Story Ideas

Off the Beaten Wine Path
There’s more to Oregon wine than its famed Pinot Noir. Southern Oregon’s latitude, climate and rich terrain produce a European-like growing season that make it an idyllic location to grow wine grapes. And with more than 70 different varietals grown in five distinct regions, visitors can enjoy a different side of Oregon Wine Country from popular grapes like Syrah, Malbec and Tempranillo to the more obscure such as Montepulciano. Southern Oregon has more than 150 wineries and family-owned vineyards dominate the landscape. The Umpqua Valley is a prime example where German immigrants planted the first vineyards back in the 1800s and today the boutique wineries are still family owned and operated. Similar stories are woven into the other four regions and it is common to sip on wine poured directly by the winemakers who love to share their deep knowledge and love of viticulture with visitors. Far from the crowds of California or Willamette Valley, enjoy a wealth of wines in a variety of styles and full attention in the tasting room.

Adventure is Southern Oregon’s Soul
Maybe it’s our pioneering spirit, the geological drama, our untamed forests and rivers, spectacular waterfalls or the vast outback. But one thing is certain: the landscape lends itself to adventures great and small. In sunny Southern Oregon, you can white water raft the wild Rogue with local guides who grew up on the river’s edge, bike Crater Lake, zipline high above the forest or don a headlamp and explore the West’s largest cave system. In winter, cold weather enthusiasts can enjoy snowshoeing, skiing, snowmobiling or ice fishing.

The Great Oregon Outback
Look out over the vast Oregon Outback and you’ll see a landscape so vast and rugged that even Oregonians find it a mystery. But there’s plenty of history, culture and geology to explore in this high desert for those seeking a true escape in the wild American West. Here, social distancing is a way of life, adventure is plentiful and people are few. You can paddle 90 miles on the Oregon Outback Scenic Bikeway through the most remote part of the state, hike to cascade mountain waterfalls and visit towns that haven’t changed much since cattle ranchers settled there in the 1800s. At Fort Rock, scientists have found evidence of humans that roamed the area more than 10,000 years ago, including 70 prehistoric sagebrush bark sandals, and a pair believed to be the oldest known shoes in the world. Bring your own shoes for nearby hiking to enjoy sweeping views of geological wonders that surround the area. After you’ve worked up a sweat, enjoy a giant steak at the same location that ranch hands would tie their horse to a tree to dig in before or after a cattle drive more than a century ago. Don’t forget to relax by soaking in the area’s natural mineral water springs while gazing up at a bright sky full of stars.

Southern Oregon Cuisine Born from the Land
Southern Oregon’s rich landscape of rivers, farms and forests produce fresh bounty from its fruitful soil. Here, food is a big part of the experience where chefs, vintners and restaurateurs have helped shape the region into an ultimate gourmet destination. Rogue Creamery is an artisan cheese company dedicated to sustainability and the art and tradition of making world’s finest cheese. Lillie Belle Artisan Chocolates has been named one of America’s Top 10 Chocolatiers and you’ll find exotic caramels, luxury truffles and “Bean to Bar” chocolates made from organic chocolate. Harry & David’s factory tour is a great stop to
enjoy samples of the company’s famous pears and chocolate truffles and you can learn how to make their famous Moose Munch. In a renovated rustic barn, the Pennington Farms family work together to produce a variety of berry jams and “old school” baked goods. Stroll the Rogue Valley Growers & Crafters Market from March-November to meet the vendors and farmers that serve healthy options, organic produce, gift ideas, unique crafts and more every week. Located in the lush Rogue Valley, Ashland is the hub of Southern Oregon’s food scene where you can get anything from elegant French cuisine to a mile-high sandwich, all highlighted with an annual culinary festival each fall.

**Not So Small Town Culture**
You won’t need a vintage Instagram filter to give you the feeling of taking a journey back in time. Down south, things are still as great as they used to be: imagine a giant cowboy-portioned steak, old town charm, a Shakespeare play in an Elizabethan theater, shopping for antiques in stores as old as the treasures themselves, a museum that lets you walk through life as it was in the 1800s or a world-class music and arts festival set in a historic gold rush town. In Southern Oregon, old school is not just cool, it’s the modern way of life.

**Health + Wellness = Rejuvenation**
Has 2020 got you feeling stressed? Life moves at a naturally slower pace in Southern Oregon and the locals like it that way. You will too. The awe-inspiring landscape makes self-care a priority with a vacation designed to nurture your mind, body and soul. Indulge in a luxury spa treatment at a first-class resort, get your Zen on with yoga and meditation, enjoy organic dining options, stroll a farmer’s market or soak in a healing hot spring. Southern Oregon astounds with its natural beauty, and those seeking solitude can escape to the Oregon Outback, a place so rural and remote the only sound you hear is birdsong.

**Meet the Southern Oregon Makers**
The maker movement is strong in Southern Oregon, where locally sourced products are carefully crafted into handmade soaps, wood working pieces, glass, knit work made from fur of resident llamas or pottery. Small business owners take pride in making some of the best craft beer you’ve never tasted, and there are more than 20 breweries to choose from. Visitors can watch cheese being made and buy it on site, try locally made salami, and learn from our wine makers. Shop for jam and savor homemade pastries in a rustic barn converted into a bakery located on a berry farm or take home a bit of Southern Oregon at an impressive Growers and Craft market with 80 stalls of artists, crafters and farmers with one-of-a-kind products that cannot be found on Etsy.

**A Playground for Families**
Southern Oregon offers vacationing families a new world of exploration where they can connect through fun activities such as hiking, biking, horseback riding or ziplining. Family members big and small can enjoy true quality time during a drive-through wildlife safari to see the giraffes and elephants that roam freely on 600 acres, a jet boat river excursion where the friendly locals wave from the riverbank, or sleep in a real tree house that is just as magical for adults as it is for children. Whether multi-generational or a small family, this special time of togetherness in Southern Oregon will be remembered for a lifetime.