

Chestnut Hill on the Delaware

Milford, New Jersey

Since 1982 owners Linda and Rob Castagna, two of the most caring and detail-oriented innkeepers we know, have continually worked on projects to improve this romantic getaway that consists of two Victorian buildings on the bank of the Delaware River.

The Country Cottage has two suites each with full kitchens. The Country Cottage Suite is on the first floor with a private Victorian porch overlooking the river. The living room has French doors that open to a bedroom with an unobstructed view of the river as you lie in bed as well as a view of the fireplace. The fully-equipped kitchen is well suited for the serious cook. The second floor of this building is the Paradise Suite which has the best river views. The oversize bedroom has a raised hearth fireplace, ornate iron canopy bed, and over-sized easy chairs. The bath, painted to give the feel of being underwater, includes a whirlpool tub with view of the river, a glass shower, and heated glass floor tiles. There's a kitchen with a granite countertop, a dining area, as well as the option of an adjoining second bedroom and bath. If you want to sleep late and have lots of privacy these two suites are ideal as guests prepare their own breakfast from a stocked refrigerator.

The main building is next door. The informal parlor has a wood-burning fireplace. The High Victorian Eastlake-furnished drawing room has a working pump organ, a piano, and a mannequin dressed in a wedding gown. The largest and newest room is Summer Morning, which is above the drawing room. It has an iron king-size bed, the only one in the inn, a sitting area with an electric fireplace, and bath with a double Jacuzzi and separate rainfall shower. Teddy's Place, a two-bedroom

suite that's always rented to people who come together, is the entire third floor accessed by a steep flight of stairs. They've added a terrace overlooking a large copper beech tree behind the building. The Rose Garden Room has two windows overlooking the river and a bath with a whirlpool tub. For romance on a budget consider the Pineapple Room or the Bayberry Room, the only room with a double bed.

In warmer weather sit on the porch or by the garden fountain and watch the changing reflections on the river. Taking full advantage of the inn's location right on the banks of the Delaware River Rob has constructed a landscaped path leading down the bank to the river's edge where there's a forty-foot dock with cushions and lounge chairs, tables and chairs, a private spot for swimming, picnicking, fishing, or bird watching. Frequently guests stay here almost the entire day.

At the candle-lit breakfast guests sit together at one large table set with crystal and silver. Breakfasts include freshly squeezed juice, frequently a superb fresh fruit salad, homemade muffins,

and hot dish such as German apple, apricot or lemon ricotta pancakes, stuffed French toast, or an omelet such as one with portabello mushrooms, pesto and tomatoes.

Rooms, rates, etc.— Six rooms and suites, each with private bath, \$100-\$250. Breakfast included. Country Cottage and Paradise Suite \$200, \$250, breakfast food provided. Two rooms have a second bedroom available. Children over 12 welcome. No pets. No smoking. Two night weekend minimum. No credit cards. 63 Church Street, Milford, NJ 08848; (908) 995-9761; (888) 333-2242; Fax (908) 995-0608; www.chestnuthillnj.com

Where to Dine. In nice weather take advantage of the sunset and have a picnic dinner by the river. They have gas grills and picnic tables. In Milford, The Lovin' Oven has a café and take-out. The Milford Oyster House, a long-time favorite, has moved a couple of blocks away to a 19th-century stone mill. The Ship Inn in Milford is an authentic English brew pub serving traditional English fare. The Frenchtown Inn serves excellent food in an historic building.

What to Do. The towpath along the Delaware Canal is sixty miles long and suited to hiking and bicycling. Milford and Frenchtown each have a number of antique and specialty stores. New Hope is a 300-year-old artists' community. Across the river is Lambertville with a lot of galleries and antique shops. The Golden Nugget Antique Flea Market is 1.5 miles south of Lambertville on Rte. 29. Rice's Market near New Hope is a bargain hunters' delight with indoor and outdoor stalls. In Doylestown visit Mercer Museum with a large collection of early Americana; Fonthill Museum, Henry Mercer's home; and James Michner Art Museum, which has a permanent exhibit of paintings of the Pennsylvania impressionists. In the summer you can rent tubes for a leisurely float down the Delaware River or take a mule-drawn barge on the canal. For shoppers, there are high-quality outlets in Flemington, New Jersey.

How to Get There. From south; I-95 to Route 29 north to end of road in Frenchtown. Turn left on Bridge Street, right on Harrison Street (Route 619). At light turn left on Bridge Street, right on Church Street. Go 100 yards after the bank, bear left to inn. For directions from the north, east or west see their web site.

For detailed information about this area refer to the Lower Delaware River Valley New Jersey & Pennsylvania issue V16N2 of The Discerning Traveler



Credit: David Bond