

Lifestyles

Buttermilk Falls Inn: A Close Getaway That Feels Far Away

By Abby Luby

Relax. That means let go--physically and mentally. It also means calming all your senses--visual, aural, tactile and taste -- which means getting away to a place other than your television room.

The Examiner found such a place called the Buttermilk Falls Inn & Spa in the small hamlet of Milton, N.Y., about a one-hour drive from the area. Overlooking the majestic Hudson River, this 350 year-old estate on 70 acres lets you lay back, find your inner "sigh" and rediscover the essence of quiet while recharging your batteries.

Owner Robert Pollack purchased the property about 10 years ago and completely renovated the main inn and two cottages. The main lodge has 13 warmly designed bedrooms, replete with antique furniture and comfy beds. The Grand Laurel is the crème-de-la-crème suite with a lace-draped king-size canopy bed, a private Jacuzzi tub and gas fireplace, the perfect combination for inducing instant tranquility. If you suffer twinges of guilt from being cyber-less, there is wireless access in each room as well as in the quiet library downstairs.

About two years ago Pollack spent \$2 million building an ultra modern spa using Geo-Thermal energy and solar panels to heat the massage rooms, mineral pool, sauna and the eucalyptus steam room. Designed by architect Richard Miller, there are 14 Geo-thermal wells reaching 175 feet below the spa that tap into the constant 55-degree air which is then heated by energy from the solar panels, which also warms the radiant flooring.

Daily massages include the standard Swedish massage, deep tissue, shiatsu and reflexology, to the more healing sessions using aromatherapy, hot stones and Reiki, among others. Facials, waxing, body treatments, poolside manicures and pedicures and



ABBY LUBY PHOTOS

Inside the Grand Laurel, the crème de la crème of the Buttermilk Inn's accommodations.



The state-of-the-art spa at Buttermilk Inn where daily massages and healing sessions are available. A wide assortment of treatments such as facials, waxing, body treatments, poolside manicures and pedicures and water treatments are also available.

water treatments are all offered singly and in packages, many with special rates. Yoga classes are offered a few times a week.

Why do they call it Buttermilk Falls? A hiking trail winds down to the river by way of a steep dramatic fall of cascading whitewater that looks quite milky.

Other walking paths are footbridges over ponds which host a plucky community of ducks, swans and geese. The grounds also have flower and vegetable gardens, together with a gingerbread-styled chicken aviary whose residents supply fresh organic eggs for breakfast. A brood of energized peacocks, including one rare white male, are neighbors.



The front lodge at Buttermilk Falls Inn in Milton, N.Y., the perfect spot for an overnight or weekend getaway just about an hour from the local area.

The trail goes through the Buttermilk Falls Farm with Angola goats and llamas.

Breakfast is served in the main house dining room that overlooks an open swath of land rolling down to the river. The makings of afternoon tea are at 3 p.m., with assorted teas and freshly baked pastry. The kitchen is accessible to guests, and everyone is invited to help themselves to a complimentary drink from the refrigerator. The inn doesn't serve dinner, but just down the road is the Raccoon Saloon, a wonderful old bar and restaurant serving lunch and dinner. The hefty menu includes a tasty array of dishes from rib eye to filet of salmon to home-made vegetarian lasagna. And the burgers are quite popular. The bar has a good variety of beers and four local wines.

If you have the energy to venture outside the sanctum of the inn, you will find two wineries: Benmarl, the oldest vineyard in America with breathtaking views of the Hudson, and the newer Stoutridge Vineyard. Both have great tours and

tastings. Just across the bridge in Beacon is the DIA Art Foundation, and heading south just past Newburgh is the Storm King Art Center. Satisfying the shopping urge is the Woodbury Commons Outlet Center about 35 minutes away.

Prices for accommodations run from \$225 a night for the Garden room with a queen size bed to \$425 a night for the Grand Laurel. The North Cottage, with a river view and two queen size bedrooms, is \$650 a night, and the Pony's Pad with one bedroom is \$550. There are special mid-week specials that include massage. Massages run from \$90 to \$140.

Buttermilk Falls Inn & Spa

220 North Road
Milton, New York 12547
877-7-INN-SPA
(877-746-6772)
or (845) 795-1310
www.buttermilkfallsinn.com

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