mostly Teeny) suited for the system we are targeting. Of course we still provide all the tackle you will need as well. Due to recent hassles associated with commercially flying, we have also started offering use of lodge rubber boots, chest waders, and rain gear. Just please let us know ahead of schedule your sizes so we have everything on hand.

Web Page

By the time you get this we will have updated our website once again. You all shared so many great photos with us this summer we had to use them. Also, thank you very much for the many humbling quotations you left in our cabin logs, they have been added as well. Content is nearly doubled, so please visit next time you are browsing the web at www.raspberrylsland.com. While you are there please feel free to say hi on our guest book page, or look at the scrapbook page to see more pictures of your trip.

Kayaking

Kayaking this summer was again a tremendous success. Granny (Cilla, Birch's mom) showed many of you some of the best of Raspberry Straits. Many fond memories of hesitant first timers returning with a new skill, goal oriented trekkers searching for whales, and even kayak fishing! The sea otters are ever numerous, and some of you even kayaked along the coast to a river, up the river, all the way to the lake!



Photos

We had quite a variety of talent here with cameras, on a professional trip or using their professional talents recreationally. Thank you all for sharing your pictures with us, and we hope you recognize them on our web page! We have put your names on the ones in this newsletter.

Food

I find myself in conversation quite often regarding Tiffany's food that she prepares from scratch and serves every day. Before the season started she spent literally two months coordinating and preparing her menu. Out of that planning was rendered only six menus, six days of food. Since many of you are only here for a

week it seemed appropriate to serve the same best meals we could possibly come up with to each group. This year's menus featured seafood pasta, King Crab, fresh out of the ocean halibut and salmon, lots of sashimi, and of course smoked salmon from the cold smoke-house. New for next year will be prime steaks hand selected just for us by our new friends at Iowa Pacific Processors.



Raspberry Island Apparel

Soon we'll have our gift store updated with more clothing. We are looking into more fleece, hoodies, hats, and are trying to get our logo on Buzz-Off bug resistant cloths. The bear and sun logo will remain similar, but the new name will of course be reflected, with Kodiak, Alaska on there somewhere.

Hiking

As you know, Granny is also our hiking guide. She led many a hiking expedition this year, either combined with or separate from her kayaking trips. Parked kayaks and walks along the beach or to the eagle's nest or a vigorous jaunt up the mountain behind the lodge resulted in deer, elk and bear viewing, as well as snow ball fights! Our views are certainly unforgettable and many cheers for those of you who enjoyed them.



Fishing



We had quite the year of fishing this year, I must admit. A cold spring and summer disrupted salmon returns all over the West Coast US, and our halibut were on and off as well. The fishing was either out of this world, or very frustrating for me as a guide, searching for fish that seemed to be off track. In all, everyone seemed to go home with plenty of fish, (some of you even had to leave fish here and *all* of you practiced catch and release) and if it was a slow day we just had to work to find our fish. Seemingly once we found them again, they were thick! The kings stuck around a little later than usual, (Meribeth, yours was the biggest) and we were still picking a few up here and there in August while we were fishing for Silvers. We were also catching them for a while simply by casting to them from the boat. Also interesting was the number of sea run Dolly Varden we were catching while trolling for salmon or casting to them from the boat-quite fun. An abnormally good Sockeye return to a couple of our systems that we fish provided some great fishing as late as July. We caught one of the biggest Ling Cod I have ever seen this year, I suspect he was in the low 60lb range, and after a pleasant release he is still out there. We had some great days on halibut, and I am looking forward to trying some new spots we discovered later in the fall last summer that were



very productive. We also tried some new areas for silvers in September with our fly rods, and some of them were truly amazing, targeting 2-3,000 fish all by ourselves. Can't wait to get back there again! Finally, I am looking forward to fishing new areas this summer, places I have never fished but



have always been curious about. The good ol' hotspots continued to produce fish, but my curiosities lured me to new areas this past summer and in many cases the rewards were well worth the extra 10-15 minutes of travel time.

"Keerator"

One of the changes Tiffany and I decided to implement as the new owners of Raspberry Island Remote Camps is the "Keerator." The keerator is down by the beach and serves mountain



stream cooled beer on tap, locally brewed in Kodiak, Alaska by our friends at the Kodiak Island Brewing Company. As usual the beer is complimentary and serving it helps Tiffany and I feel like good hosts. We continue to just as happily offer a variety of complimentary wines.

New Brochure

We should have a new multi-page color brochure coming off the press by the time you receive this newsletter. It is really aimed at folks who have never been here before, and directs them to our extensive web page. However, if you would like a copy or know someone who would, please e mail us with a mailing address and we are happy to send them out.

Bear Viewing

Bear viewing this summer was, in all, incredibly successful. Tiffany and I began to promote bear viewing, especially fly out bear viewing, more



than ever this summer. Our Explorer Package was designed to include two days of fishing, the fly out bear view, and two days of kayaking and hiking into one trip and was popular, but we also had guests request the bear view as the primary purpose of the visit to Raspberry Island, and organized other activities around that. It was quite fun, viewing bears do their thing, seeing the volcanoes and glaciers, and enjoying your pilot/guide (Crazy Phil, Wrangler Willie, Josh—we have to come up with a nickname for Josh if he comes back this summer).

Super Adult Staff (S.A.S.) Program

We decided to continue my parents' use of a CIT (crew in training) program, but reorganized and re named it to the SAS Program. Where the CITs were mostly younger adults in their teens, we now encourage more seasoned adults to join us on Raspberry for a week or more of helping out with various responsibilities in exchange for free time during the day to enjoy the locale. We are currently recruiting for 2009, so please email us if you are interested! The position description is also currently listed on our website under the 'employment' section.



Fisher and Sage

When Tiffany and I were pondering the opportunity to move to Raspberry Island one of our main concerns were our two kids, Fisher and Sage. Fisher is now four, and Sage is about two and a half. Our concerns were two sided; first, how would they react to growing up without peers? Sure, the folks visiting us from around the world every summer will expose them to a number of influential and diverse people, but what about kids their age? What about schooling, and health issues that may arise? Though these are still valid questions, we do not dwell on them too much since I was brought up in the same environment and 'turned out' okay. (email us if you disagree :) Secondly, how would YOU respond to two young kids running around? We were



thankful that our kids seem to be well behaved and our guests seemed to enjoy them. We were also surprised and humbled that one compliment we received from many of you this summer was, "thank you for making us part of the family." Our focus will remain on emphasizing your comfort on your vacation, but we thank you for the compliment!

Hydro Electricity

We are very thankful our Hydro Electric plant worked so well again this summer. Tiffany and I installed an intake/filter at the top of the pipe, which kept the pipe full of clean, pure water! We produce more power than we need, even with all of the freezers operating and the vacuum sealer running. It is quite nice to have. Also installed are three solar panels, which are typically on 'sleep' mode since the hydro is so productive!

New Rental Cabin

Over the years we have been asked if we offer a rental cabin, where folks can come and visit and enjoy the beauty and nature around our property, but more on a do-it-yourself level. This winter we plan on remodeling the Captain's Quarters into just such a place. It will have two bedrooms, each with two beds (one will be a queen), a small kitchen, bathroom with running water and shower, and small living/dining room. Also will be a small deck out front with Webber grill. It will be in range of the wireless internet that covers the rest of our facility, and will be plugged into our hydro electric system. Please know that this place is *small*, but you're not coming here to be inside, anyway, right? Included in the package will be suggestions by us on where to hike and/or kayak, use of our kayaks and kayaking gear on an unguided basis, and use of fishing gear if you would like to try fishing from the kayaks. We will suggest a list of air taxi services in Kodiak that will provide transportation to and from the lodge. By early spring we expect to have the remodeling completed and will have a section on our website advertising it with more information. We expect pricing will be \$400/night for the cabin. If you are interested in availability, please contact us by e mail.



New Rates

As an extension of our thanks to you for supporting us and visiting us this summer and past, we are now offering a 10% discount to returning guests. We will continue to offer discounts for kids twelve and under, and will reserve the entire facility for groups of eight or more, unless someone else has booked the time slot you are interested in. Please note that the discounts apply only to our rates and do not cover activities we sub contract to other businesses, for example, the fly out bear view. Please let us know how

many in your group have been here in the past and I am happy to present the discounted trip. Our package rates, listed on our website, have not changed from last year, and as always, I am happy to prepare custom itineraries for those of you interested in shorter or longer stays with us.

About Us

Well, we are settled into our first winter here as a family. It is currently snowing out, and 12 de-



grees. The last time I was in Kodiak I picked up some new flooring to replace the tile floor that refused to stick to the sub-floor my folks had hand laid so long ago. The new floor looks beautiful, but what a dusty job! Tiffany has been busy dusting. Now that it is January, we are starting to hear from some of you and are preparing for our summer, getting organized again and going about fulfilling the promises listed in this newsletter under any column that starts with the word "new." So, we're busy as bees!

We are not sure if we will travel this winter or not. It was not originally our intent, as we wanted to spend the whole year here, aside from a few brief trips to Anchorage to get some 'big city' back into our systems. So far it has been fun and not a lot of 'down time' with fall guests into December, and close friends visiting for a few days over New Years. But, you never know what February might bring! We actually had a storm the other day where recorded gusts in Kodiak City were over 100mph, and the cold temps, hmmm, Hawaii is so close to Alaska :) Anyhow, thank you for reading this newsletter! We hope to hear from you soon. All our best,

[Birch, Tiffany, Fisher, and Sage](#)