

BY AUDREY RICHARDSON

THE QUECHEE INN AT MARSHLAND FARM

STAYING AT HOME IN VERMONT



It is not just the crisp creak of the wide pine floors or the vibrant fall landscape that attracts visitors to the Quechee Inn at Marshland Farm. For many guests, it is the fresh breath of local life captured by a quintessential Vermont homestead.

As the leaves start to turn, innkeeper Rick Trahan prepares for his busiest season. Fall is booked with a revolving door of guests and wedding parties. But many guests of the inn seem to be seeking refuge from the hustle and bustle of their various city and suburban lives. "People can come here and just sit by the fire or on the porch and sip wine," says Trahan. "It's the ambiance they are expecting." Trahan makes clear this is a country inn that captures the authentic feel of life in Vermont. »





Far left: The inn's entrance welcomes autumn guests.

Above: One of the inn's antique-filled guest rooms.

Left: Common Room fireplace decorated for fall.



Main Dining Room and the Porter Library set for a fall event.

A QUINTESSENTIAL VERMONT INN

For owner Rodger Perry, it's the canvas of colors and pastoral beauty that sets his inn apart from all others. "It is the red barn, the white clapboards against the various shades of green countryside," says Perry, who purchased the inn in 1995. Today he still strives to strike a balance between the inn's original charm, the needs of the modern traveler, and the surrounding community. Perry, a resident of Simsbury, Connecticut, entrusts the care of the inn to Trahan and his highly qualified staff.

The Quechee Inn at Marshland Farm is one of a number of inns owned and operated by Perry's Pinnacle Hospitality Group. And while Perry may own multiple inns, he is not your

ordinary hotelier. He is specifically interested in these particular inns because of their historical relevance. "I was never interested in amassing large quantities of hotels; these are distinguished trademarks that will endure for generations. I am a caretaker of history, and that is exciting," says Perry of his path through the hospitality industry.

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

The inn's down-home feel is largely due to its historical roots as the homestead of Colonel Joseph Marsh. The historical presence of Marsh in Vermont extends far beyond the construction of the inn. Marsh came to Vermont from Connecticut in 1772. At that time, the state was known as New Connecticut. Five years later in 1777,

Marsh helped declare New Connecticut an independent state and changed the name to Vermont. One year later, Marsh became Vermont's first lieutenant governor, and he built the inn himself at the age of 67 in 1793 as a homestead for himself and his wife Dorothy Mason Marsh.

Although Marsh left Connecticut behind, his homestead was constructed mainly of wood from his previous home. Marsh called his new Vermont abode "Marshland." The homestead lovingly stayed in the Marsh family for the next two generations. The family began operating a dairy farm, and the property remained mostly a dairy farm through the next three owners, but that operation eventually ceased when it was acquired by the Quechee Lakes Corporation in an effort to meet the rising tourist demand.

After purchasing the inn, Perry

worked hard for two years to achieve the designation as a National Historic Site, which finally happened in September 1998. A complete history of the inn is available on the inn's website (www.quecheeinn.com).

AN INN FOR TODAY

For Trahan and Perry, the inn's history is essential to its modern-day appeal. "It's important to give people a sense of the history and keep that historical aspect alive," says Trahan of the inn's origins. The antiques, portraits, and era-appropriate design of the 25 guest rooms as well as the dining and common areas preserve this historical look, which Trahan feels gives the inn warmth. The inn's trademark history garners it so much success that Perry is collaborating with other historical homes to create more extensive vacation packages.

Amidst all the rich history, Trahan makes it clear that although he calls it a country inn, it is an inn that is keeping up with the times. Guests of the inn will find rooms equipped with WiFi and other modern amenities. The inn's website is complete with a blog, which Trahan believes has brought in more business.

Although WiFi and blogging are in demand in the hospitality industry, the inn's guests most likely do not book a room for those reasons. They book a room to experience what Vermont has to offer—a relationship with nature and a sense of place. Guests of the inn have the opportunity to step out their door and go fly-fishing, canoeing, kayaking, and snowshoeing. For those who prefer the simplicity of hiking, the inn is host to an intricate map of wilderness trails weaving through rolling hills. Trails range from easy to challenging, providing something for everyone. »



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View of the inn from the front lawn.

AN EMPHASIS ON COMMUNITY

The inn not only brings the Vermont wilderness to guests but also local products and foods. Guests drink beer from breweries such as Otter Creek, Long Trail, and Harpoon, dip their pancakes in Misty Morning Farm's maple syrup from Hartland, eat ravioli made by the Vermont Fresh Pasta Company, and taste cheese made by Cabot and Grafton Village Cheese. Patrons to the inn's dining room are not only overnight guests but also locals looking for a cozy fine-dining experience. The menu has mouth-watering dishes such as Maple Stout Braised Short Ribs, as well as an extensive wine list. The inn's Affordable Supper Menu attracts more casual diners.

The inn's connection with the local



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community does not stop with its use of local products. “This goes beyond business; the inn is a significant presence in the community” says Perry. He uses the inn as a host venue for a passion other than history—the arts. The Quechee Inn is host to local jazz musicians weekly, local artists each month, and it hosts the Northern Stage fundraising gala every year as a donation.

September’s Artist Reception is from 3:00 to 5:00 pm on September 20. The art show features the work of local artist Yvonne Shukovsky. Those who attend can meet the artist as well as view her latest collection. The inn does this at no cost to the artists. Show dates are September 17 through October 22. The October reception is on the 25 from 3:00 to 5:00 pm. The show is called “Artists in the Barn” and features the works of several local artists. Both receptions feature complimentary champagne and local Vermont cheese; all are open to the public.

Nestled in the grandeur and obvious natural beauty of Vermont, the Quechee Inn at Marshland Farm radiates an inner sense of home and the beauty of the Vermont community. Whether folks are looking for a care-free getaway, an evening out with the arts, or local gourmet cuisine, they are sure to find just what they need at this country inn. 🍷

Audrey Richardson lives in Woodstock, Vermont, with her husband and two young daughters. She has a Master of Arts degree from The Bread Loaf School of English and is a freelance writer.

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