

THE *Discerning* TRAVELER®

Your guide to the East's most memorable, delightful and delicious destinations

ROMANTIC HIDEAWAYS 2009



Hotel Le St-James, Montreal, QU



Lake Placid Lodge, Lake Placid, NY



Rabbit Hill Inn, Lower Waterford, VT



Twin Farms, Barnard, VT



The Mayflower Inn, Washington, CT



The Charlotte Inn, Edgartown, MA



Wauwinet, Nantucket, MA



Inn at 202 Dover, Easton, MD



The Inn at Little Washington, Washington, VA



The Sanderling Resort & Spa, Duck, NC



Inn on Biltmore Estate, Asheville, NC



Two Meeting Street Inn, Charleston, SC

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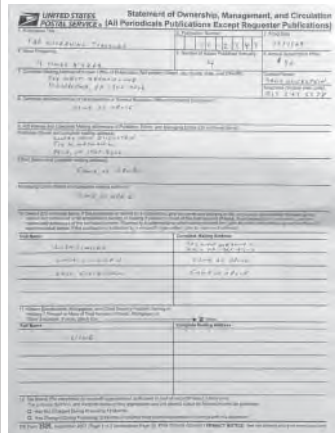
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V8N1 = Jan/Feb 1994	V17N1 = Jan/Feb 2003	V18N1 = Jan/Feb 2004
V9N1 = Jan/Feb 1995	V19N1 = Jan/Feb 2005	V21N2 = Apr/May/June 2007
V10N1 = Jan/Feb 1996	V21N1 = Jan/Feb 1998	V22N4 = Oct/Nov/Dec 2008
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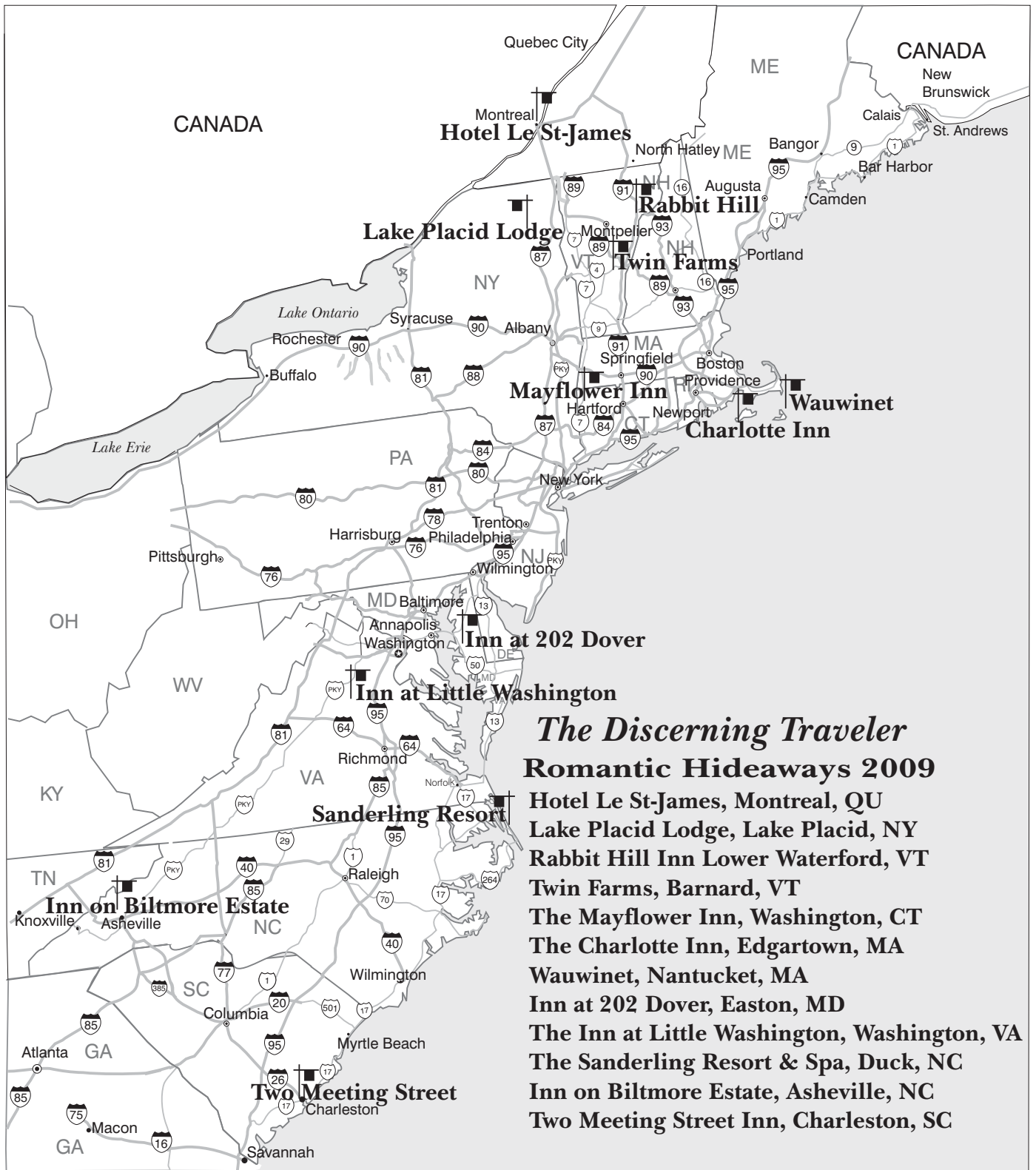


THE Discerning TRAVELER®

October/November/December 2009 Volume 23 Number 4

David and Linda Glickstein Travelers and Publishers

The Discerning Traveler is published quarterly by Lida Limited, 504 West Mermaid Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19118. Rates \$50 per year; in Canada \$60 U.S. funds or equivalent; elsewhere, \$65 U.S. funds or equivalent. Single issue \$12.00. Second class postage paid at Philadelphia. ISSN # 0898-6231. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to *The Discerning Traveler*, 504 West Mermaid Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19118. Selection of all attractions, lodging and restaurants is made on a completely independent basis by *The Discerning Traveler*. Copyright ©2009 by *The Discerning Traveler*. All Rights Reserved. Reproduction in whole or part prohibited without permission of the publishers. Room, restaurant, and attraction prices, accommodation offers, and area codes are subject to change. Send subscription orders and correspondence to 504 West Mermaid Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19118. (215) 247-5578; fax (215) 247-6130 Or you may E-mail us at: discern@verizon.net. Check out our web site at www.discerningtraveler.com



The Discerning Traveler
Romantic Hideaways 2009

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Hotel Le St-James

Montreal, Canada

If you are looking for a small very elegant hotel with superb service this is one of the best places we have found in North America. Located in Old Montréal this historic, beautifully restored former Merchants' Bank building, which was built in the Second Empire style in 1870, opened in 2002 after three years of renovations. The first floor has 22-foot ceilings with ornate moldings, elaborate chandeliers, original marble floors, antiques, and fine paintings. Rooms and suites are all different with no expense spared to make them ultra luxurious in a classic way. The beds are made with fine goose down duvets and Frette linens. All the baths are spacious and deluxe with marble floors and walls, a rainforest shower, some with separate soaking tubs and Molton Brown toiletries. All the rooms are large, with queen or king-sized beds decorated to perfection with fine heavy draperies, beautifully coordinated luxury fabrics and furnishings.

For the top accommodations there is a Royal Suite, Presidential Suite and a Penthouse Suite, that's a full apartment, all with beautiful in-laid old floors, Italian furniture and an over-the-top décor that blew us away! For a romantic stay with prices that aren't quite as high as the three specialty suites we'd opt for one of the Heritage suites (about 1,200 square feet) and the Heritage junior suites as they have extra high 20-foot ceilings with elaborate moldings, mahogany paneling and antique pieces. The oversized bedroom features



a king-size bed and a giant plasma TV with DVD player. The separate living room offers a flat-screen TV with DVD player, walk-in closet and powder room. The large marble bathroom has a glass rain and multi-jet shower and a deep soaking tub.

Executive suites (800 square feet) are their best seller as they have a separate sitting room and a powder room. The ceilings in these and other suites and rooms are of a more normal height. Other room types include junior suites that are 500-600 square feet. Do inquire about the specifics of the room as some have deep soaking tubs and separate showers and some just have showers. The lower-priced rooms are the deluxe rooms that are 400 square feet with baths with showers only.

The hotel has an intimate spa located in the former Merchants' Bank vault, which dates back to 1870. The actual stone wall of the treatment room was part of the fortification of the City of Montreal and was later preserved. They offer a full range of massages, body treatments, and European mask treatments.

XO is the elegant restaurant in the hotel. XO is a sculptural piece at the front entrance to the dining room, the Bankers Hall of the former Merchants Bank of Canada. In the evening you will luxuriate in dim lighting, soft music, white linen tablecloths, fresh flowers, crystal, and fine tableware. There is plenty of room between tables.

Lunch is a good time to visit as the prices for the table d'hôte menu includes choices of five first courses, five entrées and a dessert for \$33. The recent menu included risotto with carrots, sunflower seeds and Mexican chocolate and fettuccini with Prince Edward Island mussels, orange and sundried tomatoes.

There is an exquisite afternoon tea. The more elaborate St. James tea includes sherry or white port, canapés, tea sandwiches, berries with cream and petit fours. Dinner has more elaborate preparations. Appetizers included a tumbler containing jumbo shrimp, blood-orange granita and a ginger and yogurt sabayon. Beef tartare is made with minced raw meat and slices of carpaccio as well as chopped veal tongue, fresh hearts of palm from Hawaii and quail's egg. Main courses were equally impressive. Gaspor milk-fed piglet from St-Canut just north of Montreal consisted of braised belly and roasted

loin with gnocchi and Chinese broccoli. Don't pass the cheese course with those wonderful Quebec cheeses. There is a full wine list.

Rooms, rates, etc.--23 rooms and 38 suites, \$269-\$5,900. All meals available. Lunch weekdays, table d'hôte \$27-\$42. Afternoon tea daily \$30, \$45. Dinner nightly entrées \$34-\$43. 355 St Jacques Street, Old Montréal. (514) 841 3111; (866) 841-3111; www.hotelstjames.com; www.xolerestaurant.com

What to do. Montreal, a French-speaking city, has an abundance of cultural attractions, historic sites, fashion boutiques, and outstanding restaurants. During the summer months parts of the city appear to be one large block party with weekly festivals. At the Olympic Park visit the Biodome and Botanical Gardens. Top museums include the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Canadian Center for Architecture and the Museum of Archaeology and History. A couple of blocks from the Hotel St-James is Rue Saint Paul, a narrow winding street first laid out in 1672. As you walk along this street you'll think you are in a European City. During the summer months the entire street resembles one big party. Flags fly from many of the buildings. There are dozens of restaurants and numerous galleries. Street performers are at almost every open spot or side street. Explore the underground city, the largest in the world. The network of 50 miles of underground passages connects hotels, office buildings, department stores, shopping centers, universities, hospitals, museums, concert halls, railroad and bus stations, and more.

For detailed information about this area refer to the Montreal, Quebec issue V21N4 of The Discerning Traveler

Lake Placid Lodge

Lake Placid New York

This deluxe property, owned by David and Christie Garrett, is in a secluded cove along the southwestern edge of Lake Placid. There are magnificent views of Lake Placid and Whiteface Mountain from just about every room, suite and cabin. Staying here you have privacy yet are only a five-minute drive from the town of Lake Placid.

Following a major fire in 2005 that destroyed the main lodge, they built a new building in the Arts and Crafts-style that opened in 2008. It is different in shape and layout from the original but has a similar feel. As before it is built into the hillside on many levels (though now there's an elevator) with a lot of stone on the exterior, a dining room, pub, outdoor terrace, and five accommodations. The rest of the property includes a Lakeside Building with six suites, two suites next to the Lodge, and seventeen Lakeside Cabins.

The décor throughout includes Adirondack-style furniture of the highest quality we've ever seen with many pieces made by local craftsmen. All the rooms and suites have wood-burning fireplaces and most have baths with both a soaking tub and separate shower. The newest accommodations are the five in the Lodge and the six Lakeside Suites.

The top floor of the Lodge is the Whiteface Suite, the most deluxe and largest accommodation (1,300 square feet) with the most expansive view, a massive stone fireplace, vaulted ceiling and a large porch with a swinging bed, from which there's a great lake view. Next to it is Treetop Suite that has an octagonal bath with a deep soaking tub in front of a bay window with lake views. The other three rooms in the Lodge are on the main level.

The Lakeside Building, which is right at the water's edge, was totally reconfigured. Now there are only two suites per floor each with expanded decks large enough for outdoor dining, a sitting room and a bedroom separated by a double-sided wood-burning fireplace.

Except for Birch and Pine, two suites with decks that are on the hillside next to the Lodge) the cabins are spread along the water. All are furnished with Adirondack style furnishings from the finest Adirondack craftsmen and have wood-burning stone fireplaces, walls of peeled logs or cedar boards, and baths most with a deep soaking tub and separate double-headed shower. Each cabin has an amenity closet with a refrigerator stocked with water, juices, sodas; a French press coffee pot; and snacks of chips, cookies and candies. The favorite cabin is Owl's Head as it is next a brook, is a little larger than other one-bedroom cabins, and has an outstanding

larger bath with a double whirlpool tub, steam shower and sauna. Other favorite one-bedroom cabins are Whitney and Golden that are studio-style and Eagles Eyre with a separate bedroom, all with king-size beds. Lookout is the favorite of the three two-bedroom cabins.

Summer activities that are included are canoes, kayaks, a daily lake cruise on their hackercraft, mountain bikes, and a nightly bonfire with smores. In the winter they offer snowshoeing, tobogganing, ice skating and cross-country skiing with all the equipment provided.

A full breakfast is included. You can have it brought to your room or you can go to the dining room.

Dining options include the Artisans Restaurant with chairs and tables made by Barry Gregson, a master Adirondack craftsman, and Maggie's Pub with a soaring stone fireplace as well as seating

on an outside terrace. Appetizers on the fall menu included parmesan risotto with forest mushrooms and fennel and apple soup with crisp prosciutto. Entrées included chicken with a ragout of cannellini beans and thyme jus from the Lake Meadow and Mountain Farm in nearby Moriah as well as pan seared salmon with Brussels sprouts, smoked bacon, celery and pumpkin seed oil. Desserts included warm sticky toffee pudding and mascarpone cheesecake. There is an



Treetop Suite

Photo: Lake Placid Lodge

extensive wine cellar.

Rooms, rates, etc.— Nineteen cabins and eleven rooms, all with private bath. Breakfast, tea and all activities included, \$550-\$1,550. Children over 14 welcome. Pets permitted, \$75 per night. 2-night weekend minimum. 144 Lodge Way, Lake Placid, NY 12946; (518) 523-523-3914; (877) 523-2700; www.lakeplacid-lodge.com

What to Do. Lake Placid was home to two winter Olympics and the facilities are open to the public. Watch Olympic figure skaters. Take a ride to the top of the ski jump. Ride the Olympic bobsled. Go to Whiteface Mountain for downhill skiing and to Mt. Hoenberg for cross-country skiing. In the summer you can drive to the top of Whiteface Mountain, take drives through the 6,000,000 acre Adirondack Park, hike to your heart's content, go canoeing and kayaking, visit the outstanding Adirondack Museum in Blue Mountain Lake and the Wild Center in Tupper Lake.

For detailed information about this area refer to the The Adirondacks of New York issue V22N2 of The Discerning Traveler

Rabbit Hill Inn

Lower Waterford, VT

Tucked into a Vermont hillside near the Connecticut River is Lower Waterford, a thoroughly traditional New England village. The steepled church, stamp-size post office, library, and eighteenth-century houses are all painted white with dark green shutters. Within this storybook setting you'll find the utterly romantic Rabbit Hill Inn.

What makes Rabbit Hill Inn particularly special is the welcoming hospitality of innkeepers Leslie and Brian Mulcahy. It is also the large imaginatively-decorated rooms most with fireplaces and whirlpool tubs, the food, and the unexpected pleasures such as tea and pastries, served from 2-5:30, and the turn-down fairy who puts on oil lamps and candles, soft music, and gives you a different gift each night of your stay starting with a heart-shaped "do not disturb" pillow to hang from the door.

Our top favorites all have gas fireplaces, separate showers as well as double whirlpool tubs, some in the bedroom area and some in the bathroom. The most deluxe is third-floor Cummings Suite with a living room with a tub facing the fireplace, bedroom with a queen-canopy bed and second fireplace, and a large private screened porch with a view of the White Mountains. Cedar Glen is an over-sized room with a Vermont country cabin feel and a massive king-size log bed and whirlpool tub in the bedroom. The Loft, accessed through a nearly invisible door and a private staircase, has a cathedral ceiling, Palladian window, king-size canopy bed and porch. The Nest is quite feminine with a queen-size bed with a draped white gauze canopy, sun deck, and dressing room with a chaise.

The building next door is the 1795 Tavern Building. These top rooms also have fireplaces, separate showers and double-sized whirlpool tubs. Samuel Hodby is a very large room with a king-canopy bed and a porch that's shared with the adjoining room. The Turnabout, a handicap accessible room, has a porch, a private outside entrance, and a king-canopy bed.

The fireplace rooms are more moderately priced but still perfect for a romantic stay. Victoria has a white iron king-size bed. The Canopy Room has a queen-size arched fishnet canopy bed and a shared deck with Victoria. The Music Room, a favorite, has a king-size canopy bed, a Victrola and collection of '78s and a pump organ. The Top of the Tavern Suite, recently redone with a French Country motif, is a large bedroom with a sitting area, a queen-size four-poster bed, as well as a dressing room with a daybed. Hampshire, designed to look like an English manor study, has a king sleigh bed.

For budget-minded guests they have four classic rooms with either a queen or a king-size bed.

Prior to dinner head to the Snooty Fox Pub where you'll find

Brian tending bar. Sit by the fireplace or go in the adjoining game room and try your hand at one of their Stave puzzles. Rise in the morning to a generous breakfast (8:15-9:45): a buffet table with muffins and sweet breads, homemade granola, and fruit. A choice of two entrées are offered such as soufflé French toast or blueberry pancakes and a creative omelet served with home fries and bacon or sausage.

Note the "Rabbity" details that include the butter pats, napkin rings, and porcelain table decorations. During the season almost all of the dinner ingredients come from within sixty miles of the inn. They always offer five or six choices of entrées, appetizers and a couple of desserts. The winter menu includes appetizer choices of steak tartare with a fried egg yolk, fried foie gras with fruit chutney, seared diver scallop with cannellini beans, spinach salad with walnuts and blue cheese, or soup of the evening.

For main courses the choices included dishes such as roasted

cod with mussels, cabbage and potatoes in a fish broth; pheasant and bacon sausage roulade; bison rib eye steak with braised root vegetables; rack of lamb with seared liver, sweetbreads, tongue, parsnips and barley; and gnocchi with wild mushrooms and roasted celeriac.

To finish choose from a dessert such as chocolate ganache cream pie, profiterole Napoleon, French apple-pear soup, or sampler of New England artisanal cheeses.

Rooms, rate, etc.—

Nineteen rooms and suites,

each with private bath, \$199-\$375. Full breakfast and afternoon tea, and gratuity included. Dinner served nightly, \$49 prix fixe. Children over 14 welcome. Pets permitted in one room. 2-night minimum on weekends. Route 18, Lower Waterford, VT 05848; (802) 748-5168; (800) 76-BUNNY; www.rabbithillinn.com

What to Do. Backroading, antiquing, cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, and canoeing are all available in the area. Visit the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum's art gallery to see the 10-by-15-foot *The Domes of the Yosemite* by Albert Bierstadt and other paintings displayed at the gallery at the back of the library. Take a driving tour of the White Mountains in New Hampshire. If it's a clear day, drive to the top of Mount Washington or take the cog railway to the summit. Drive through Franconia Notch, walk through the Flume, and take the tramway up Cannon Mountain. Stop at the Appalachian Mountain Club at Pinkham Notch for detailed hiking information and maps.

For detailed information about this area refer to the New Hampshire and Vermont issue V15N5 of *The Discerning Traveler*



Cedar Glen

Photo:Rare Brick

Twin Farms

Barnard, Vermont

This 300-acre grand estate north of Woodstock is the finest hide-away that we have ever seen. The farmhouse was Dorothy and Sinclair Lewis' country home in the 1930's and 40's. Millions of dollars was spent in renovating, adding new buildings, and doing an incredible job of decorating. Stunning pieces of art and antiques from the owner's collection were combined to create a refined quietly-elegant unpretentious atmosphere.

When you come you are treated as a house guest with no additional charges for any on-site activity or for alcoholic beverages except for spa treatments and the reserve wine list. The price is unquestionably a lot, but we feel that it is well worth it if you are looking for this kind of exclusive place. Common space is spread among a number of buildings. The main house has a two-story central living room with an oversize fireplace, a huge picture window, and a balcony library nook with books and DVDs to borrow. A second living room and game room each have fireplaces and an open bar for guests. Cross a foot bridge to the pub with a Wurlitzer juke box, a 46-inch television, pool table, dart board, fully stocked

bar, leather couches and showcases filled with the owner's collection of beer bottles. A well-equipped fitness center and a spa with a full range of treatments available is underneath this adult playground. After exercising walk down the road to the building with a Japanese furo, a soaking tub, with a view of the woods. There is also a private ski slope and tow, a swimming and stocked fishing pond with canoes and row boats, tennis courts, and miles of hiking trails. A recreation director is on staff to teach you skiing, fly fishing, or lead a hike.

Each accommodation has a wood-burning fireplace with a comfortable seating area and a large bath with a separate oversized shower and a tub. The ten cottages set in the woods are the most deluxe, and, if price is not a consideration, are our favorites. The ultimate is The Chalet, a 3,000 square foot house on the hill with a double story living room, a stone wall with a fireplace and floor-to-ceiling windows giving a panoramic view. The bedroom has a second fireplace and there are both his and her bathrooms, a stone terrace and a screened/glass enclosed porch with a hot tub.

The Studio, a two-story stone building, the second most expensive accommodation, has a more formal feel with white carpeting and couches, a double-story cathedral ceiling, and art work by Stella, Dines, Hockney, Lichtenstein, Steinberg and others. A screened/glass-enclosed heated porch has a large hot tub. The second floor bedroom has a second fireplace and a bath with a copper-lined 300-gallon tub.

The Aviary, the third most expensive, is utterly romantic as it has a bedroom with floor-to-ceiling windows and a sunken whirlpool in front of the fireplace.

The Treehouse has a latticework of birch logs around the vaulted ceiling and an ebonized four-poster king-size bed. The Perch Cottage, decorated with a fishing theme, has a 300-gallon tub

that is so large that you can float without touching the sides. The Woods Cottage has a second fireplace in the outside porch room. The Barn has a twenty-foot window with a view of the meadows, a double-sided fireplace visible from the living room and bedroom, and a heated screened porch. The Orchard has a wall of windows overlooking a beaver pond. The Log Cabin, a 250-year-old reconstructed Appalachian cabin is decorated around the theme of dogs. Meadow has an exotic Moroccan theme with a tented ceiling.

Ten additional rooms include four in the Farmhouse at Copper Hill, where there's a central meeting room with a fireplace; two in the Lodge and four in the Main House.

Meals are served in a dining room that reminded us of a small European castle with two large fieldstone Rumford fireplaces at either end of the high arched room. Guests have their own table and are served a set gourmet lunch and dinner paired with wines. Food allergies and special diets can be accommodated with no problem. You can request to have an intimate dinner in the wine cellar or in your accommodation by the fireplace.



The bedroom of the Aviary Cottage

Following a cocktail hour in the barn living room or pub dinner is served at 8 P.M. On our most recent stay it started with poached swordfish on golden tomatoes with eggplant-thyme confit and grilled Yukon potatoes. The salad was marinated white asparagus and haricot vert on baby greens topped with shaved almonds and sheeps milk cheese. The main course was a spectacular dish of Maine lobster on melted fennel and carrot purée. Dessert was individual chocolate devils food cake filled with framboise cream with chocolate ganache icing and a decoration of spun sugar. A request for Vermont cheeses

was not a problem, served as an extra course along with a sweet dessert wine. If the weather is nice ask about having after dinner drinks outside by the bonfire. There is a 26,000 bottle wine cellar including an exceptional reserve list.

You can have a continental breakfast basket delivered to your room or you can come to the main house for a full breakfast. Lunch is either here, on the porch, or packed for a picnic. Come late afternoon and you're ready for a cup of tea, finger sandwiches and sweets, or fruit and cheese just let them know and it will be delivered wherever you like. They truly pamper the guests and do their utmost to make most any request a reality. It's very easy to get awfully spoiled when you stay here.

Rooms, rates, etc.— Twenty suites and cottages. \$1,300-\$3,000. 18% service additional. Breakfast, lunch, dinner, alcoholic beverages, and all on site activities and equipment are included except spa treatments and wine selections from the reserve list. Closed in April. Not appropriate for children under 18. No pets. P.O. Box 115, Barnard, Vermont 05031; (802) 234-9999; (800) 894-6327; www.twinfarms.com.

For detailed information about this area refer to the Woodstock, VT issue V16N6 of The Discerning Traveler

The Mayflower Inn

Washington, Connecticut

Fifty-eight acres of formal gardens, mountain streams, specimen trees, and hundred-year-old rhododendrons form the backdrop to this exquisite country-house hotel. The property includes the rebuilt 1920 Mayflower Inn, three additional guest houses, spa building with an indoor pool, conference center, tennis court, and an outdoor swimming pool. The general manager is John Trevenen who has been here since the inn opened in 1992.

The combination of antiques throughout the common rooms, along with Oriental rugs, walnut and mahogany paneling, fine oil paintings, and decorative pieces, lend the patina of age. We particularly liked the richly paneled library with a fireplace, furnished with a leather sofa and chairs, and shelves of artfully arranged books including many first editions.

Each designer-decorated room is spacious and includes a pair of upholstered easy chairs or a sofa. Most rooms have king-size carved four-poster beds, many with elaborate canopies, all with fine Frette linens and featherbeds. The oversize baths have mahogany wainscoting, double marble-topped sinks, a glass-enclosed tiled shower, and a deep soaking tub. The rooms are in superb condition and all have been redecorated a couple of times since the inn opened. Price variation is reflected by the size, whether there's a balcony or gas fireplace, and whether the rooms look onto the flower gardens or the woods.

For the most luxurious experience choose one of the six large suites: Winslow and Eaton in the main building, Story in the Speedwell Cottage, Billington in The Standish Cottage, and Suites 50 and 52 in the Allerton Cottage.

The 950 square foot Billington Suite has both a library and a living room with a fireplace plus a bedroom. The two suites in Allerton, the newest cottage, have fireplaces in both the bed and sitting rooms. The other three have a fireplace in the sitting room. They also have other suites that are over 600 square feet.

The 20,000 square foot Spa House that opened in 2006 includes an indoor pool; mosaic domed whirlpool; Thermal Sanctuary (a cross between a sauna and steam room); Garden Room, a relaxation room overlooking a pond; exercise studios including a fitness center with exercise equipment, rooms for yoga or Pilates classes; a Labyrinth meditation garden; plus treatment rooms for the full range of spa and beauty services.

Other facilities include a heated outdoor swimming pool, tennis court, and trails through the woods. Other complimentary amenities include bicycles, snowshoes and XC skis. They can arrange for guides to lead kayaking, biking or hiking excursions. Other nearby activities include golf and horseback riding. When you tire of the activities head to the tavern for a drink or meal by the fireplace or on the white wicker-filled porch that wraps around two sides of the main building overlooking the manicured gardens. In

warm weather you can dine on the outdoor terrace overlooking the Shakespearean garden.

Tables are set with Italian linen and French Limoges china that was designed for the inn. Nineteenth century oil paintings are on the walls of the dining room and throughout the inn.

For starters we enjoyed the popular Boston bibb salad, which was sprinkled with blue cheese, shallot crisps and truffle vinaigrette. Potato gnocchi were sautéed with spinach, baby carrots and snow peas in a tomato basil sauce topped with miniature greens and edible flowers. Other starters included sashimi of tuna with wasabi, pickled ginger, seaweed salad and shoyu sauce; and house-smoked salmon served with toast points and tomato caper relish.

Entrées on the spring menu included our choice of a large piece of Alaskan halibut wrapped in prosciutto served on a bed of roasted corn and lobster stew. A second entrée was seared sliced duck breast and spring rolls of duck leg confit served with Asian sauce in a passion fruit cup with haricot verts. Maine sea scallops are pan seared and served with rissole potatoes with little bits of black truffles and sautéed spinach. Roasted red sea bass comes with baby Japanese artichokes, morels and asparagus tips.

From the extensive reasonably priced wine list we chose a rich lush Landmark Pinot Noir from the Sonoma coast of California.

Desserts included apple pie with cinnamon and maple ice cream, warm chocolate pudding cake, and a dish of small scoops of coconut, chocolate, mango and raspberry sor-

bets.

For more casual dining head to the Tap Room and the terrace in warm weather. The most popular item is the burger made with local organic beef served on a housemade bun. Turkey club sandwich, cobb or Caesar salad are some of the other lunch offerings which are also available at night in the bar.

Rooms, rates, etc.—Nineteen rooms \$500-\$800, and eleven suites \$950-\$1,600, all with private bath. All meals available but are not included. Children over 12 welcome. No pets. Lunch entrées \$18-\$28. Dinner entrées \$24-\$34. Tap Room entrées \$12-\$20. Two-night minimum on weekends. 118 Woodbury Road, Route 47, Washington, CT 06793; (860) 868-9466; www.mayflowerinn.com

What to Do. Litchfield is one of the finest examples of a late 18th century New England town. Tour the gardens at White Flower Farm. New Preston has upscale shops and antique stores. In Kent visit the galleries, Kent Falls and the Sloane-Stanley Museum of Early American Tools.

For detailed information about this area refer to the Litchfield County, CT issue V17N3 of The Discerning Traveler

The Charlotte Inn

Edgartown, Massachusetts

For lovers of superb antiques, this magnificent complex of five buildings, tied together with brick courtyards and refined English gardens, is the crown jewel of Martha's Vineyard lodgings. The inn is located in Edgartown one block from the water on a quiet street of elegant 19th century homes, brick sidewalks, and large shade trees.

Gery Conover has owned the inn since 1970. He and his wife Paula live in the main building and over the years have purchased the adjacent properties. The main building was built in 1864 for Captain Samuel Osborne. The Summer House with a porch that overlooks one of the gardens is where tea is served in the summer. The 1705 Garden House across the street has a cozy living room with a fireplace. The two newer buildings are the Carriage House and the Coach House both located behind the main inn.

This is one of the very top inns we've ever visited. It is an ideal inn for the perfectionist especially for those who appreciate quality antiques and manicured gardens. Be sure to find the new secluded reading garden and the artfully arranged tool shed. The first floor of the inn is a series of four comfortable sumptuously furnished living rooms with walls covered with fine paintings and displays of decorative items including many silver serving pieces.

Everywhere that you look there is another perfectly fashioned vignette, a photographer's dream: a desk from a barrister's office in Scotland, equestrian prints and oils, bronze sculptures, English riding boots, and hundreds of volumes of leather bound books found throughout the inn.

The most sumptuous accommodation is the Coach House Suite. This is the entire second floor above the museum-like garage that houses an antique operating panel truck. The peaked ceiling sitting room has a large Palladian window with a window seat, a marble English gas fireplace, easy chairs, and over 300 leather bound volumes. The bedroom is enormous with a king-size bed covered with a beautiful white matelese, matching easy chairs, and antique dressers. The Carriage House suite (Room 3) has a sitting room with a fireplace and a bedroom overlooking the gardens with a king-size bed.

Other favorites are Room 14 in the Summer House, a large room with a white baby grand piano, queen canopy four poster bed, a fireplace and sitting area. Room 21 in the Garden House is a top pick in the summer as you can lie in the queen-size bed and open the French doors leading to the private patio to view a picture-perfect scene of the gardens, the perennial borders, and the little garden cottage. Room 12, one of the large fireplace rooms in the main

inn, has a queen-size English mahogany canopied paneled bed and windows on three sides of the room. All have televisions tucked into armoires and Bose radios.

Breakfast is served in the terrace dining room. The continental breakfast includes fresh squeezed orange juice, pastries, toast and rich Greek yogurt served with muesli and raw honey. Hot breakfast is an additional charge and includes selections such as a Swiss cheese omelet served with thick slices of bacon, eggs any style, or French toast.

To get to Il Tesoro at The Terrace, the current restaurant at The Charlotte Inn, you walk through two of the inn's magnificent sitting rooms furnished with fine antiques and superb paintings. The dining room, the most sumptuous in Martha's Vineyard, is an enclosed

brick and flagstone patio decorated with prints and oil paintings, Boston ferns, and large terra-cotta pots with ficus trees. An enclosed outdoor terrace with a fountain is a very popular summer dining area. Tables are set with silver flatware, Limoge china and fresh flowers. We especially like knowing that the atmosphere will be quieter than other places as they don't take large groups and there's no bar.

The large menu of Italian favorites include pastas like pappardelle with porcini mushrooms, linguine with fresh clams and entrées of rolled chicken breast stuffed with spinach, Italian bacon and cheese; filet sautéed with Cognac and green peppercorn sauce and local fish specials.

Rooms, rates, etc.— 21 rooms and 3 suites. Memorial Day through late October \$295-\$950. Other times \$295-\$695. Continental

breakfast included, hot breakfast \$15. Children over 14 welcome. Rooms are double occupancy only. No pets. 27 South Summer Street, Edgartown, MA 02539; (508) 627-4751; Charlotteinn.net. Dinner, mid- February through December, entrées \$19-\$38. (508) 627-7200. www.iltosoro.net

What to Do. During the summer the beaches are the big attraction. Take a walking tour of Edgartown to see whaling captains' homes, old churches, and the Vineyard Museum. In Oak Bluffs look at the Carpenter Gothic cottages and ride the Flying Horses Carousel. Drive up-island to Menemsha, a fishing village, and to Gay Head to the Lighthouse and the Cliffs. For hiking try one of the wildlife sanctuaries such as Menemsha Hills, Felix Neck, or Cedar Tree Neck.

For detailed information about this area refer to Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts V20N3 of The Discerning Traveler



Room 14 in the Summer House

Photo:Nina Bramhall

Wauwinet

Nantucket, Massachusetts

Situated between the Atlantic Ocean and Nantucket Bay some nine miles from town, this full-service world-class inn allows guests to soak in the healthful sea breezes with nary a care. The décor is done in excellent taste without a trace of stuffy or pompous formality. We were impressed by the exquisite bouquets of fresh flowers, crisp chintz fabrics, whimsical trompe l'oeil floors, antique scrimshaw, original Elephant Folio Audubon prints, fine oil paintings, and bronze sculptures. The list could go on and on, as no expense has been spared.

Each of the rooms is individually decorated, with Pratesi linens, fresh flowers, and many with antique pine armoires and chests, baskets, wood carvings, and books about Nantucket. All the rooms have robes, CDs, and TVs with DVDs. The lower-priced rooms are the Guest Rooms that have queen beds and overlook the inn's gardens. Bayview Rooms have queen beds and have a view of the water. Superior Rooms are on the first floor of the inn, have a view of the Bay, king-size beds, and a sitting area. Deluxe rooms are on the second floor of the inn, have king-size beds with a sitting area and panoramic views of the Bay.

Another option is the one- and two-bedroom cottages, each boasting the same designer country feel as the main inn. The one-bedroom cottage has a king-size bed and a living room with a gas fireplace. The two-bedroom cottage has a private sun-deck with bedrooms with a king and queen bed. Guests staying in one of the two cottages can have private dining served on their patios.

An expanded continental breakfast is included in the room rate. In addition to fruit, pastries, and juices they set out charcuterie, artisanal cheese, yogurt and Wauwinet's granola.

There are no additional charges for use of the tennis courts, fitness room, kayaks, sunfish, hobie cat catamarans, mountain bikes, or the inn's collection of 200 DVDs (complimentary buttered popcorn). Sit on the lawn or in the inn's library with a wood-burning fireplace and stocked with good books, swim or stroll along miles of pristine beaches. A deluxe spa located in a cedar shingled building on the property lets guests get away from the activity of the inn to experience calm pampering. A full range of massages, wraps, facials are offered. The spa herb garden has cushioned chaises for relaxation after a treatment. They have customized iPods to borrow for walks on the beach, runs or biking on the miles of paths. A free hourly jitney service runs to and from town.

Other activities (fee charged) include a four-wheel drive natural history excursion to Great Point Wildlife Refuge and a cooking demonstration by the inn's chef with a glass of wine.

If we could only dine at one of the fine restaurants on Nantucket,

Topper's at the Wauwinet is definitely the one we'd choose. The two summery dining rooms are filled with fresh flowers, a wood-burning fireplace for chilly evenings, bronze sculptures and oil paintings. A long-time favorite is the lobster and crab cakes - a combination of jumbo lump crabmeat and lobster garnished with smoked corn. Thin sliced prosciutto is served with candied pine nuts, shaved endive and gorgonzola cheese. Warmed oysters are served with roasted duck confit.

Main course selections include seared Georges Bank scallops with a shellfish sauce; a daily spa fish is served without butter, cream or olive oil; roasted halibut with fried clams; tenderloin of beef Wellington; and Little Pig Little Pig that includes roasted rack, crisp pork belly and cured roast. They have the prestigious Wine Spectator Grand Award of Excellence.

For a more casual dining experience the awning covered, heated Topper's Deck offers outdoor dining overlooking the Bay. At lunch the choices include starters such as charcuterie, Caesar salad, and

tomato soup with corn fritters. Second choice options are fried chicken and cheddar biscuits, kobe meatballs and maccaroni, spa fish, and a sophisticated burger made with kobe beef.

Rooms, rates, etc--Open mid-May through mid-October. Thirty-two rooms and cottages. Mid-June to early Sept. \$695-\$1,200. Spring and fall, \$300-\$900. Check the web for Hot Dates rates. Expanded continental breakfast, afternoon port and cheese, and fresh fruit included. Children over 12 welcome. No pets. Lunch, afternoon light fare, and dinner daily. A la Carte or 3-course

prix fixe dinner \$49. Box 2580, 120 Wauwinet Road, Nantucket, MA 02584; (508) 228-0145; (800) 426-8718; www.wauwinet.com

What To Do. Take a bike ride to Siasconset or to Madaket on the bicycle paths. Take walks at Sanford Farm and Tupancy Links, land owned by the Conservation Foundation. Walk the streets in Nantucket town and shop at the designer boutiques, galleries, and craft stores. The Historical Association has restored twelve buildings that are open to the public. Be sure to visit the Whaling Museum. The Peter Foulger Museum tells about different periods of Nantucket's history. The Hadwen House is a restored 1844 Greek Revival mansion with beautifully furnished period rooms. The Old Mill, built in 1746, is the country's oldest operating mill. At Bartlett's Farm you can see a newly constructed windmill. St. Paul's Episcopal Church has 3 large Tiffany windows.

For detailed information about this area refer to Nantucket, MA V11N4 of The Discerning Traveler



Deluxe rooms have a panoramic view of the Bay

Inn at 202 Dover

Easton, Maryland

This elegant Colonial Revival building located less than a block from the center of town is the most luxurious place to stay in Easton. Owners and innkeepers Ron and Shelby Mitchell, with careers in public relations and law, have meticulously restored this mansion which opened in July 2006.

The expansive first floor has a number of common rooms including a library with mahogany built-in bookcases, a glass-enclosed porch with a piano, a living room, and a newly constructed conservatory with a glass ceiling.

There are four very large two-room suites and one room, sumptuous designer decorated spaces that are ideal for a romantic getaway. The suites all have king-size beds and large baths with double-size air-jetted tubs and separate steam shower. All have cable television, DVDs (library of DVDs available) and high speed internet.

Since pampering is what this inn is about they offer complimentary washing or pressing of clothes. They can also arrange for massages done in the privacy of your room.

The French suite is on the first floor with pocket doors separating the two rooms. The other suites and room are on the second floor. They even installed an elevator. We stayed in the English Suite, which is decorated with English country fabrics, antiques and reproductions. The sitting room off a foyer entrance is particularly spacious. The Asian Suite has rosewood furnishings, a gas fireplace, and

bamboo canopy bed. The Safari Suite has a sitting room with a vaulted ceiling and the bedroom has a gas fireplace and massive bed. The Victorian Room has a queen-size iron bed and bath with an air-jetted tub with a rain forest shower.

A second floor coffee room has complimentary hot and cold beverages and energy bars. In the evening they put fruit, cookies, and chocolates in your room. A full breakfast cooked by Ron is served in the formal dining room or the conservatory using Wedgwood china, crystal and silver flatware. Popular dishes include scrambled eggs in their own shell finished with crème fraîche and caviar or croissant French toast with orange calvados sauce.

Peacock Restaurant and Lounge is on the first floor of the inn. If you arrive early you can have cocktails in the lounge or wood-paneled library. For appetizers they have broiled lobster cake with a saffron cream sauce, seared foie gras and braised duck leg confit served with a fig and blue cheese compote, and oyster casserole gratin with layered toasted brioche and cheddar cheese. Salads include grilled hearts of palm on roasted plum tomatoes with an avo-

cado dressing or candied pears and apples on microgreens.

Loin of lamb is wrapped in pastry with spinach and carrots with a blueberry glaze. Venison osso bucco is served with creamy grits and roasted root vegetables. Filet mignon or New York strip steak; roasted Cornish hen filled with rice, almonds and apricots; a vegetarian selection; fresh fish and specials of the day give ample choices. Look for exciting changes in the restaurant in 2010.

Rooms, rates, etc.--Five rooms and suites, all with private bath, \$279-\$475. Breakfast and snacks included. Children over 15 welcome. No pets. Dinner served Thursday-Monday, entrées \$19-\$30. High tea served on Thursdays (additional charge). 202 East Dover Street, Easton, MD 21601. (410) 819-8007, (866) 450-7600. www.innat202dover.com

What to Do. Easton is the commercial center and the unofficial capital of Maryland's Upper Eastern Shore. During the past

half-century, the area has attracted people of means who have purchased waterfront plantations. Consequently the area is able to support an inordinate number of fine shops and restaurants. The wealth of this area is quickly apparent if you browse the windows of the numerous real estate offices and check the prices of waterfront properties. Talbot County Welcome Center, 11 South Harrison St, www.tourtalbot.org has maps and brochures.



The French Suite

A great web site is www.eastonmd.org with links to calendar of events, things to do, accommodations, dining.

In St. Michaels The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum is a highlight of any trip to St. Michaels. The museum has expanded over the years with a number of new buildings, interactive exhibits, and opportunities to take a workshop or a boat ride. Historic buildings display exhibits that trace the history of the bay and its early inhabitants from its Ice Age formation to the present day. Informative sections explain the trading of tobacco with England, the harvesting of crabs and oysters, and waterfowl hunting with flocks of wooden decoys and guns.

The Crab Claw, our all-time favorite crab restaurant is next to the museum. From the museum you can take a ride on a skipjack or a replica buy boat, or a narrated trip up the Miles River on The Patriot.

For detailed information about this area refer to Maryland's Upper Eastern Shore V21N1 of The Discerning Traveler

The Inn at Little Washington

Washington, VA

What causes a couple to willingly pay an extra \$165 to \$275 to dine and lodge on a Friday or Saturday night in a tiny Virginia town? We think it's the very real possibility that the inn will fulfill your romantic dreams of being pampered in a Victorian English country home.

If you are going to invest in this experience, we suggest you choose one of the most spacious accommodations. The most luxurious is the Claiborne House, 3200 square feet, with two bedrooms, 2½ baths, living room, dining room and private garden. This would be an ideal spot to host a small party.

Another very private accommodation is Mayor's House, a building with fireplaces both in the bedroom and sitting room as well as a private walled courtyard garden.

The Game Keeper's Cottage, attached to the Mayor's House, has a living room with a fireplace, a loft bedroom, two baths and an outdoor dining area with an expansive panoramic view.

In the Norman House the top favorite is the Garden Suite with a sitting room with a wet bar and gas fireplace, a new huge bath with heated Jerusalem stone floor, a soaking tub in the middle of the room with French doors opening to a private courtyard, as well as a two-headed shower and separate toilet room.

If you want to stay in the main building the top choice of the two sumptuous duplex suites is now

Suite 12 with two balconies overlooking the street and Blue Ridge mountains, a sitting room with a wet bar and a newly renovated bath with a two-person shower, double sink, and a soaking tub.

Junior suites include some with and some without fireplaces and all with whirlpool tubs and separate showers. Superior rooms have a balcony. We like Room 7, which is directly over the center of the garden courtyard and Room 3 that also has a view of the garden. The intermediate rooms are slightly smaller and have a queen-size bed and a bay window with a window seat. There is only one standard room, which has a queen-size bed, a bath with a shower only, and a turret with a bay window with a wraparound window seat.

Tea, individually served wherever you wish from 4-6 p.m., includes finger sandwiches, cookies, tarts, scones and a pot of your choice of tea.

Breakfast, served in the glass-enclosed pavilion that faces the courtyard, includes a flight of four fresh squeezed juices, muffins, croissants, house-made jams, fresh fruit, granola and yogurt. Hot entrées are available for an additional charge.

Selections from the October menu include a choice of six first course options. Some are carpaccio of herbed crusted baby lamb or petal-shaped slices of chilled veal tongue served with fresh horse-

radish. Five second course options included spinach and cheese filled ravioli (with shaved white Italian truffles \$35 supplement) or macaroni and cheese with Virginia country ham and shaved black truffles. From the selection of ten main courses: halibut poached in olive oil on vanilla scented local silver queen corn succotash with baby shrimp or prosciutto wrapped loin of veal on celery root puree with black truffle sauce.

Diners have a choice of dessert, cheese plate or after dinner drink. Two examples from an ever changing selection include a checkerboard terrine of pistachio and white chocolate ice cream or a trio of chocolates that includes black forest mousse bombe, chocolate crème brûlée and bitter chocolate soufflé. The cheese cart in the shape of a cow is probably the finest in the United States. The wine list of over 90 pages has all the great California and French wines including a large selection of half bottles.

To dine at the chef's table in the kitchen of this most exclusive restaurant requires advance planning. Seating is on banquettes at two trestle tables in a most unusual totally redone kitchen which has a wood-burning fireplace, antique sideboards, walls covered with Portuguese tiles and forty spotlights pin pointing the various work areas of the kitchen. It is a state of the art kitchen and even includes a wall of cold air next to the pastry area.



Claiborne House Master Suite

Photo: Gordon Beall

Rooms, rates, etc.—

Eighteen rooms and suites, \$410-\$985. Additional charges: Fridays \$145; Saturday \$245; Sunday \$75; May, June and October \$100. House breakfast and tea included. Overnight guests have guaranteed dinner reservations at the restaurant. Dinner nightly. Closed Tuesday part of the year. Sunday–Thursday 6-course prix fixe \$148, Friday \$158, Saturday \$168. Middle and Main Streets, P.O. Box 300, Washington, VA 22747; (540) 675-3800; www.theinnatlittlewashington.com

What to Do. Stroll around the village of Washington and visit the high quality craft, art, antique, and custom-furniture galleries. Take a drive through the 195,000-acre Shenandoah National Park, which has hiking trails, nature walks, waterfalls and some of the finest vistas in the East. Watch the start of a fox hunt. Go to the point-to-point or steeplechase races, which are held on spring and fall weekends. Visit some of the nearby wineries.

For detailed information about this area refer to Virginia Hunt Country V14N3 of The Discerning Traveler

The Sanderling Resort & Spa

Duck, North Carolina

This is the top choice on the Outer Banks for an ocean front inn. The architecture of the inn is patterned after the old Carolina beach hotels with long verandas with wide overhangs to keep the sun out. The owner's extensive collection of museum quality bird carvings, porcelains and castings as well as Audubon prints are on display in the public spaces, particularly the second floor lounge in the main inn. The property includes a main building, north and south buildings, five villas, a conference center, health club and two restaurants.

The spacious rooms each have a private deck and are priced according to size and floor. Since there are high dunes that separate the inn from the ocean the first floor rooms in the Main Inn and in the North Building on the ocean side do not have water views. Each side of the inn has its advantages with bird sounds and sunset views over Currituck Sound or dune, beach or ocean views and the sound of the waves on the ocean side. Personally, we loved leaving our windows and porch door open to hear the waves crashing on the beach. Most of the rooms have a king-size bed (sixteen have two double beds), flat screen televisions with DVDs and a library of movies available to borrow, a wet bar with a small refrigerator and a coffee maker.

Rooms in the Main Inn have a wet bar with a microwave and those in the South Building have a microwave. Many of the rooms in the South Building have ocean views; those on the third floor are naturally better. This building also has an elevator. We noted that many of the rooms in this building have beds that face the ocean. All the rooms on the third floor have vaulted ceilings. The best rooms are the second and third floor corner suites; two have a full front view of the ocean and two have a side view of the ocean. The ultimate is the deluxe corner third floor suite in the South building with a wrap-around deck affording great ocean views and a swivel easy chair set in a reading nook with the same views.

The rooms in the North Building are smaller than those in the main inn. Since the first floor rooms in the North Building on the soundside would normally look onto the parking lot, they have built an attractive landscaped waterfall garden that runs the length of the building that obscures the parking and provides aesthetically pleasing views and sounds.

Our favorite rooms in the main inn are the four second floor loft suites, two with ocean and two with sound views. The first floor has a wet bar with a microwave, powder room, living room with a sleeper sofa and a deck. The second floor has a large bedroom and a large bath with a separate sink/dressing area.

In addition they have five villas. The six-bedroom Golden Eye Villa is the only one that faces the beach. The other four face the

sound. The villas range in size from three to six bedrooms.

Facilities for the guests include two large outdoor whirlpools where you can soak and hear the ocean. The large full-service spa includes eight treatment rooms as well as an exercise room. Guests have complimentary use of the fitness facilities at the nearby Pine Island Racquet and Fitness Center and get a discount for their indoor and outdoor courts. The owners donated 3,400 acres north of the resort property to the Audubon Society as a nature preserve. There is a five-mile trail perfect for jogging or birding that starts near the spa.

The Left Bank is their fine dining restaurant and the Lifesaving Station Restaurant, made from one of the Outer Banks' old life saving stations which was moved to this site, is their full service more casual restaurant.

The 60-seat fine dining Left Bank Restaurant overlooks Currituck



Sound. Appetizers include gravlax of king salmon, foie gras torchon, and linguini with octopus and calamari with celery-mint pesto. For main course try the olive oil poached tuna with tempura bok choy; roasted saddle of lamb with Merguez sausage, baby beets

and spinach; or Carolina trout with fennel and toasted almonds. Dessert options include artisanal cheeses or sweets such as chocolate custard pave or Napoleon of apple and Calvados cream.

The Life Saving Station Restaurant features more traditional dishes such as their signature shrimp and crab chowder (*see recipe*); grilled pizza with mozzarella, shrimp and corn; and main dishes of rockfish with crab broth; grilled North Carolina shrimp with red beans and rice; and beef filet with sweet potato hash and charred green beans. Homemade potent Wild Turkey whiskey ice cream was delicious and is served with chocolate pecan pie.

Rooms, rates, etc.-- 88 rooms and 5 villas. Summer \$250-\$550, other times \$150-\$400. 3-6 bedroom Villas: summer \$950-\$1,500, other times \$600-\$1,050. All meals available. Children welcome. No pets. Left Bank entrées \$32-\$39. Life Saving Station dinner entrées \$20-\$24. 1461 Duck Road, Duck, NC 27949; (252) 261-4111; (877) 650-4812; www.thesanderling.com

What to Do. With miles of beach at your door, you may just work on your tan and catch up on your reading. Visit the Wright Brothers National Memorial and learn about the events that made history in 1903. Take a hang gliding or wind surfing lesson or spend a day on a charter boat fishing the Gulf Stream. Drive along the desolate 75 mile Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

For detailed information about this area refer to the Cape Hatteras, NC V8N3 of The Discerning Traveler

Inn on Biltmore Estate

Asheville, North Carolina

Staying at this luxury hotel is as close as you are going to get to experiencing what it is like to live on the 8,000-acre Biltmore Estate. Situated in the middle of the estate on a hill above the winery with views of the mountains, the Biltmore mansion, and Asheville's skyline in the far distance we felt as though we were miles away from the city. This grand deluxe elegant hotel has an impressive lobby library with a stone fireplace, high vaulted ceiling, and groupings of oversized couches and club chairs. Off the library is a bar that opens onto a terrace with rocking chairs and a view of the winery. A wide staircase leads to the grand dining room with a fireplace and terrace.

The hotel opened in 2001 and recently underwent its first room makeover. The rooms have new soft goods (carpets, linens, draperies, upholstery), a new color scheme, plasma televisions, and new lighting and framed mirrors in the bathrooms. The furnishings and decor of the spacious guest rooms were inspired by English and French manor houses, plushly carpeted and decorated with designer fabrics and large windows. On the front of the hotel are five rooms with small balconies and others with ground floor terraces; however, none of these rooms have mountain views. The marble baths are some of the most deluxe and largest we've seen in a hotel. They have a separate toilet room and granite topped vanity with two sinks. Features of all rooms include high-speed internet, robes and slippers, and in-room safes. The deluxe rooms are 340 square feet and have a king or two double beds. The grand deluxe rooms are about 50 square feet larger than a deluxe room. These rooms all have king-size beds, a pair of easy chairs with ottomans and a luxurious bath with a whirlpool tub separate from the shower. Rooms with a view of the Biltmore House are priced higher than those with a view of the French Broad River or Asheville. Since the view rooms are the most popular you need to make a request for one of these rooms when you make your reservation. For better views ask for a room on a higher floor.

Suites include four junior suites (800 square feet) with a separate bedroom and one-bedroom suites (1,200-1,400 square feet) with a living room with a wet bar and pantry. You can also stay at the Cottage on Biltmore Estate, originally the residence of the market gardener and later used for visiting VIPs. It has two bedrooms, two baths, living and dining rooms as well as a full kitchen.

Facilities in the hotel include a petite spa offering massages and facials, a fitness center, and an outdoor rimless pool and whirlpool. The hotel provides complimentary scheduled shuttle service to the Biltmore House, gardens and winery.

Rooms, rates, etc.—213 rooms and suites. April-December \$299-\$599. January-March \$189-\$379. Call for suite rates. Packages available. Children welcome. No smoking. No pets. 1

Antler Hill Road, Asheville, NC 28803. (828) 225-1699; (800) 858-4130; www.biltmore.com

Where to Dine. The fine dining restaurant at the Inn on Biltmore Estate is our suggestion of the place to dine for a relaxed romantic dinner. The dining room has widely spaced tables and walls of windows with views of the estate. Following an amuse you could start with white tuna saimi, barbecued quail, roasted prawns served with crab spoonbread or a small portion of a pasta, risotto or vegetable crêpe. For entrées they have olive oil poached halibut served with a Provençal salad and braised mussels; tandoori grilled tuna served with chick pea caponata, prosciutto wrapped pheasant breast, or filet mignon, rib-eye steak, or parmesan crusted veal medallions.

For a more casual lunch or dinner we like The Bistro. Located next to the winery it has the casual feel of Tuscany with an open kitchen in the center of the room. The menu features individual pizzas cooked in the wood-burning oven, homemade pastas, sandwiches and entrées including Low Country shrimp and grits, southern pecan chicken salad and grilled flat iron steak and fries. In the evening the entrées expand to include pan seared sea scallops with corn pudding, braised lamb shank served with polenta and root vegetables, filet mignon served with mushrooms and glazed carrots.

Inn on Biltmore Estate Dining Room, Dinner nightly, entrées \$29-\$40, 3-course prix fixe menu \$48. (800) 411-3812. Bistro, Lunch and dinner daily, Lunch entrées \$13-\$19. Dinner entrées \$19-\$32. (828) 225-6230; Other dining options include Deerpark Restaurant with lunch buffets, The Stable Café for casual lunch and dinner, and the Arbor Grill for al fresco dining. www.biltmore.com. All these restaurants are located within the Biltmore Estate.

What to Do. There is much to do on the estate so you could easily spend a couple of days here. Of course you will visit the Biltmore House, the gardens and the winery. Then choose from a wide range of recreational activities including a Land Rover Driving School for off-road driving, fly fishing guides, horse-drawn carriage rides, wagon rides around the winery and farm village, horseback riding, bike riding on paved paths around the lagoon or on off-road trails, and river float trips or kayaking on the French Broad River. For golf the concierge can arrange tee times and recommend nearby courses.



William A.V. Cecil Suite

For detailed information about this area refer to V19N5 The Blue Ridge Parkway, North Carolina of The Discerning Traveler

Two Meeting Street Inn

Charleston, South Carolina

The area of Charleston south of Broad Street next to the Battery and the White Point Gardens is the most exclusive residential area of the city. This Victorian style home, completed in 1892, built in the Queen Anne style includes fish-scale turrets, stained-glass windows, and curved piazzas. The longtime owners/innkeepers are the Spell Family – Jean, Pete, and daughter Karen Spell Shaw. The inn and grounds are kept in pristine condition.

The first floor is paneled with carved English oak, including the ten foot doors. Two of the nine stained glass windows are by Tiffany. In the dining room there is a spectacular sun-burst stained glass window over a six-foot carved oak china cupboard that's filled with crystal. Guests can have their breakfast in this formal dining room amid the elegant surroundings of the family's silver and collection of fine china or outside in the garden. The common rooms are sumptuously decorated with family pieces such as an eleven foot *étagère* in the Renaissance Revival style and an antique English Chippendale mahogany chest with satin-wood inlay. Part of the experience of Charleston is staying in an elegant inn,

absorbing the leisure of afternoon sherry or tea in the living room or on one of the piazzas that overlook the Battery and the continual parade of horse-drawn carriages carrying tourists that stop in front of the inn for pictures and commentary.

Rooms on the first and second floor have twelve-foot ceilings and hardwood floors with Oriental rugs. All have wireless internet and iPod docks. The Spell Room is the most popular since it has both a gas fireplace and

access to the piazza with rocking chairs and wicker furniture. It has a queen-size canopy bed with a curved tester, a curved window that overlooks the street, and bath with a shower only. The Carr Room shares the piazza, has a queen canopy bed, and a bath with a shower only. The Williams Room, the second favorite, a corner room, has windows on two sides, a window seat, gas fireplace, queen-canopy bed and a private balcony that looks out over the Charleston rooftops. This room has a large bath with a Victorian tub with a handheld shower. The Queen-Anne Room has coordinated wallpaper and fabrics on the two queen-size beds and bath with a Victorian tub and shower. This room is on top of the dining room so you can imagine how large it is. The three third floor rooms are smaller, have standard eight foot ceilings and are decorated with period reproduction furnishings and wall to wall carpeting. The nicest of these is The Canton Room with a modern shower and tub.

Tea, 4:30-5:30, includes a nice selection of fresh baked sweets and savories. Favorites are chocolate cream sherry bar and white chocolate apricot fudge made from local Charleston cookbooks which are available in the inn's gift shop. A full breakfast with a

hot plated entrée, 8-9:30, is served in the dining room or outside on the piazza. This could be sausage Wellington, quiche with Southern grits, or bananas Foster all attractively served with fresh fruit.

Rooms, rates, etc.— Nine rooms, all with private bath, \$225-\$479. Children over 12 welcome; \$35 additional for third person in room. Breakfast, tea and evening sherry included. No pets. No credit cards. 2 Meeting Street at the Battery, Charleston, SC 29401; (888) 723-7322; (843) 723-7322; www.twomeetingstreet.com.

Where to Dine. For the size of the town Charleston has a lot of excellent restaurants. For fine dining we like McCrady's with a sophisticated menu and an atmospheric room with high ceilings and brick walls. Peninsula Grill is another top favorite. Others, more casual, where we've had good meals in the past include High Cotton and Anson. Newer restaurants in downtown Charleston include Fig and Cypress.

What to Do. There is an excitement, a warmth and friendliness

about this city that give it a feeling far different from other historic places. The best time to visit is March and April during the Historic Charleston Foundation Festival of Houses and Gardens held during the peak of the historic port city's blooming season. The Festival offers guests a rare opportunity to visit the private interiors of nearly 150 of the city's most magnificent colonial and antebellum houses and gardens. Come in late May thru



mid- June for the Spoleto Arts Festival, which includes more than 100 performances of classical ballet, modern dance, opera, chamber music, symphonic and choral concerts, jazz, and theater, along with visual arts exhibitions throughout the city. The winters are mild and great for touring. Walk the historic streets, smell the aroma of boxwood and sweet bay in the narrow alleys, peek through the ornamental wrought-iron gates to catch glimpses of manicured gardens, and stroll along the Battery as the sun sets. Purchase a basket from the sweetgrass basketmakers who come from the South Carolina Sea Islands. Take a tour boat to Fort Sumter to see where the Civil War began. Spend a day touring the plantations and historic homes located outside the city, including Drayton Hall, Magnolia Plantation and Gardens, and Middleton Place. Golfers will want to play one of the courses on Kiawah Island or at Wild Dunes Resort.

For detailed information about this area refer to Charleston, South Carolina V14N2 of The Discerning Traveler

The Sanderling Signature Chowder with Corn, Crab, and Shrimp

This chowder is always on the menu at the Life Saving Station Restaurant at **The Sanderling Resort** in Duck, North Carolina.

3 slices of bacon, small diced
 2 stalks of celery, small diced
 1 small red pepper, small diced
 2 TBSP butter
 1 10 oz can of cream style corn
 2 cups of chicken stock or fish stock
 ½ cup of heavy cream
 2 splashes of Tabasco
 ¼ tsp. pepper
 ½ lb. picked crabmeat
 1 medium onion, small diced
 1 carrot, small diced
 1 small green pepper, small diced
 2 TBSP flour
 1 cup of frozen shoe peg corn
 1 splash Worcestershire sauce
 ½ tsp. salt
 ½ lb. 70/90 peeled and deveined shrimp

Heat a medium sized saucepan over medium heat. Add bacon and cook until crispy. Add onions, celery, and carrots; cook about 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Add butter and let melt. Add flour and stir well until all of the oil is absorbed by the flour. Add both types of corn, peppers, stock, cream, and seasonings. Mix well and allow chowder to simmer 20 minutes. Just before serving add crab and shrimp and stir well. Chowder can be made ahead of time and stored until serving. Chowder stores better without seafood added.

Tea at **Two Meeting Street** in Charleston, South Carolina always includes sweet and savory items. The Jezebel Sauce is a very traditional Southern recipe. These recipes come from Charleston cookbooks that are sold at the inn. Jezebel Sauce is found in the cookbook *Charleston Entertains: Season by Season*. Chutney Cheese Ball is in the cookbook *Music, Magic and Magnolias*

Jezebel Sauce

9 oz. pineapple preserves
 9 oz. apple jelly
 ½ oz. dry mustard
 3 oz. prepared horseradish
 ¼ tsp. freshly ground pepper

Combine all ingredients and blend well. Keeps indefinitely in the refrigerator. Serve over cream cheese with crackers. Also delicious with pork, roast beef or venison.

Chutney Cheese Ball

Makes 12 generous servings

16 oz. cream cheese
 ½ cup chutney, cut up
 2 tsp. curry powder
 1 tsp. dry mustard
 ½ cup almonds, pecans or coconut, chopped

Mix all ingredients together except nuts or coconut. Refrigerate overnight. Make into a ball and roll in nuts or coconut. Serve with crisp ginger snaps or crackers.

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