

# Genoa – a town with modern amenities, steeped in history

By Kathryn Reed

GENOA – No need to drive after checking in. Delicious food. Fun bar. Relaxing balcony and hot tub. History everywhere. Scenery spectacular.

Where did we find this walkable, bikeable community? Just over the hill in Genoa.

The Wild Rose Inn was our launching pad last weekend to celebrate Sue's birthday. It was like we were in another world, even though we were so close to home.



The Wild Rose Inn in Genoa caters to those who want relaxation, good food and fun right out the door.

Photos/Kathryn Reed

Having breakfast made for us each morning was a definite change. Sue Knight has been running the Wild Rose since 1998, though it has been open since 1989. I hope who ever buys it from her keeps it just the way it is with all the antiques,

comfortable rooms, incredible guest service and yummy food.

Our first breakfast we share the table with a couple from the Santa Cruz area.

Each morning a bowl of fruit starts the meal. Coffee has been brewed earlier to get people moving. If it weren't for the aromas wafting to our room, it would have been difficult to leave the tranquility.

My favorite was the eggs Benedict – vegetarian style. Ham is served on the side to Sue's liking.

Plenty of food is served that lunch is not needed.

From our balcony off the Sierra View room we look up to the Sierra. Immediately below us is the expansive yard where a variety of trees are beginning to bud and a fenced area for Knight to grow veggies is off to the side.

With Genoa being the oldest town in Nevada, history is everywhere. It's even on the grounds of Wild Rose. Elzy Knott's headstone from 1859 is there. His father refused to have his son be buried in the Mormon cemetery. This used to be the Knott's homestead.

While Genoa boasts of being the Silver State's first settlement, Dayton begs to differ. In Genoa's Mormon Station State Historic Park are eight panels about the history of the area. One delves into the dispute about which town is the oldest.

A large sculpture of Snowshoe Thompson is at the entrance of the park. He is the legendary Norwegian who traversed across the Sierra carrying the mail as he glided on the snow on long skis.

Even the bar in town is historical. The Genoa Bar is the state's oldest watering hole. Willy Webb has owned it for the past 12 years.

The stories he tells.

A few years back the power went out on New Year's Eve, snow was trucked down from Kingsbury Grade to ice the beer, the old oil lamp chandeliers illuminated the joint along with candles, and the town came together. Every Dec. 31 since then they've re-created the scene to turn back the clock a bit to the pre-electric era.

A buffalo chip from Harvey Gross' place finally wound up in the trash after critters keep crawling from it and covering the liquor bottles.

Raquel Welch's dust covered bra hangs in front of her picture. Bras used to hang everywhere. Now they are in a safe. The rule is if you take a look inside, you have to leave something behind. Because I didn't know the rule until after Webb told me to look inside he let me slide this one time.

The only signed photograph of the original Nevada Supreme Court justices is on a wall in this bar.

Plenty of famous people have had a drink in this saloon – Presidents Ulysses S Grant and Teddy Roosevelt, Carol Lombard, Clark Gable, Lauren Bacall, Red Skelton, Willie Nelson, John Denver, and Johnny Cash to name a few.

Our first dinner is also in a house of history.

We drove there, though we didn't need to. It's hard to believe with La Ferme being around since 1998 neither of us had been there before. The restaurant run by Gilles LaGourge is in the 98-year-old guesthouse of the original Pink House that was built in 1884.

Though the structure is old, the food is much more contemporary. Sue keeps talking about the seven-hour pork shoulder that was so tender no knife was needed. My ravioli was delicious, with a light broth-like sauce instead of a

traditional marinara or white sauce.

Another night we ate at the Genoa Station Bar and Grille, which opened last summer. Sue dives into the shepherd's pie, while I enjoy the grilled salad.

The late morning activity on Saturday and Sunday is cycling. The first day we go about 13 miles toward Jack's Valley. Cows and deer seem to be everywhere. A jackrabbit hops in the brush.

Having a lane to ride in is refreshing. Vehicles pull out so they never seem to be a threat. This part of the road is rough, though.

The next day we head toward Foothill Road for a 20-mile ride as we gradually get our cycling legs working after the winter hiatus. Ah, a smooth road with no cracks. More cows. More mountains to gaze up at.

Genoa might just be my new favorite place when I need to get out of Tahoe for a weekend.

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### **Information:**

- Wild Rose Inn: website, (775) 782.5697
- La Ferme: website, (775) 783.1004
- Genoa Bar: website
- Genoa Station Bar and Grille: (775) 783.1599.

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