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BAHAMAS



Special Contributor/Brian Irwin
Bonefish Ebbie David and Lori Irwin angle the hard sand flats of Bimini's estuary. Bimini is the closest Bahamian island to the United States.

Inspiration island

Find out why Bimini cast its spell on King, Hemingway

By **BRIAN IRWIN**
Special Contributor

Bimini is difficult to leave. The idyllic spit of sand just east of Florida may only be a 20-minute flight from Miami, but in character it's a world away. Glass-clear water replete with marine life, elephantine yachts and a deep history make Bimini an inspiring place.

So inspiring in fact, that the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. used to visit and write famous speeches aboard a

tiny boat deep in the mangroves. Ernest Hemingway used to hole up here too, penning alcohol-driven musings at the then-bustling Big Game Club.

It's a special place, one where you can imagine stepping back in time to an era that was less complicated in some ways, more so in others.

We came to Bimini, the closest Bahamian island to the United States, to fly-fish and explore, but also to understand the island and its past, present and future.

Things are changing on Bimini, and as the island balances the scales of its

genuine persona and history with the need to expand tourism and add more luxurious offerings, we realized that this special place may have struck a healthy balance.

Searching for bonefish

Bonefish Ebbie David is an animated character. He's a tenured fly-fishing guide and Bimini native who took us angling for bonefish, a laser-fast, missile-shaped fish that roams the shallow "flats" that surround Bimini. As he pushed his skiff in the skinny

water, his voice resonated in the salty air as he bellowed "Amazing Grace" in an attempt to entice the higher deity of all things fishy to present bonefish to our water. It worked.

A few minutes later, knees shaking from the pressure, I laid a fly onto the dinner plate of a hungry bonefish. And in a flash, my line tugged and began to run off toward the horizon.

Although fishing is a major facet of life on Bimini, this island is not all things piscatorial. Bimini boasts world-

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OREGON

'World-class' region awaits south of Portland



Jenny Graham

The antics of Pyrate Technics entertain guests at the Green Show, which is offered six days a week during the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

Wine, arts and culture mingle with area's natural beauty

By **KATHY CHIN LEONG**
Special Contributor

Have you heard of Ashland, Medford, Jacksonville and Grants Pass? Perhaps overshadowed by Portland, this affordable, seven-county region in southern Oregon just above the California border beckons to wine geeks, culture mavens and nature lovers everywhere.

Wine time

Robert Trottman, business development manager at 2Hawk Vineyards in Medford, doesn't like to boast, but when asked about the area's vino reputation, he can't help himself. "This is a world-class wine region. When people come, they are super impressed," he says. "You can see the true Oregonian at work [in the wineries] because here are survivalists who are entrepreneurial

in every way."

The more than 150 wineries are winning awards left and right. Where to start a visit? The Southern Oregon Winery Association website matches consumers with winery preferences such as family-friendliness, wheelchair accessibility, food availability and more.

The success of over 70 varietals is credited to the European-like growing season, mountainous topography and wide range of microclimates. In one afternoon, visitors can sample the glories of pinot noir, riesling, chardonnay and lesser-known grapes such as albarino and bastardo (trousseau).

The growing regions include Umpqua, Rogue, Illinois, Elkton, Jacksonville and Applegate. Highway arteries empty into small batch enterprises tucked between fruit trees and quiet orchards. Countryside wine rooms run on the smallish side compared to Napa's fortresses, but these spaces brandish a Pacific Northwest aesthetic, an updated

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