



Jewelers, a high-end clothing and jewelry consignment store. Mark Hoyt, a master jeweler, designer and a partner in the store, is among the friendly people who help make the Lake Oswego community so special. The longtime veteran of the jewelry industry shows me around his shop, letting me examine amazing pieces of jewelry. He chats with me about his career while cleaning my wife's rings. After 43 years, he figures he's "designed enough platinum and diamond jewelry to fill two wheelbarrows."

West Linn

This delightful town of about 26,000, located about 10 miles south of Portland, is known for its abundance of trees, earning various awards from the Arbor Day Foundation. In addition, *CNN/Money Magazine* recognized West Linn as one of the best small towns in America in 2011.

The quaint community boasts a three-block-long stretch of wooden storefronts with a variety of businesses, including a mix of restaurants—from Chinese to Mexican to Thai. One of my favorites is Allium, where the menu ranges from seafood paella to a scrumptious cheeseburger and fries (I like the fries drizzled with rosemary-seasoned duck fat).

Part of the town's charm is how local

businesses have renovated and preserved many of the community's historical buildings, such as the Willamette Ale & Cider House, which is located in a building that dates

back to 1915 and was the original site of the Willamette General Store.

The British-themed bar and restaurant features the flagship cider Royal Dryness, part of its Queen Orchard brand, as well as a rotating selection of beers that includes unique local brews. Just down the street is the Nineteen33 Taproom, where the gourmet bar food is made from scratch. Owners Doug Nelson and Landers Boyd offer menu items such as brisket fries and shishito peppers toasted in sesame oil. The former Portland food cart owners wanted to move to the suburbs, and they found the perfect place in West Linn. "We started searching," Doug Nelson says, while busily cooking one afternoon. "This place popped up. It was the right size, right neighborhood."

Oregon City

About 5 miles south of West Linn, I cross the Willamette River and enter historical Oregon City. Located along the Willamette River, and adjacent to the 40-foot-high Willamette Falls—the largest falls by volume in the Northwestern United

States—Oregon City has a population of about 37,000 and dates back to 1844. Locals maintain that the city has the oldest Main Street west of the Rocky Mountains.

The town is also the official finishing point for the Oregon Trail. You can visit the End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive & Visitor Information Center to learn about the trail, with interactive exhibits, a feature film and guided tours.

Downtown Oregon City boasts a collection of brick buildings, many of which date back to around 1900. More than \$40 million has been spent over the past decade to revitalize the city center. The effort and expense has paid off, with Oregon City earning national recognition in 2018 as one of three winners of the Great American Main Street Award, given by Main Street America, which provides information, support and resources for revitalizing downtowns.

Mica and I enjoy the storefronts in the handsome buildings on our way to lunch at Mi Famiglia Wood Oven Pizzeria, where we order a Kyle's Favorite pizza, which includes garlic chicken and pepperoni. Later, we peruse the stacks of vinyl at Oregon City Records, which has an extensive vinyl collection. We also liked the store's many knickknacks for sale, including a selection of beer steins.

At Black Ink Coffee and White Rabbit Gifts (a coffee shop and gift shop in one),