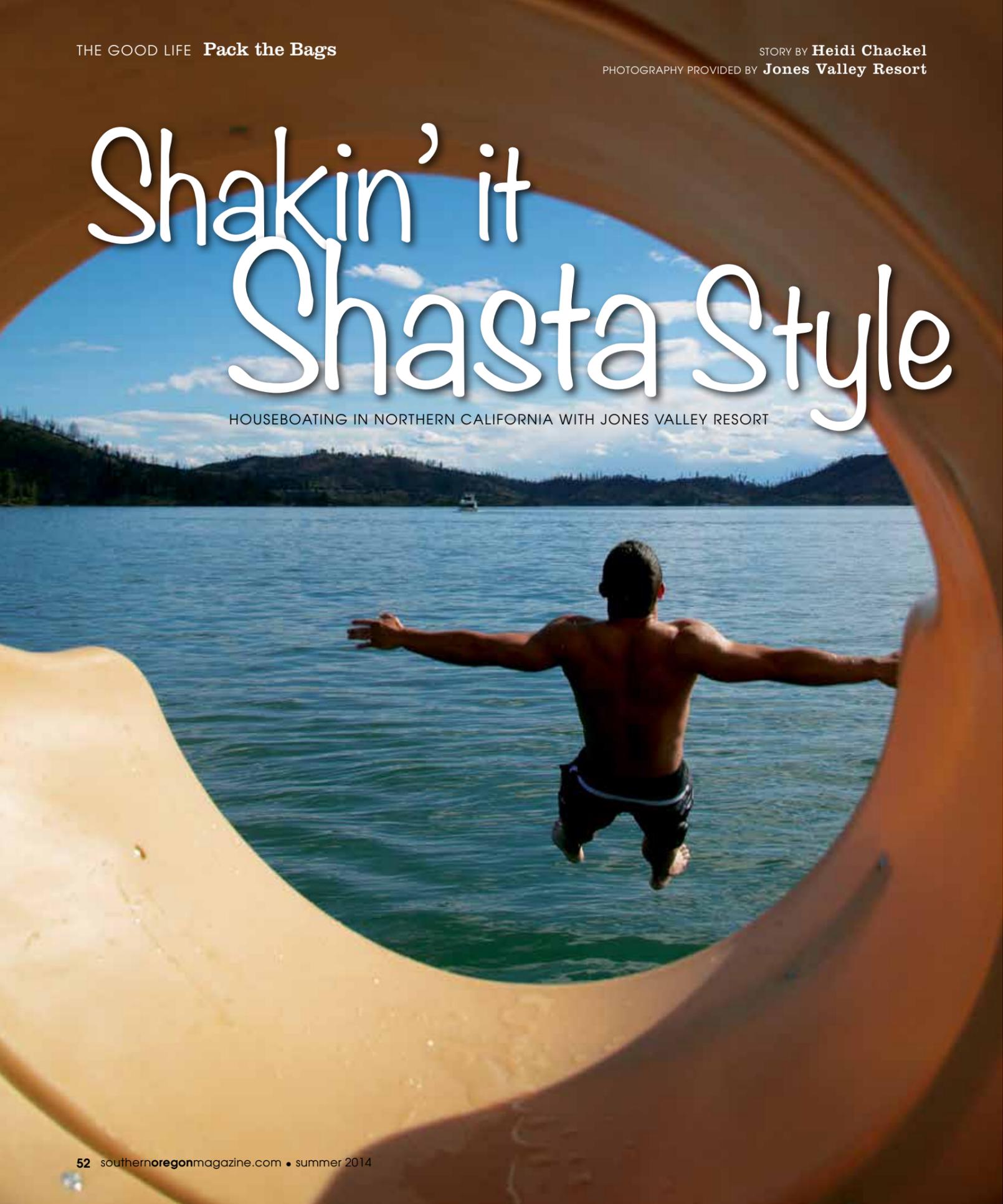


# Shakin' it Shasta Style

HOUSEBOATING IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA WITH JONES VALLEY RESORT



**S**hasta Lake, located about 20 miles north of Redding in California, boasts 370 miles of shoreline making it the ideal location for a houseboating adventure. Four rivers, or what are commonly referred to as 'arms,' merge to create this fantastic man-made lake.

As I write we are wrapping up our week of bliss on Shasta Lake. Last Sunday we rented one of Jones Valley Resort's killer houseboats and we are scheduled to return it tomorrow morning. I have to say, this has been one of the best family trips we have ever had. There was no airfare involved, packing was simple with swimsuits being the main apparel, and there were no schedules to adhere by. Several families joined us and our days were spent swimming, boating, participating in watersports like wakeboarding, playing games, listening to music, roasting s'mores around the fire pit and much more.

It certainly helped that the weather in late June was fantastic, low 90s and not a drop of rain. That seems pretty typical for this area, however, with temperatures rising slightly in July and August, and staying warm through September.

Jones Valley Resort is a full service marina with overnight and year-round moorage, small boat and accessory rentals, a floating store and of course a fleet of houseboats from which to choose. These houseboats range from the 12-passenger Corinthian to the 65-foot, 22-passenger Titan. And let me tell you, after taking a tour, I can say that the Titan is appropriately named as it is a beast.

Our particular houseboat model is named the Escapade and we couldn't be happier with the layout. If you've never been on a houseboat of this caliber, you really need to check out the Jones Valley fleet at [www.houseboats.com](http://www.houseboats.com). They really are a house on water, with all the typical amenities.

This Escapade sleeps 15, although we had a few extra young kids sleeping upstairs to reach 17 (the max is 19). It sounds like a lot, but it worked well as you pretty much are never all inside at once except to sleep. Upstairs is open air with a barbecue, two full counters from which to eat, serve and play, as well as a sink, mini-fridge, stereo and TV. There is a ton of deck space,

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two canopies for shade and even a hot tub! We utilized the hot tub as a warmer pool for the young kids, a perfect way to occupy them while parents lounged nearby.

While the outside is amazing, the inside is even better. There is a full bath and a half bath, each with windows. Across from those are two main bedrooms with tons of storage, and the rear is occupied by bunk beds. The main part of this floor is filled with a full kitchen with island, a couch that folds out into a double bed, a large eating table that folds into a double bed, a TV and fireplace, sound system, driver's seat with mini couch and a small bar with two stools. And even with all of that, there is plenty of storage and room to move around. There are also sleeping quarters in a penthouse upstairs (not full height) with room for four.

Moving on from houseboat details, let's get down to the actual vacation. Including us we have four families total, and we all combined our funds and purchased a majority of our food and beverages from Costco, and we have plenty! Coolers on the back deck house our beverages while all the food fit into the full size fridge/freezer and pantry/drawers. We have split up food and cleanup duty so no one feels they are spending too much time in the kitchen. A "kitty" was created with everyone pooling funds to purchase ice, gas and so on as a group. I highly recommend this to avoid any confusion on who has paid for what.



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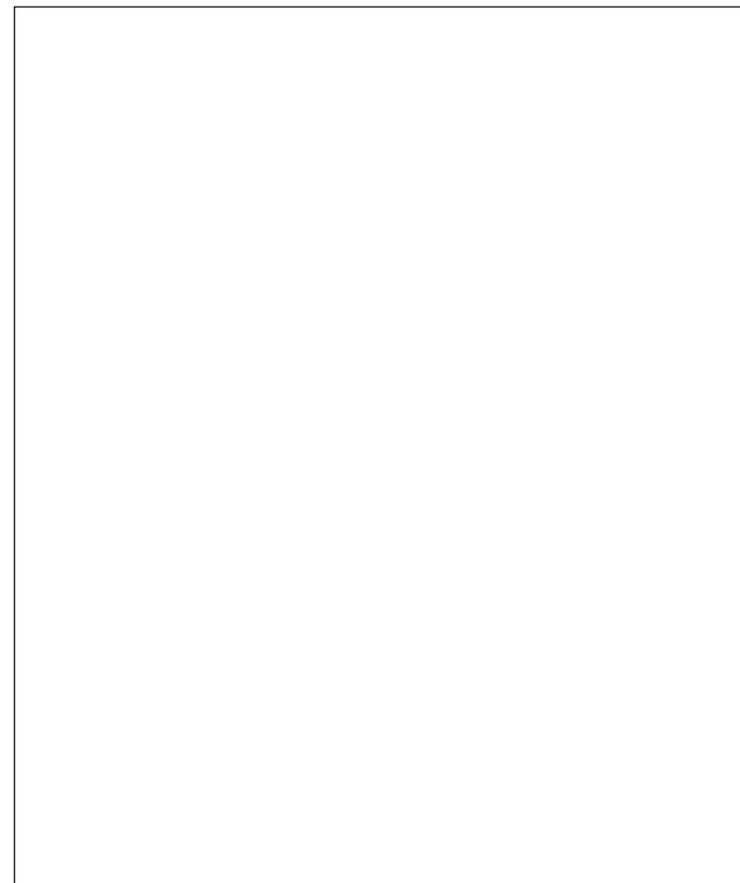
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In terms of activities, everyone pretty much does as they please. At this exact moment, some of the kids are on shore playing Frisbee and Cornhole, several parents are reading and playing cards in the shade above keeping an eye on young ones in the hot tub, a group is out on the ski boat (which we also rented from Jones Valley Resort) with a wakeboard and kneeboard and another group are swimming off the back deck. And this is pretty much how the day goes!

If you are unfamiliar with houseboating in general, I can give you a quick overview. The folks at Jones Valley Resort have been amazing and have made our vacation seamless. Upon arrival, we checked in with an extremely friendly Jones Valley Resort crew who handled the paperwork and gave us our orientation. They walked us through the boat operations from how to run the air conditioner to how to dock our boat on shore. We have had no troubles whatsoever with the houseboat at all, and even if we had a Jones Valley Resort mechanic would have come to us for a quick fix. In fact, he did visit us once for our ski boat rental, which needed a new safety key. He showed up within 30 minutes of our call, and had us up and running 10 minutes from then.

During our orientation, the Quad Squad had fully unloaded all of our cars and brought our gear and food to our houseboat. And I have to tell you, that was much appreciated in the heat of the day! This is unique to Jones Valley as they are the only resort on the lake that loads and unloads your boat from your car. The crew also backed us out of the Jones Valley Resort dock and headed us in the right direction.

Shasta Lake is huge and there are a tremendous number of options on where to dock your boat on shore. We sent two adults out in our ski boat to scope out the perfect spot and then direct our houseboat there. Of course, we did make a pit stop in the middle of the lake to swim and enjoy the slide—did I forget to mention that? There is a great slide off the back of the houseboat with a four-foot drop. This was a huge hit!

Once we found the perfect shoreline, we slowly eased the boat straight in for a slight beach, and our guys jumped out to drive in stakes and use the massive ropes to tie us up.

## Q & A

with Rich Howe, general manager of Jones Valley Resort

**Q: How long has Jones Valley Resort been operating at Shasta Lake?**

A: We are proud to now be celebrating 25 years.

**Q: When does the rental season start and end?**

A: Generally the season begins on Memorial Weekend and runs through September.

**Q: What is the minimum rental length in terms of days?**

A: Three nights, but on weekends you'll find most houseboats come back Sunday night rather than Monday morning.

**Q: What is the number one question or concern you get from prospective houseboaters?**

A: What if I don't know how to drive a boat? Our answer: We'll teach you, and don't worry about driving in and out of the marina as we will do that for you. After that, you are on the wide-open lake; you'll find driving the houseboat is no challenge at all.

**Q: How did you come up with the idea of the Quad Squad?**

A: From our best resource: Our guests!

**Q: What is your most popular houseboat?**

A: The 65-foot Titan.

**Q: Any new houseboats or other interesting additions to the resort in the near future?**

A: We will continue to train and coach our crew to deliver the best service on Shasta Lake, and this season we just introduced the 'SuperCruiser' party boat, which was a pet project of the experienced Jones Valley crew. They realized the need for this unique, one-of-a-kind rental, then designed and remodeled a former houseboat to suit very large groups. It is perfect for a relaxing day on the lake, complete with kitchen and ample café-type seating for 24 passengers...and it has been very popular!

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If the water was higher, we might have tied up to trees, but that wasn't an option this week.

Speaking of water level, have you driven over the I-5 bridge on your way to Redding? The lake is low this year and receiving plenty of hype, but I have to tell you, it hasn't affected our trip one bit. The lake is massive and the shoreline is shoreline, whether the water is high or low, with plenty of room for houseboats and ski boats alike to find private coves. Water level was a non-issue.

The spot we found is ideal, a well protected cove with fairly level shoreline offering a place to enjoy games and a fire pit. We have actually stayed put all week, although I am sure most groups do move around a bit during the week. Mid-week we took the houseboat back to Jones Valley Resort to pump out, but left the ski boat in our cove to reserve the spot!

During the week we also visited Jones Valley Resort to grab a few groceries, ice, gas for the ski boat and of course ice cream. The resort is actually a fun place to spend an hour or so, offering a ping pong table, shuffleboard, basketball hoop and more. Jones Valley Resort offers a variety of water sports equipment for rent as well as houseboats, ski boats and jet skis.

As you can imagine, I fully intend to come back next year and enjoy another great week with Jones Valley Resort. My kids have had the time of their life, and as they are usually exhausted by the end of the day, us parents have enjoyed some down time on the top deck as they snore below! 🐾

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