



LOCAL WANDERLUST: LAKE CHELAN'S ANNUAL WINTERFEST, FIRE AND ICE

Travel By Sharlyn Petit on January 22, 2014

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Stressful holiday travel and family gatherings behind us, it's about time to take a break from it all. Enter: the lakeside reprieve of [Lake Chelan's Winterfest](#) only 3 hours away from the demands of city life. Check you later, Seattle. We've got 48 hours to make the most of the Northwest's winterscape.

The annual Winterfest event features two weekends of fire and ice adventures during the 2nd and 3rd weekends in January. Usually, the Lake Chelan area is lightly blanketed in snow for the event, which is in its 28th year. This year, a light fog barely lifted throughout the whole weekend, but that didn't slow down the festivities or the twinkling and wintry feel of the town.



Winterfest Fire & Ice from a previous year (image via [Lake Chelan Winterfest Facebook page](#))

THE DRIVE: We chose to head over Snoqualmie Pass via 1-90 east, then north on Hwy 970 toward Wenatchee, and up 97Alt alongside the Columbia River to Chelan. A few words about this drive: a foggy Friday evening made for a white-knuckled drive through the bends of Blewett Pass. And that was with no snow on the ground. If you can, try to do your driving during the daylight hours for the views and a relaxing start to your sojourn. In the end, it's about a 180-mile drive, or 3 hours. Alternately, you could take Highway 2 over Stevens Pass.



Campbell's Resort image by Sharlyn Petit

THE STAY: Hopefully, I'm not the only one out there who gets creepily excited about the hotel check-in process. I have to barge into the room and check out every detail, touch all the mini-toiletries, draw back the blinds, and pretty much be an embarrassment to my travel companions. We ended up in the perfect spot; *Campbell's Resort* (104 W Woodin Ave) was in the middle of all the action. Our room was within walking distance to everything you might need for the weekend, including a Safeway to pick up some things we (of course) forgot to bring. Rooms are well-appointed, modern, and have a great view of the lake. The onsite River Room Spa further encourages the vacation mindset with massage, body treatments, facials, and more.



Campbell's Pub & Veranda (image via Campbell's Resort Facebook page)

THE DINNERS: On night one, we jumped right into the mix by quickly checking in and hitting up Campbell's Pub & Veranda (104 W Woodin Ave) for dinner. The place was packed (12th man included) and lively with the winter spirit (and *spirits*) at their Winterfest Fire Bar. Fire pits blazing in the background, dishes like beef bourguignon and blackberry-glazed pork chops were just the ticket for prepping tummies for an avenues' worth of wine tasting. Night two brought a Tuscan-inspired dining experience at Sorrento's Ristorante at Tsillan Cellars (3875 Hwy 97-A). Classic Italian fare (think: marsala, parmigiana, piccata) was on par with petite bistros on the banks of Lake Como, and the view and ambiance wasn't far off either. Another recommendation rumored to have that Chelan charm is Cannella Kitchen (94 Wapato Way, Manson). The menu is mostly gluten-free, and the intimate setting allows for 7 reservations per evening, once you've got the table, it's yours.



Campbell's Bar image by Sharlyn Petit



Sorrento's Ristorante image by Sharlyn Petit

THE QUICK EATS: Finding little enclaves to pig out brunch-style ranks as one of my favorite pastimes. We came across a few spots that did not disappoint. For an early-morning caffeine fix, check out [Lake Chelan Artisan Bakery](#) (246 W Manson Hwy). Serving Blue Star Coffee and made-from-scratch sweets, this place was a Northwest morning at its best. A certain cranberry oatmeal cookie had us coming back to buy out the whole batch before leaving town. No joke; we bought them all. Then there's the classic diner-feel of the [Apple Cup Cafe](#) (804 East Woodin Ave) — great service and all the eggs, bacon, and short stacks you crave. Other standouts for casual dining include the creative pizza pies of downtown's [Local Myth Pizza](#) (122 S Emerson St), or the farmhouse-style restaurant at [Blueberry Hills Farms](#) (1315 Washington St, Manson); um, coconut cream waffles and a French dip that's worth a 400-mile drive? Yes, please.



Apple Cup Cafe image by Sharlyn Petit



Lake Chelan Artisan Bakery image by Sharlyn Petit

THE WINERIES: More than a dozen wineries are sprinkled throughout Lake Chelan's Wine Valley, which makes for a great wine-tasting getaway. The hospitality at Tsillan Cellars (3875 Hwy 97-A) was world-class; we even got a guided production tour of the facility and grounds by owner Dr. Bob Jankleson. The passion and pride this man has for winemaking and Lake Chelan is inspiring. Taking us on the same walk he "walks often with his dreams," we learned the history of the land and how wineries have brought a new culture to the area. His future plans include building Italian-style resort villas, spa, and marketplace all on the estate. Who needs Tuscany?



Tsillan Cellars Wine Tasting image by Sharlyn Petit



Tsillan Cellars' Owner Dr. Bob Jankleson image by Sharlyn Petit

THE ACTIVITIES: The options are overwhelming no matter what the season, but we kept it simple this time around with the events that Winterfest had in store: an ice sculpture tour, wine walk, live music, bonfires, and Stretch-Sip-Shoe (a mix of yoga, wine tasting, and a stroll through a vineyard — oh yes, this is as good as it sounds). Lynda Kennedy of Yogachelan (206 A East Woodin Ave) led our group through an invigorating “Snowga” class at Tsillan Cellars, and once all stretched out, we were ready to experience a wine tasting like no other and take a moment to root ourselves in nature’s elements. Other winter activities in the area include cross-country skiing through 25 miles of groomed nordic trails at Echo Ridge (snow required: check out the grooming reports at LakeChelanNordic.org), snowmobiling, snowshoeing, tubing, or just walking around Historic Downtown Chelan.



Yogachelan's Snowga image via Yogachelan's Facebook page



Winterfest 12th Man Ice Sculpture image by Shazlyn Petit



Winterfest Ice Bar image by Sharlyn Petit



Winterfest Fire & Ice image via Lake Chelan's Winterfest Facebook page

And we did this all in 48 hours. So you missed out on Winterfest? Well, February brings its own fun (and romance) with the **Red Wine and Chocolate** event Feb. 8-9 & 15-16. Whether you're looking for a winter getaway or romantic retreat, the town is ready to please with wine tastings, chocolate in every form, cooking classes, and spa treatments. Sounds like a recipe for relaxation, doesn't it?