

# BAR ONLINE Newsletter

## OTTER LODGE

### Twenty-Twelve Season in Review

The winter of 2011/12 was nothing short of nerve wracking, nail biting and hair pulling! The dry fall and December storms failed to put much snow in our high country mountains. By February, we were worried as the pack was thin at best, although we had received 23 inches of rain by the end of the month. We were hoping for a 'Miracle March' to dump a lot of snow in the mountains and we were not disappointed! We had over 15 inches of rain and 12 feet of snow up high in March alone and this wet pattern persisted through the Spring. This made for a fantastic year of paddling and we were on the Salmon well into July. Business was better last season and it was a joy to see

Otter Bar is still going strong, after 32 years. Lots of new people and old friends returning kept us busy throughout the season. We had an amazing new couple, Dan and Mary, who cooked for us last season and their energy and food were nothing short of spectacular! We had lots of regulars: one group (The Cheney Clan) that took over most of the spots in one week; 'Old Home Week' (some folks who have been coming here since the early 1980s) and what I call the 'Last Week' which is always packed with a number of people who come each year to the 'last week' (Carrie, Bill, Justen, John, Amy, Paul, and Cheryl). Cheryl usually stays two weeks each year and do a few others as well. (ie: Paulie Popovich from Calgary, Alberta. Burrrrr . . . he would probably stay longer if he didn't have a job! And we would take him in.)

As always, we are so tremendously appreciative of all the people who come year after year and keep our business (and the sport of kayaking) alive and active.

Also of note, last year our river had a tremendous run of King Salmon! The biggest salmon run in a long, long time. This made for the best snorkeling on the "rest" day in Otter Bar's history. We have never seen so many fish in the pools on the property and up and down the river. Everyone who went snorkeling with us saw big fish. As the old timers used to say, "Why, back in the good 'ol days, you could walk across our river on the backs of salmon, there were so many." So now, we sort of believe the story, kinda.

A very busy wonderful 2012 – thank you all for making it that way!

2012 Highlights  
2013 Updates



# 2013



## Letter from the Baron

The years roll by ever faster and the speeding locomotive knows no bounds. It is mid February 2013 as I write this and the massive storms of December seem the distant past. We are ready for more and are keenly hopeful for the West coast storm door to reopens. I have been able to get out in the back country whenever there is powder and my funky knee continues to put up with my exploits. It is slowly improving! It has been stunning here at OB and I have made use of the dry days having completed some new river trails on either side of the main Otter Bar beach. Lots of maintenance projects, as well as the never ending landscape component. We created a new camp area as we have a couple of weddings on the horizon (Steve C. & Michelle and Galena & Lincoln) and we now have a place for the overflow. I also just purchased a new (to us) pickup truck, which I have enjoyed bringing back to life. Old Green, our truck, is in the pasture but will live on here to assist with her trusty winch and rugged slash collection jobs. We did get away to the Caribbean in January for 10 days of diving in the Bay islands of Honduras and it was a welcome break from our frigid paradise. Rush and Alli are home at the moment and while Rush just smashed his face (again), Kristy is applying liberal doses of chicken soup and he seems to be recovering from a broken nose and concussion. Another trip to hospital, this time on his 28th birthday. He is working on the completion of his newest film and Alli is training a new Australian Sheppard puppy, Porter, and moved to Ashland, OR. She's working at the Ashland International Film Festival and Cucina Biazzi, a great restaurant. Life is very good thanks to you and we continue to truly love what we do here in the wilds of Northern California. See you soon we hope!

Peter

### LEVEL OF CLASS

DATES	PRICES
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#### ADVANCED & INTERMEDIATE

Classes run concurrently

May 5-11 \$1,990.00

May 12-18 \$1,990.00

#### INTERMEDIATE & BASIC INTERMED

May 19-25 \$1,990.00

May 26-JUNE 1 \$1,990.00

#### BASIC INTERMEDIATE

JUNE 2-8 \$1,990.00

JUNE 9-15 \$1,990.00

JUNE 16-22 \$1,990.00

JUNE 23-29 \$1,990.00

#### BASIC INTERMEDIATE & BEGINNING

JUNE 30-July 6 \$1,990.00

JULY 7-13 \$1,990.00

JULY 14-20 \$1,990.00

JULY 21-27 \$1,990.00

JULY 28-AUGUST 3 \$1,990.00

AUGUST 4-10 \$1,990.00

AUGUST 11-17 \$1,990.00

AUGUST 18-24 \$1,990.00

AUGUST 25-31 \$1,990.00

#### NOT FOR GROWN-UPS-KIDS CAMPS

N.Q.G.U.

AGES 10-14

JULY 21-27 \$950.00





## Diving in Utila, Bay Islands Honduras

In January of 2013 Kristy and I and her old friend Katherine Saltman and my old friend Jeff Ouder Kirk rented a wonderful house on the island of Utila. We flew into Roatan and chartered a Cessna 206 for the short hop to Utila where we picked up our golf cart for the week. Well known as the super cheap dive destination in the Caribbean, Utila attracts young people from all over the world and it's funky ambiance with an artistic bent is not for everyone. We found it entertaining with great food and a very laid back atmosphere and while the diving is typical Carib reef (few pelagics and school fish) the structure and corals were lovely and made for wonderful free diving. It is devoid of fancy resorts and upscale accommodations and while really quite basic we loved it. A large storm moved in at the end of our stay and made the return to the states memorable, to say the least. Nothing like a mega dose of "airport hell" to make getting home feel even more sublime.





By Creek Hanauer

The bride was breath-taking. The groom was stunned, er, stunning also. Standing for Grum as Best Man was Peter Kettering. Creek Hanauer performed the ceremony for the couple in front of a hundred or so of Elissa's family and closest friends. At the point in the ceremony where they each were to speak to one another, and they finally figured out who was supposed to go first, Graham got a little choked up on his words. After a moment of struggle with his emotions, PK reached out a hand of comfort on Graham's shoulder. Graham took a catching attempt at a full breath and looked at Peter and said, "Well, that doesn't help . . ." He pulled through.

Graham presented a beautiful slide show that chronicled his and Elissa's life together so far. (That began when they were making eyes at each other across the dinner table at Otter Bar Lodge a few years ago. Yes, another OB romance between guide and student.) Peter Kettering then took the mic and gave a lucid over-view of his "mate" Grum Charles so that Elissa's nearest and dearest would have just an inkling of who this big Kiwi bloke was, who had stolen her heart away.

The one very long, long table was filled with food and laughter as the west coast and the east coast talked story and danced till late early morning. The next day was beautiful, but for the humans involved not pretty; but a very slow and content air prevailed.

# THE WEDDING OF ELISSA BROWN AND GRAHAM CHARLES

The occasion that drew some old Otter Bar family out of their various backwoods environs and out into the world of rolling, emerald fields bordered by centuries-old stone fences was the wedding of Elissa Rionda "Brownie" Brown to New Zealand's, by the way of Otter Bar, finest of fellows, Graham Christopher "Grum" Charles in Middleburg, Virginia. And, I've got to say, we clean up pretty damn well. Eighteen Otter Bar-barians made the cross country flight to show the love to the new couple and to make sure Elissa's extended family got the full flavor of the life she was jumping into . . . and we had Grum's back, you know, his posse.



# SCUTTLEBUTT 2013

Scuttlebutt seems to be everyone's favorite article in the News Letter. How could it not be? It's informative, extremely well written, clever, tells our clients everything they really need to know about our staff. I'm sure you all have been waiting to read this since you left OBL last season. First I want to catch you up on Babies. Yes, you read this correctly, babies. An important part of kayaking if we want the sport to be passed on. Former staff members have been busy in that department. The Hanauer Clan (Creek & Betty Ann's children, Merlin & Tesilya) have been busy pro-creating and spreading out the Hanauer name at a rapid clip. (So to speak.) Merlin, who was one of our kayaking instructors before he became a PhD in Economics, had baby #3 in November. Baby Nash came into this world a few weeks early but if he's anything like his 2yr-old brother, Lars, he'll catch up soon. Big sister, Lyla, (4) will have those two boys whipped into shape by the time they're both 3. Merlin's sister, Tesilya, just had baby #2, a sweet girl, Audrey. Tesilya and Brad were mar-



ried at Otter Bar a few years ago and have son, Mackoy, who just turned 3. Tesilya was no stranger to babies since she helped Peter and I raise Rush. She took care of Rush for years and taught him all his good traits (not the waterfall part). We received a holiday card from Ethan Winter,

another past instructor, and he has 3 kids. Not quite sure how that happened. Well, I know, but he is much too young for that isn't he?

And everyone's favorite nice guy, Jason Arbetter, Financial Advisor to the Stars, and his wife, Rachel, are having a baby girl this June. Jason has

wanted a baby ever since we met him about 18 yrs. ago. Congratulations for finally getting your wish. That's all the baby news I have for you this year! Tune in next year for more.

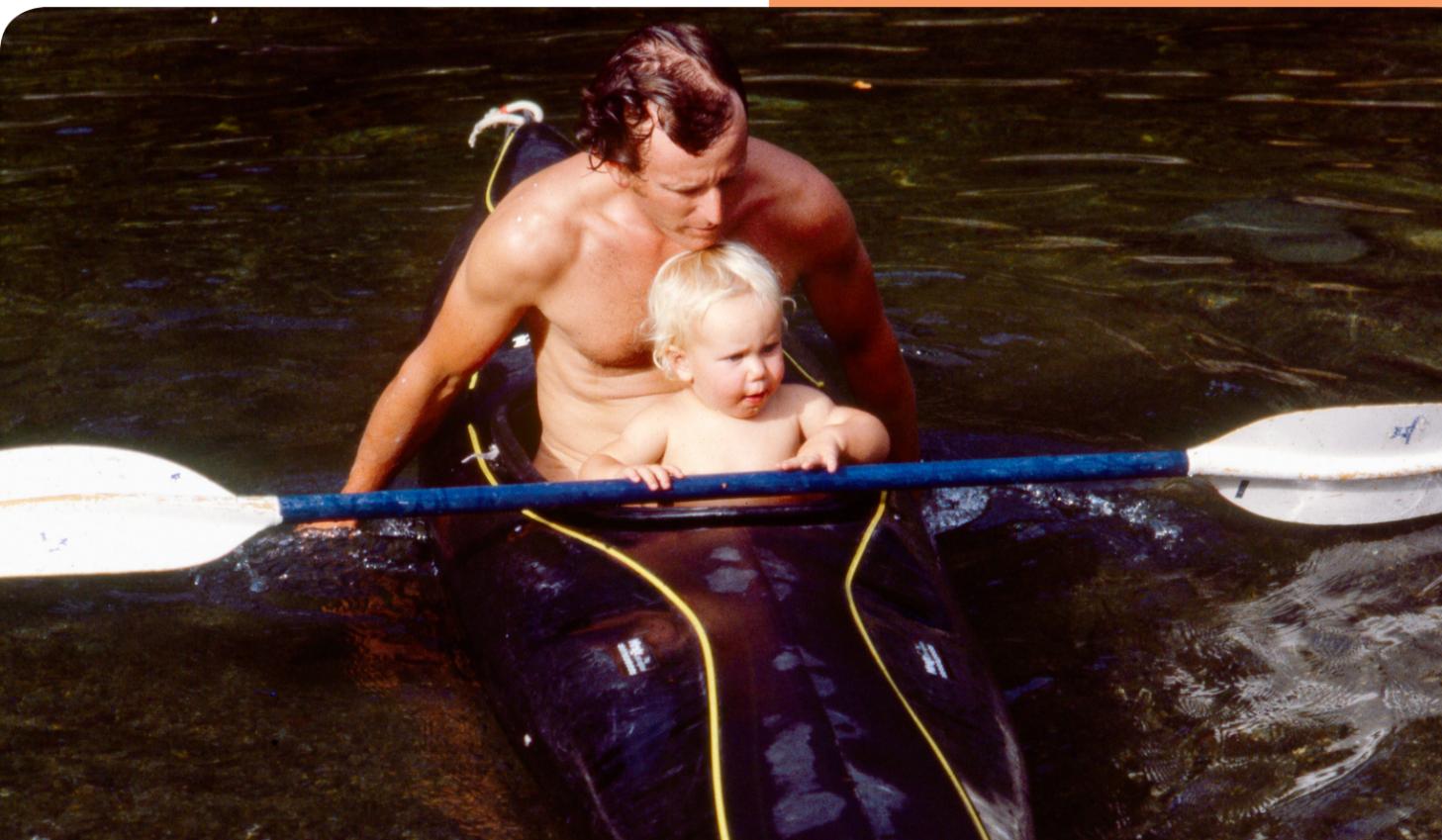
Now, as far as the present kayak staff goes, no babies, yet, but weddings yes! Jason & Rachel last summer and Graham Charles and Elissa Brown both tied the knot, not all four together, just the two couples. Elissa & Grum had to get the hang of the wedding thing, so they did it twice. Once in Middleburg, VA on Elissa's beautiful farm and once in Graham's 'Man-Shed' in Hokatika, New Zealand. We only attended the first one, but I think I heard the wedding held at Elissa's grandmother's estate was different than the one at the 'Man-Shed.' Both equally



outrageous and the most fun wedding we've ever been to. That was the sentiment of everyone there. The 'Kayaker Contingent' held their own and Grum's side of aisle showed up dressed to the nines! The Chacos were off and the Jimmy Choos were on. (Well, that's a bit of an exaggeration.)

Another fabulous Otter Bar Wedding will be held this September for two of our most favorite people: Galena Seeger and Lincoln Else! We couldn't be more excited than to see this wedding go down! Galena worked for us over many years, taking care of the Rush & Alli; helping Kristy in the office; doing kid's camp; sweeping floors and anything else that needed to be done. She was born in Forks of Salmon but moved when she was a kid. She waited until she was old enough to come back to Forks at 16 and work for us. Now...a wedding! Lincoln is a world-class mountain climber and photographer, but Galena has him beat in a kayak. After he got his skull cracked open, I think it 'opened up his mind' that Galena was the best pick ever!

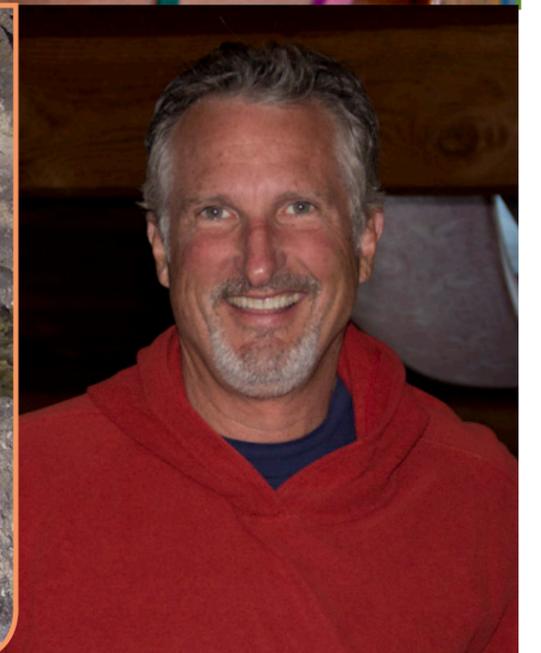
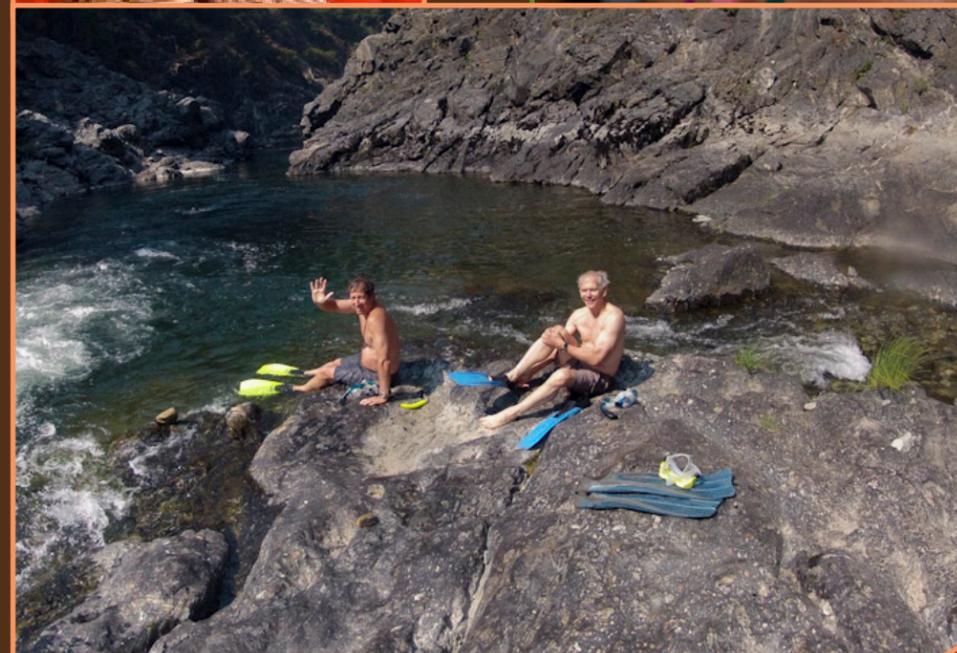
As long as someone gets married once a year, us older folks in Forks will have another excuse to buy new duds and comb our hair just to let it down again. We had a few new folks around during 2012. Always



good to have some new blood around as well as someone with new stories and jokes to tell. Dan Hensley and Mary Anders were our 2012 cooks. They were super talented in the kitchen and did a wonderful job with the guests. They are traveling in Thailand now and won't be back for 2013 we are sad to say. Another catch last season was Shannon Finch, a wonderful gal from Salt Lake City, who had been working at Sierra South. She came up to Otter Bar for look around and we never let her go. She proved to be a great asset to our program and a wonderful friend. Shannon will return for our summer programs. Dimas Pina also came for a spin and ended up doing a couple classes for us, including kids camp. (Which is where we



throw our young, vivacious, strong and energetic instructors to break them in. Nothing like a group of 12, ten to fourteen year olds, to keep you on your toes.) Hawk White, a down river friend, took over our grounds keeping and did a terrific job. He used to be one of my students in grammar school and I love having him around without giving him homework or demerits. Dennis Meade, ace gardener, did the landscaping and garden this year, as he has been doing for many years. The plants and landscaping just get bigger and more gorgeous each season. Dave Farkas, who moonlights as a high school teacher in Durango, teaching Science and Math, between Kayaking gigs at OBL, will be here. He is our Mr.Up guy and always a joy to have around. Speaking of positive attitudes, Kyle Kovalik was also a pleasure to have around Otter Bar this year. And when he was off the river, his musical talent was appreciated by everyone.



As I say each year, our staff is usually larger than the number of guests each week. It takes a lot of people to keep this place going. The housekeepers and dishwashers of 2012: Buff, tough and sassy: Melinda Stearns; her darling daughter, Violet; my darling daughter, Alli Sturges; Cathy Leavens-can't get away from us even if she wants to; Sharon Lieper-our trusted fill-in I can always count on; Jamie Scepkowski, new mother to a second daughter as of January. That's just

the house staff. Then instructor, Peter Kettering, has been with us longer than anyone else on the staff. I guess you could say, he is a fixture here, that everyone relies on. And that is a good thing! We're planning on training a new instructor this season. He has been working with Chris Spelius in Chile, who is another long ago instructor of ours. If you remember Chris teaching here, you are old now. (Just thought I'd point that out) Maybe one day our son, Rush, will be teaching here, but not until he stops roaming the world, running off waterfalls. Then, of course, there are: Bob & Judy Beaver, our mas-

seurs. There have been reports of some nasty fights on Sunday mornings with guests trying to grab the sign-up sheet from each other to sign up for massages; Rex & Miles Richardson, father & son duo who play music for us on Mexican Nights, are a couple of the best musicians you will ever hear, anywhere. Luck has it that they live close and love Mexican food and Music! And, last but not never least: The Head Bottle Washer and Janitor, Peter Sturges, founder of Otter Bar Lodge. Without this guy, you might as well kiss this place good-bye!



# Not-Quite-Grown-Ups

Our NQGU (kids kayaking camp) has been going on since our son, Rush, was 10 years old. (He just turned 28!) It's a long time for a small camp to stay around with kids returning each year until they age-out of the program. The camp is for ten to fourteen year olds who have an interest in learning to white water kayak. It's important that this is their idea and not just the parent wanting them to kayak because they do. We have been very successful in teaching kids to kayak. The key is to have fun kayaking and to be safe. This camp is taught by young, energetic and skilled instructors who know where to draw the line and when to let it rip. They know how to keep control of 12 kids while having a blast with them.

This is an overnight camp for seven days. The parent/s can come to the Lodge Program (or not) and the kids are at the other end of the property in their area. They sleep in tents, are served fabulous meals by an in house cook, and are taught by the most outstanding professionals in the sport of whitewater kayaking. Kids also come by themselves and become fast friends with the other kayaking kids. Since these kids are 'kids' their learning curve is fast! (Much faster than the 'Adults in the lodge program!') They are rolling quickly and take to the sport like ducks to water.

We make sure there are rules to follow and safety is always in the forefront. We provide all child-size equipment; meals; instruction and a really fun learning experience. Put kids in or on water and you have the ingredients for the time of their lives!



# Strokes from the Folks 2012



Each week we ask our guests to fill out a 'Feed-Back/Evaluation' for us. We get to read about the high points of their week, if there were any low points and a general overview of how their week went. The following show some of the quotes that our 2012 guests made on these forms at the end of their week.

Thank you, thank you, thank you! It has been a wonderful week of expectations surpassed. Thanks for the excellent and patient instruction, the warm hospitality and the best food ever. [Abi Riak, Durham, NC](#)

I am very pleased and entirely satisfied with my introductory week and progress toward my goal of being a class 3 boater. I practiced my 'S' turns, edging, leaning into cliffs and angles. As an educator, I do not take your instruction for granted. Both pedagogy and content were superior. You have much to be proud of. [Gretta Brown, Grenada, CA](#)

I just wanted to thank the both of you along with your entire staff for a wonderful week! I applaud your vision to create such a unique place as Otter Bar. I would think sometimes it is more a labor of love than anything else on weeks when you do not have a 'full house' of paddlers. I have every intention of returning next season. Let everyone know I appreciate all of their hard work which made my week at Otter Bar so easy to enjoy! [Milling Blalock, Greenville, S.C.](#)

Excellent instruction. Each instructor was able to break down skills into steps, encouraging clear, concise instruction. As a former teacher, it is a pleasure to experience excellent teaching. I appreciated each instructor's approach and learned from each person. It's nice to be with people that have elite skills and enjoy to share it with others. You enrich so many lives with your teaching. Thank you for sharing your skills and joy in what you do. I couldn't have had a better 60th birthday than what I had at Otter Bar. [Sal Jepson, Portland, OR](#)



I really wasn't sure what to expect coming in, or if I would enjoy kayaking at all. (I was definitely prepared to relax and read if necessary.) But, I had a phenomenal time and ended up loving every second. I am sad to see the week end! The lodge was beautiful, clean & very comfortable. I cannot say enough great things about the instructors. I learned so much this week and the guides never let me feel uncomfortable. I knew that no matter what happened, they would be there immediately and that gave me a huge confidence boost. The food was awesome-beyond my expectations. Everything always super fresh tasting and delicious.

[Meghan Walters, New York, New York](#)

There isn't anything I can add to all the accolades you've received over the years from all your guests, except that your organization is in top shape and you have a genuine concern for your guests that is shared by your staff. Thank you for a perfect week that gave me the opportunity to make new friends. [Tony Lunt, Tucson, AZ](#)

Kathy and I have once again just totally enjoyed the week. Otter Bar has been a blessing in our lives. We appreciate the hard work that everyone on the staff puts forth to make the week so memorable. Thanks to all!

[Peter & Kathy Litz, Garland, TX](#)

The lodge combines esthetic design with a practical floor plan. Makes excellent use of natural light. It is cozy & pleasant. Also lets a guest practice good memory training re: "Where did I put my shoes?" The instruction was: highly competent, step-by-step in logical progression; effective demonstrations, both on land and water. Knowing they were there for a rescue allowed me to try things that I might otherwise have shied away from. [Tom Douglas, Houston, TX](#)

The instructors were all excellent teachers and mentors. I learned a ton and enjoyed every minute of it. The progression is just right. The food was spectacular and I felt personally cared for by the entire staff. The meals were tasty, but also not very heavy. It was a great compliment with the physical nature of the days. [Mark Ahlbrecht, Champlin, MN](#)

I had a blast!!! The lodge is absolutely spectacular in every way, clean & beautiful, interesting architecture. Love the engineering and thought behind energy management. I want Dan & Mary (cooks) to come to Durango!!

[Penny Cooper, Durango, CO](#)



Hearing the loving banter in the kitchen and the look of pleasure on Mary & Dan's faces; could the food be anything other than exceptional? Awesome food & awesome cooks. [Richard Spry, Geneva, IL](#)

I learned so much and had so much fun doing it. The instructors made me feel very comfortable but also pushed me past my comfort level at the same time. The food was AMAZING! I've never eaten this good in my life.

[Corinn O'Brien, New Orleans, LA](#)

The entire week was more than I could have ever experienced elsewhere. The balance between instruction, great food and welcoming people made this all the more better with each day. I will definitely return next year.

[Dannie Keil, Tempe, AZ](#)

I really do not know enough superlatives. All the instructors were generous and kind, unfailingly so, all day. I was never bored and they got a lot more out of me than I would have myself. I didn't have a hesitation leaving my children in their care. [Kathleen Coco, who came with her 15 & 21 yr.old children, Stroudsburg, PA](#)

I can't imagine better instructors on the planet. These people know how to teach! Each instructor had a slightly different spin on presentation but the message was the same. They were patient, but knew just when to prod you to take the next step. I learned a lot! The food was fabulous!! Imaginative, beautiful to look at, healthy, just awesome! If I had stayed longer the hip pads would have had to come out of my kayak. All of the staff was terrific. Everyone knew my name by day 2 and used it. I came here on my own but felt like I was part of a happy group. You attract some great guests. I wouldn't hesitate to come by myself again. [Maura Shea, Anchorage, Alaska](#)

A rare combination. The instructors were educated, talented and professional individuals whose knowledge and passion for the sport equaled their outgoing and personable personalities. They not only ensured we understood the concepts presented, they were genuinely interested in getting to know us personally. The lodge is beautiful, comfortable and encouraged group mingling. It made you feel at home, love the wood and windows. The outdoor picnic table for dinner made for a perfect setting to relax and visit with others after a day of activity. [Milan Kucerak, Jefferson, Iowa](#)

This must be the best team in the business. I was impressed with the consistency of 'problem detection' (I kept doing the same thing wrong!), and corrective action (ie: 'maybe you could do it like this . . .') I have four new friends who I can trust with my life. [Jeff Turner \(Kokatat Water Sports Employee\), Arcata, CA](#)

Many people told me what a special place this was, but nothing prepared me for the happiness I experienced here. I leave strengthened, refreshed, and grateful. Thank you. [Michael Gross, New York, NY](#)

## KAYAKS 4 SALE

If you would like to buy a kayak now and are taking one of our classes in 2013, we can hold it for you until you come.

CONFLUENCE BOATS	PRICES
MAMBA 7.5 RED	\$590.00
MAMBA 8.0 GREEN	\$590.00
MAMBA 8.5 BLUE	\$590.00
MAMBA 7.5 GREEN	\$590.00
AXIOM 8.0 GREEN	\$590.00
HABITAT 8.0 GREEN (Wave Sport)	\$590.00
LIQUID LOGIC	
REMIX 79 BLUE	\$690.00
REMIX 69 RED	\$690.00
REMIX 69 RED	\$690.00
REMIX 59 BLUE	\$690.00



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