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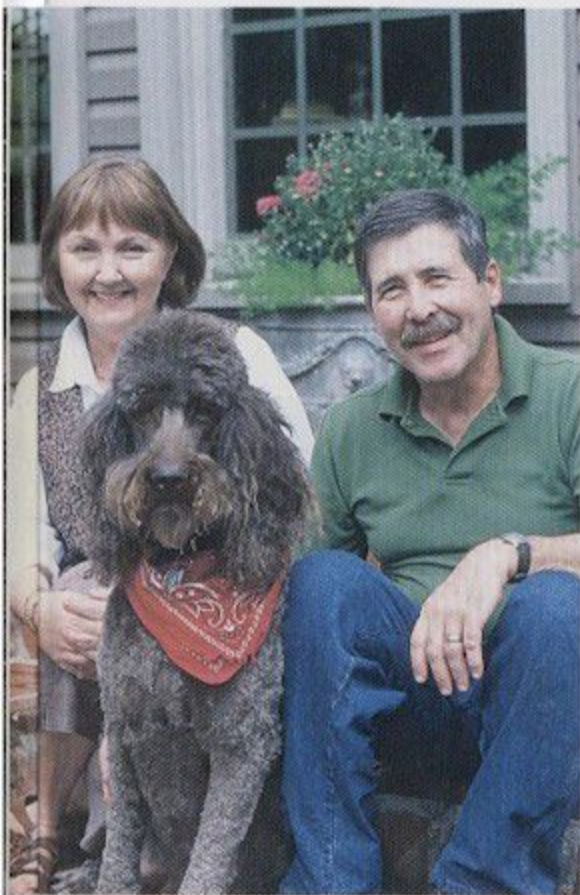


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White Birches Inn, Abingdon, VA



The White Birches Inn



Abingdon, Virginia

by Timothy V. Kreitz

photography by Josef Willis

Nestled in the heart of picturesque Abingdon, Virginia's historic district, Michael and Paulette Wartella's White Birches Inn offers an exquisite mix of history, hospitality, and atmosphere to all its guests.

The house itself is an early twentieth century, English-style country home that has been completely updated and renovated both inside and out, while at the same time maintaining the look and feel of the period in which it was first constructed. Each guestroom offers individually zoned central air conditioning and private baths for the ultimate in comfort and privacy, along with elegant furnishings and a plethora of other amenities that span the gamut between antique and modern.

The suites and rooms at White Birches, each named after famous writers such as George Bernard Shaw, feature everything from plush velour robes and Egyptian cotton towels to cable television, and VCR's with access to a large video library. Attention to detail is apparent in every room of the inn.

For example, the Tennessee Williams Room, a mini-suite located on the second floor of the inn, is decorated in deep jewel tones and floral accents. A century-old armoire and Chippendale sofa adds to the room's ambiance, while a window seat overlooking a huge dogwood tree ties it fully together with the beauty of the outer grounds. The lovely, hand-painted walls incorporate a scumbling technique intended to reflect the warm hues of the room's many decorator fabrics, and are further detailed with wonderfully embellished hand-stenciling.

The Robert Porterfield Room, named in honor of the founder of the nearby historic Barter Theatre, is the highlight of the inn with its 200-year old American walnut chest of drawers and king-size four-poster rice bed. The suite is further accented with a fireplace and walk-in tiled shower.

All the inn's guestrooms offer comparable levels of style and comfort, and feature a wide range of amenities that include, in-room fireplaces, whirlpool tubs, private baths, king and queen beds, dormer windows, irons & ironing boards, bathrobes, and wall-mounted hair dryers.

Like many of the guestroom pieces, the decor in the rest of the inn is subtle, but easily sensed and impossible to overlook. Though most of the furnishings are English or American antiques, there is a compelling mix of periods that fit together seamlessly. And many of the pieces are unarguably museum-worthy. An Eighteenth Century Norwegian upholstered chair and a Nineteenth Century Biedermeier secretary share space with Picasso lithographs and Russian iconistry. The collection spans several centuries and many different countries of origin, yet reflects an overall consistent aesthetic element. Michael and Paulette Wartella feel that real style is best when understated, and have successfully incorporated that philosophy into the design of White Birches. The quiet yet bold interior of the inn speaks to all five senses at once without ever becoming too much. This aspect of the inn's interior only adds further to the level of overall comfort a guest will experience. Indeed, each moment spent at the inn offers something new to take in, a special memory of a wonderful place that beckons its guests to return again and again.

Mornings are an equally special time at White Birches. Guests awaken to a cuisine of homemade and fresh foods. Meals are presented on antique bone china, in crystal goblets, and with sterling silver flatware. Always served in front of the main fireplace, candlelight illuminates the hand-painted wall murals in the formal dining room. Freshly ground coffee, a large selection of fine teas, seasonal fruits, and juices accompany the hot entree.

Outside, one of the porches has been transformed into an outdoor sunroom, complete with antique wicker furniture and paddle fans. The porch overlooks a spectacular view of a Koi pond with waterfall, a garden train, and a private courtyard with gazebo that adds to the relaxed, tranquil feel that invites guests to enjoy the open air. In winter, the room is enclosed in glass, making it an excellent spot to kick back and doze away a cold day. Rest comes easy at the White Birches Inn.

No matter the time of year, however, the surrounding community of Abingdon is an excellent destination for both young and old alike. Alive with activity, Abingdon offers more attractions than the average person can pack into a single weekend. Historical and cultural sites abound such as The World Famous Barter Theatre, The Cave House where Daniel Boone fought off wolves, Whites Mill operating since 1790, The William King Arts Museum, The Virginia Creeper Trail hiking and biking 34-mile trail, The Martha Washington Inn, The Penn Fields House, The Arts Depot, The Train Station, The Moonlight Drive-In, and The Carter Family Fold, are just the beginning. Upscale antique shopping, plus annual events such as the Virginia Highlands Festival, Appalachian Trail Days, and the Highlands Jazz Festival add exponentially to the character of the area.

Whether in the Abingdon area for business or pleasure, the Wartellas also offer many guest packages and specials to compliment a wide variety of ingoers and their individual needs. With a reputation built on quality and service, the Wartellas always strive to insure customer satisfaction. Guests agree. The White Birches Inn is a one of a kind ingoer experience.

White Birches Inn
www.whitebirchesinn.com

