

### Portland, Oregon... and Tammie's Hobbies

A co-worker of mine wanders into my cube just the other day, down here at the Great Big Food Company, and announces that he needs one of my group to accompany him on another road trip to verify what we have at an outlying company. "Can someone go with me?" he asks.

My co-workers immediately pretend not to hear, or invoke some sort of surreptitious Klingon Cloaking Device, so that he cannot see them, and so he looks directly at me.

"Where to?"

"Portland."

"Oregon?"

"Yes. You game?"

Of *course* I'm game. I've never been farther west than Salt Lake City and Albuquerque, I absolutely love to fly, even on a Southwest cattle car, and I sure don't mind eating on the company expense card. Portland? Pacific Northwest wild salmon (the good kind, not the chum we get here), cold-water crab, oh, hell yes, I'm game. Can't let the grizzly bears eat it all.

An immediate online search in our company travel website, a few clicks, and before you can say "Hillary and Bill go to Prison", I am booked on a United 737 for a quick (yeah, right) 4-hour trip to the Pacific Northwest!

There are a few things to see there – spectacular, snow-covered Mt. Hood, about 40 miles away (yippee, rental car), the Columbia riverfront, colorful Ganja-smelling local citizens dressed in their "grunge rocker" look. But of course, there was one more search I had to do before jetting off to Oregon.

I throw up some ads on Hyperscale and Steelnavy, asking if there are any good hobby shops in the area. By the next morning, I have a handful of responses from some cooperative gents. One suggests a place in Vancouver. Too far. Another suggests a local outlet of Hobby Town, which he says is "not bad". I'm not going 1,800 miles to go to a Hobby Clown. I can be unimpressed, overcharged (minus a 10% discount), and disappointed right here in West Houston.

But, by far, the most likely target suggested by these gents is one Tammie's Hobbies, just west of Portland by a few miles, in Beaverton (oh, grow up and stop it, Paul). It's predominantly an RC shop, but the locals tell me there is a decent plastic selection, and....something VERY enticing....the "back room" where all the "old" kits are. Doesn't that sound exciting??? Digging in a "back room" full of old kits? They tell me that if I ask "real, real nice", the shop employees will let me dig through that. Ask nice? Heck, I'll beg and plead if necessary. I'm not too proud. (Unfortunately, this turned out to not be the case. There was no such "back room")

Portland is weird. No doubt about it. Think Austin, but without the UT paraphernalia, and much colder. I have never, in my entire life, seen so many... for the lack of a better word... hippies. Wow. No, just, wow. Yes, it was Halloween, but somehow, I get the distinct impression that this is how these folks dress every day. It's odd. In fact, the city's unofficial slogan is... and this should make you think... "Keep Portland Weird". I told you think Austin.

It is a beautiful city, for the vast majority of it. Steep, forested hills everywhere, with ENORMOUS trees. We're talking 100-foot high trees. A first-rate, internationally-famous Japanese garden on top of one of those forested hills. Autumn-colored foliage everywhere. Traffic is a bear, but it was rush hour when I was tooling around in my rented Toyota, so I will not hold that against them. Good seafood. See the picture... mmm, crab cakes.



It's a laid-back, leisurely city. Things happen... eh, when they happen. Usually after much conversation. Yes, there's plenty of coffee although at the time of this writing (6am Wednesday), I have yet to see a Starbucks. Hmmm.

Tammie's Hobbies in Beaverton, just west of Portland, is a large store, set in a strip center. They are predominantly an RC and train establishment, but they pleasantly showed me to the plastics area. Not large, with a single aisle – cars, tanks, and ships on the one side, planes and Gundam... lots of Gundam... on the other. Not a huge selection, but mostly good-quality stuff at decent prices by retail hobby standards. I found a Hobby Boss 20mm AA gun that will find its way to the back of something in the future, for about 17 bucks.



The paint stock was excellent. All major brands, all racks mostly full, weathering powder sets, a few other odds and ends. I did not see any aftermarket to speak of, but hey, no one's perfect.



The folks running it were quite pleasant, and conversational, and we discussed my trip, the club, and the fact that Houston was indeed not completely still under water. I had a great time, dropped some Texas money off into the local economy, and waltzed out the door with enough goodies to fill up what little space there was in my suitcase.

So, if you happen to be in Portlandia any time soon, have some coffee, and drop on in at Tammie's Hobbies in Beaverton. Buy something. Make your trip to this strange part of the world that much more interesting.