

Majestic!

It's the only word to
describe Crown Point
and the venerable
Vista House.

Since 1918, this regal sight has enthralled millions of travelers. From its surrounding vantage point 733 feet above the Columbia River, sightseers and photographers have enjoyed one of Oregon's most inspiring views.

Few places combine nature's wonders and human architectural brilliance so majestically. Once called "Thor's Heights," Crown Point is a basalt promontory shaped by the same volcanic lava flows, floods and winds that created the Columbia River Gorge. Cited for its "exceptional value in illustrating the natural history of the U.S.," it was designated as a National Natural Landmark in 1971. It has been protected as a state park property since 1938 when Multnomah County and the city of Portland gave the building and adjacent land to the state for park purposes. It is now known as Crown Point State Scenic Corridor.

The Vista House was built as a rest stop observatory for travelers on the old Columbia River Gorge Highway and as a memorial honoring Oregon's pioneers—particularly those who made their way down the Columbia River. Described by its architect, Edgar M. Lazarus, as "a temple to the natural beauty of the Gorge," it was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

Crown Point State Scenic Corridor is 24 miles east of Portland along the Historic Columbia River Highway.

EASTBOUND: From Portland, go east on Highway I-84 to Exit 17 in Troutdale. Then take the Historic Columbia River Highway 11½ miles to Vista House. Or, continue on I-84 to Exit 22 (Corbett). Follow the road up the hill; at the "Y," turn east (left) onto the historic highway and go 3 miles to Vista House.

WESTBOUND: From I-84 near Dodson, take Exit 35 and follow the historic highway 12.5 miles. Or, continue to Exit 22 and take the road up the hill, as noted above.

**For additional state park information contact:
Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
725 Summer St. NE, Suite C
Salem, OR 97301
1-800-551-6949**



Check out
Oregon State Parks by visiting
www.oregonstateparks.org



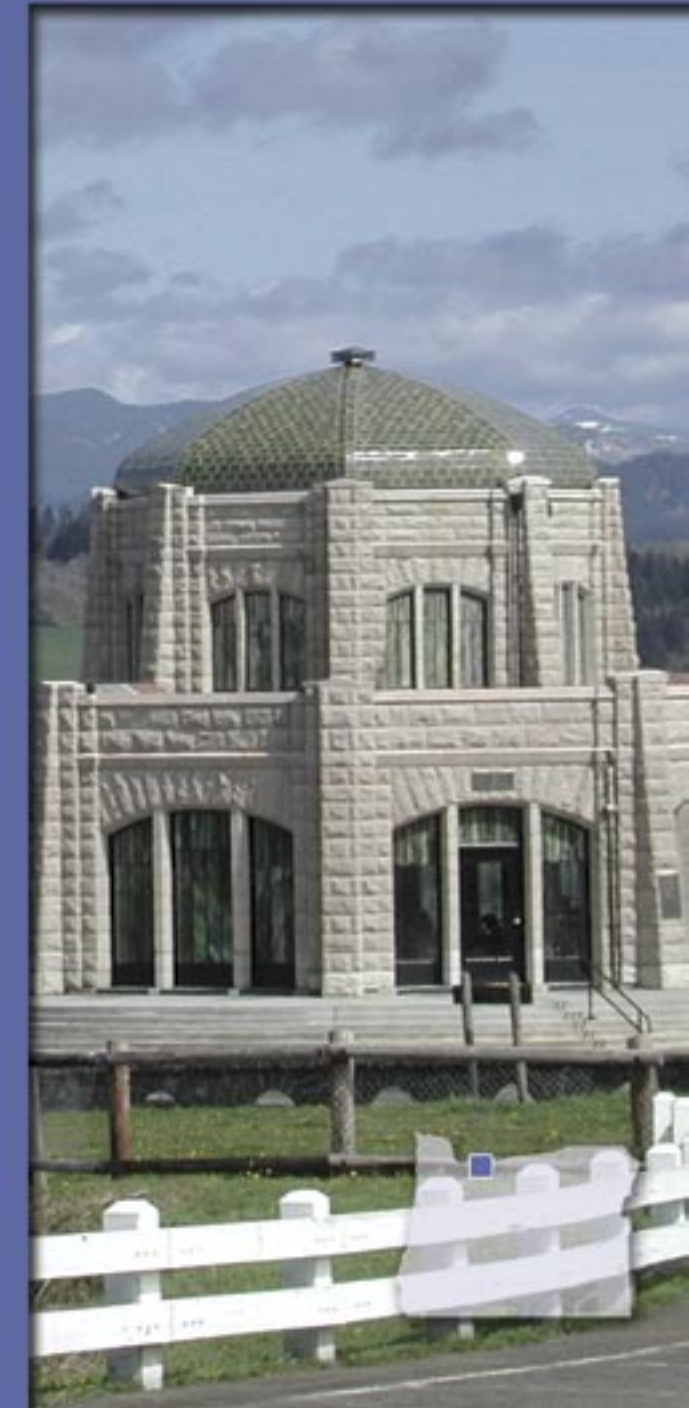
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This information is available in alternative formats on request.
Write to OPRD, 725 Summer St. NE, Suite C,
Salem, OR 97301; or call (503) 986-0707
(for the hearing impaired 1-800-735-2900).

63400-1653 (7/05)



Vista House at Crown Point





The construction of the Vista House was inspired by the builders of the old Gorge thoroughfare (U.S. Highway 30), now known as the Historic Columbia River Highway. Upon its completion, the highway was hailed as a “tremendous feat in highway construction,” reflecting the visions of its builders to reconcile nature and civilization. The highway was dedicated on June 6, 1916, atop Crown Point.

“Isle of Safety”

The construction of the Vista House also began in 1916, to serve, in the words of the highway’s chief engineer Samuel Lancaster, as an “Isle of Safety to all the visitors who wish to look on that matchless scene.” It was Lancaster who first suggested that it be called the Vista House.



Building the Crown Jewel

Financing the building of Vista House was challenging. No state dollars were available, leaving the project dependent on funds from Multnomah County and donations from private parties, including local schoolchildren. The total cost of construction—completed on May 1, 1918—was about \$100,000.



Edgar Lazarus designed Vista House as an example of modern German architecture, or the German equivalent of Art Nouveau. Native Italian craftsmen who built retaining walls and bridges for the Columbia River Highway laid its foundation without the use of cement or mortar.

Built under the direction of a Multnomah County road master and visionary, John B. Yeon, the two-story structure is 44 feet in diameter and 55 feet high. The exterior is gray sandstone. The roof, which for many years was topped with a copper crown, has been restored to its original surface of matte-glazed green tiles.

The Interior

Inside, rare Token Alaskan marble was used to surface the floors and stairs in the rotunda and as wainscoting on the basement walls. The inside of the dome and its supporting ribs were painted to simulate the marble and bronze. Attached to the wall just below the dome, eight busts of four unidentified Native Americans were aligned so that each mirrors its own likeness. Lancaster furnished plans for other interior decorations, but they were never completed.

Preserving the Jewel

Preservation efforts are keeping Samuel Lancaster’s vision alive, assuring that the jewel atop Crown Point “affords shelter and comfort to all who come to look on the splendor of the scene presented here.”

Major restoration work on both the interior and exterior began in 2001, after years of weather-related deterioration. A grassroots fundraising campaign, led by the Oregon State Parks Trust and aided by the Friends of Vista House, raised roughly half of the \$4 million-plus invested in the project.

In 2005, an ADA-standard inclined walkway was installed, allowing full accessibility into the rotunda. By fall 2005, a lift from the rotunda to the basement will be finished, making the landmark building fully accessible.



You can be part of the future of Vista House and ensure continued interpretive and visitor services by joining the Friends of Vista House.

Membership Options:

\$10	Junior (under 12)
\$25	Individual
\$50	Family
\$100	Emerald
\$250	Diamond
\$500	Crown Jewel
\$100-\$500	Corporate
\$1000	Sam Lancaster Circle
\$2500	E. M. Lazarus Society
\$5000	Thor’s Crown Circle

For information on other levels of giving or to volunteer, visit the Friends of Vista House website (www.vistahouse.com), send an email to friends@vistahouse.com or phone 503-695-2230.

Thanks to a cooperative agreement between Oregon State Parks Department (OPRD), Friends of Vista House welcomes visitors daily mid-March through October, 9 AM to 6 PM. Friends of Vista House provides a gift shop and espresso café in the building’s lower level.

The main level windows of the rotunda have been restored to their original barred, opaque stained glass. The original windows had been replaced with clear glass without bars at some point in the landmark’s long history.