

Black Butte Ranch's new Lakeside Complex

🕒 September 27, 2015

📁 Food and Dining, Lodging, Restaurants, Travel

📍 Black Butte Ranch

👤 Jon

Last week I was invited out to [Black Butte Ranch](#) to tour the newly-renovated [Lakeside Complex](#), located next to the Lodge which includes a new pool, activity center, and the Lakeside Bistro, which is open to the public. This was an \$11.5 million project that started just after Labor Day last year and finished up this past June, and the results are pretty impressive.

Have you been out to Black Butte Ranch lately? (Ever?) It had honestly been years since I last visited, though we drive right on by quite a bit on Highway 20, going to or from the Valley. I always forget that there are absolutely stunning views from just about anywhere on the property:



The Resort itself is expansive, offering the usual resort amenities—golf, horseback riding, vacation

rentals, the Lodge and restaurants, tennis, swimming, bicycling, and so on. It's also one of the oldest recreational resorts in Central Oregon. But it's that word "resort" that I think tends to make people glaze over and overlook it (and others) as destinations for vacationers from outside the area—I know / do, so the Ranch (as well as the other resorts) are never top-of-mind when thinking of local dining, recreation, and so on.

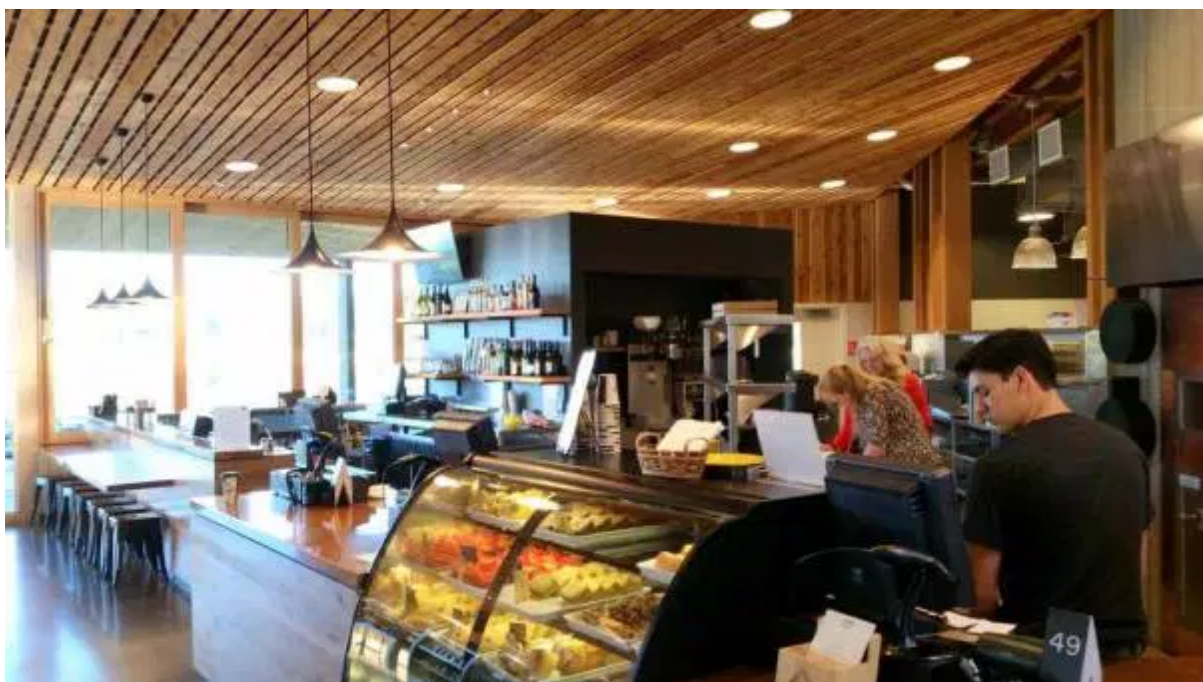
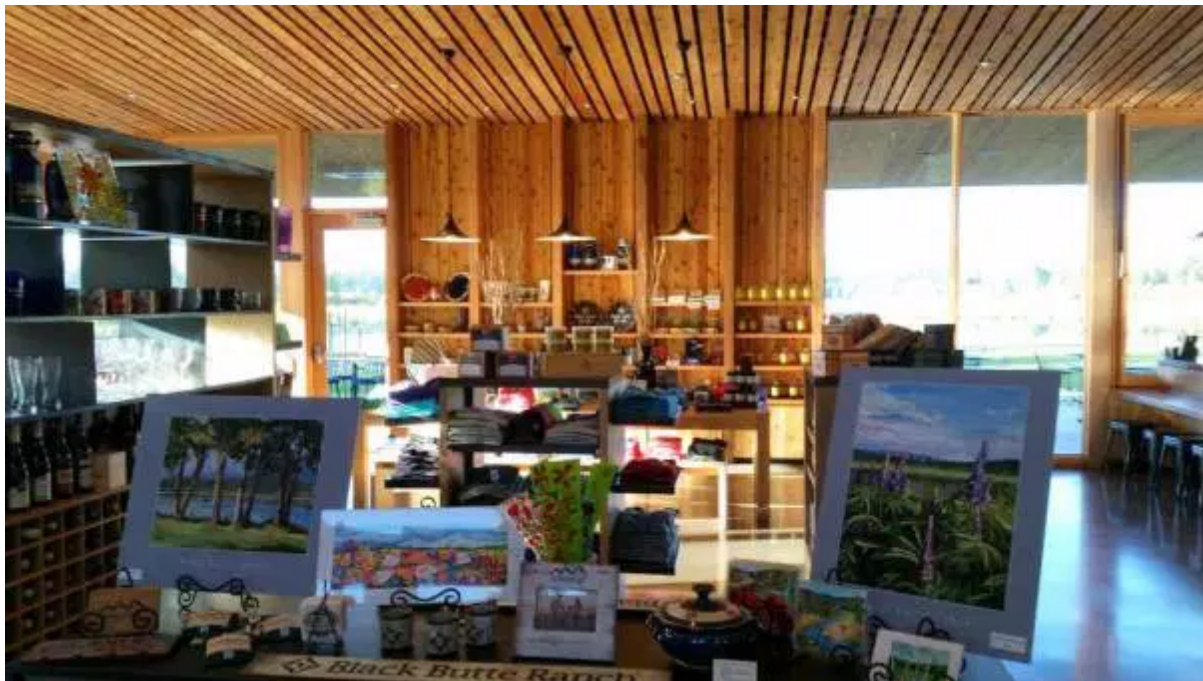
The Ranch would love to change that perception, positioning itself not only as a destination resort for tourists but a great staycation option for locals, according to Kendal Daiger, Director of Sales and Marketing. And highlighting the new Lakeside Complex is a great way to do that. Hence, my invitation for the tour. (And if you're interested, [here is the official press release.](#))



We started in the [Lakeside Bistro](#), open year-round, an expansive high-ceiling space with walls of windows letting the terrific views in; it's a combination of restaurant and retail/gift shop space and

very comfortable. The menu here is casual and seasonal, and I was treated to a mixed-berry kuchen pastry and coffee as we chatted about the facility and the Ranch. It's airy with lots of exposed wood (keeping with the "ranch" theme) but it doesn't feel rustic; in fact the entire renovation was done with a very modern architectural plan in mind—open space, lots of light, wood and concrete, no right angles anywhere.

The Bistro is open to the public (though the pool and activity center are not, only to guests and residents), and there's a sizable outdoor patio space as well, with fire pits, overlooking the lake. There's also a full bar, with six or so beer taps, wine, and hard alcohol available (though not as many options as in the main Lodge). All their baked goods as well as pizza dough are made fresh in-house daily.



Being open to the public and fairly easily accessible from the highway, the casual aspect of the Bistro lends itself to becoming a quick-option rest or snack stop if you're traveling through on Highway 20—something Kendal suggested as well. Frankly this wasn't something I had ever really considered (back to that “resort-as-destination” mentality) but it makes perfect sense; heading to the Valley? Stop in and pick up coffee and a pastry to go!

The swimming pool, hot tub, and Activity Center are equally impressive—but remember, these are only open to residents and guests of the Ranch, so that's where the “staycation” aspect comes in. The pool itself is an infinity pool, going up to nine feet deep, and the hot tub is a 24-person, outdoor tub that is open year-round. (The pool will close in October.) Guests using the pool also have walk-up window access to the Bistro and a private section of the patio.





The Activity Center, at first blush, looks unfinished: the walls have that raw composite panel look and the ceiling rafters are exposed. Surprisingly, it is finished and that's exactly the look they are going for, something of the "open rec room"/active-and-lived-in look it's meant to evoke. It's an interesting choice.

The center itself houses a ping pong table, shuffleboard, foosball, and more, and includes an expanded kids' section for kids camps and classes, complete with a kitchen, kiln for firing pottery, crafts, a playground, and more.





All in all it was an impressive tour. Black Butte Ranch has put a lot of thought and money into completely renovating their Lakeside Complex, and it shows. We're going into the fall and the shoulder season, so unfortunately the pool will be closed soon (though the hot tub will remain open) so if you're thinking of that staycation, keep that in mind—although there are many other things to do at the resort.

Myself I really like the casual aspect of the new Bistro and the idea of a quick and easy travel stop. But I always forget, too, that you don't have to be a guest of the Ranch even to come out and enjoy dinner at the Lodge for that matter. This tour served as a good reminder of that—big thanks to Black Butte for inviting me out!

And yes, if you're thinking of doing a weekend getaway or even just an afternoon, keep the Ranch in mind. It's just far enough away to feel like a big trip, but close enough to get there and back again easily. Check them out if you get a chance.

