

A PRESERVATION CASE STUDY



2018 DEMURO AWARD WINNER

By Stephanie Brown

Follow Highway 20 as it snakes westward through Benton County from Corvallis toward the Coast Range, and you'll soon find yourself in the tiny town of Philomath.

Philomath has plenty to offer visitors from easy access to vineyards and tasting rooms, to an abundance of hiking and biking trails, to a quirky shoe-making factory and retail store nestled within a repurposed vintage roller rink.

Wait... what? You read that correctly. A roller rink.

When the distinctive round-roofed Phil-O-Rink first opened in 1949, it featured a 10,000 square foot wooden skate floor, bleacher seating for spectators and a snack bar. Although it went on to serve as a popular community hangout for decades, the rink closed in the 1970s and was fully abandoned by the mid-1990s.

Several years ago, Tricia Salcido, co-owner of the footwear company Softstar Shoes, was looking to expand operations. She would often drive past the long-empty roller rink and wonder if the shabby, barrel-vaulted structure might work as manufacturing space. There was just one problem. The building was in truly derelict condition. Its interior was a mess. Much of the rink's original roller floor had been sold for scrap in the 1980s.

What remained of the cracked cement subfloor was aggressively punctured by tree saplings. The ten large timbers responsible for supporting the ceiling were rotten from direct contact with soil. And the exterior wasn't in much better shape. Its faded rainbow-colored siding sat beneath a roof coated in non-friable asbestos.

Even the building's elevation was a challenge.

The adjacent highway had been raised multiple times since the rink's construction, leaving floor-level a full five feet below the highway surface, in an area zoned as a flood plain!

Remarkably, the Softstar crew was not deterred.

Rehabilitation began with asbestos abatement, followed by the addition of a new metal roof and energy efficient rigid insulation. Then ten temporary support beams were used to jack-up the building. Next, a new cement stem wall was poured around the perimeter and radiant-heat flooring was installed. Finally, temporary supports were replaced with a series of locally-milled beams.

One of Softstar's priorities from the beginning of this project was to preserve the Phil-o-Rink building's unique past. So, the original ceiling and trusses were cleaned and left exposed, illuminated by





new fixtures designed to highlight them. The few scraps of original skate floor not sold off in the '80s were salvaged and refinished for use in the building's retail area. And the original Phil-o-Rink snack counter was repurposed to serve as the centerpiece of the Softstar retail space.

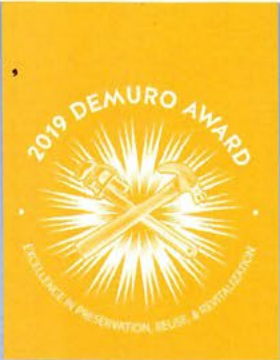
One eye-grabbing feature not original to the rink is the bright green curly slide which now connects the mezzanine office level with the production floor below.

Fully and sustainably reimagined, the Softstar facility now offers tours of its light-filled manufacturing floor and a peek at its roller rink past via fun exhibits which dot its retail space, from historic photos of the Phil-O-Rink years, to skates, accessories and original programs from shows staged at the rink, all donated by local resident and Phil-o-Rink historian/fan Lois Phelps.

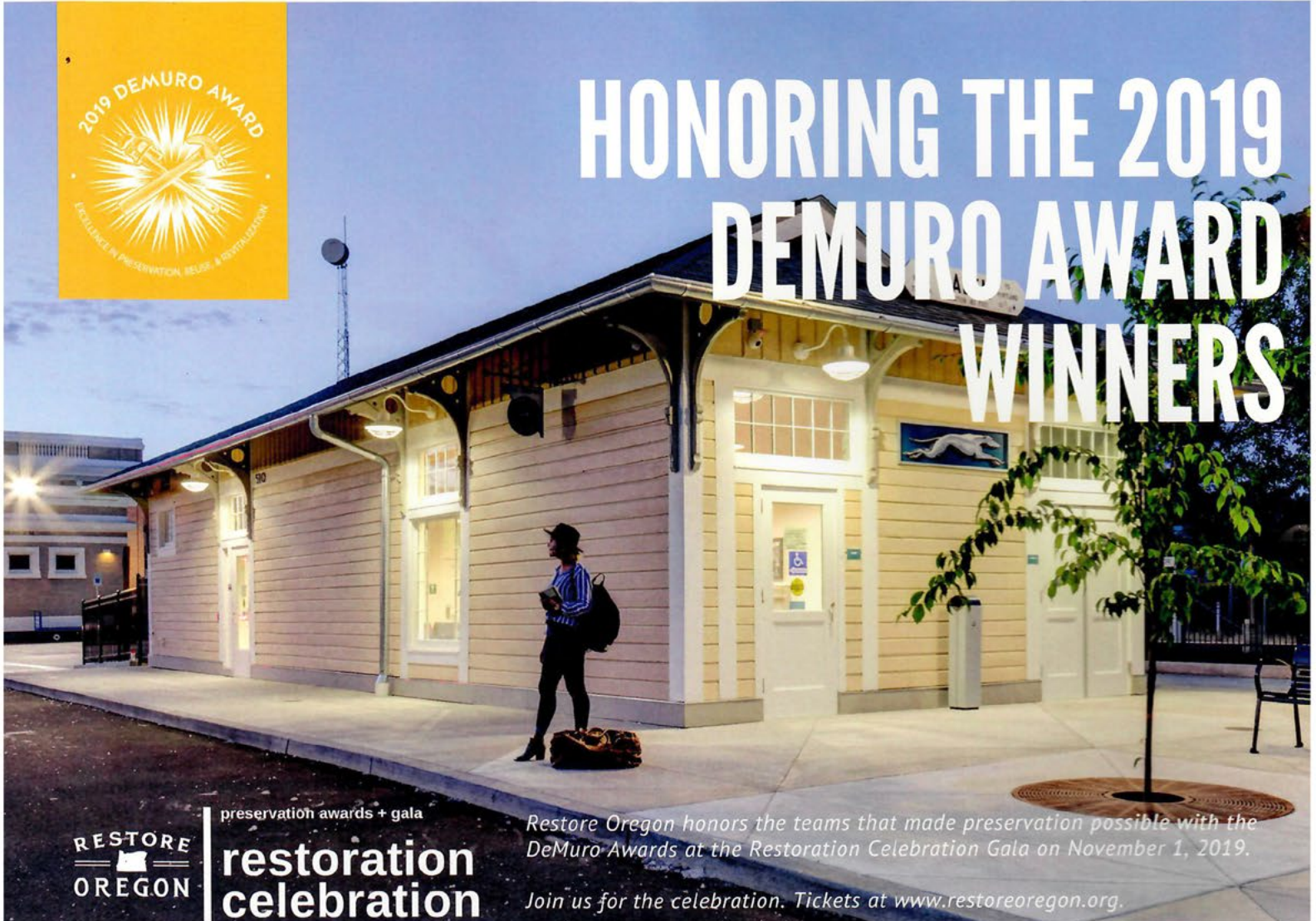
Softstar Shoes, www.softstarshoes.com, a winner of Restore Oregon's 2018 DeMuro Awards, has been selling customizable, handcrafted shoes for men, women and children since 1985. Open Tuesday - Saturday from 10am - 4pm, they are located at 914 Main Street, Philomath, Oregon. 🏡



Opposite page: Finished exterior of the Softstar Shoes Workshop, historic image of locals at skating rink. This page, top: before image of the exterior, finished interior. Right: interior under construction with green slide.



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