

Serenbe Bed & Breakfast – Palmetto, GA

by Sherra Meyers

Being a first-timer at Serenbe, I was pleasantly surprised at the serene yet convenient location. Driving only 32 miles south of Atlanta, the transformation began. Leaving the city and rush hour behind, I embraced the quiet countryside of the Chattoohochee Hill Country.

Serenbe is a quaint bed and breakfast created as the environmental safe-house of Steve and Marie Nygren, hosts and founders, as well as residents. The grounds were affectionately groomed to a natural state. There were English gardens entwined with farmlands and mature forests. Tributaries and rivers make up the rest of the 40,000 acres of natural beauty that will forever be protected. At least that is the Nygren's plan, as even now the bed and breakfast operates as a green business by composting kitchen waste, conserving water and energy and much more.

The Bed and Breakfast is the perfect example of how elegant comfort and environmentally sound living work at its best. The property has a Guest House, which is a restored 1930's horse barn, three Cottages and the Lake House, which accommodate larger groups. All the houses were built to EarthCraft guidelines, meaning they meet quality standards for energy efficiency and minimized environment impact.

Just because the cottages are made for environmental efficiency, don't get the impression that these cottages are anything but outstanding! All the houses are decorated in attractive color combinations which appease and calm the senses. The interiors cross between Post Modern and French provincial with modern and colorful art pieces throughout. When visiting a new place for the first time some people run to the bathrooms but I like to check out the linens. My favorite places are those that provide linens of the finest quality. The bed was, oh so, comfortable, whether it was because of the 450 count thread linens or all the fluff under the linens. Either way this will be one of the most comfortable beds you will rest your weary limbs on. Most of the accommodations have satellite TV, video, CD, screened in porches and spa-like air whirlpool tubs for two. For additional convenience some have small kitchens and/or refrigerators.

In the morning, a country breakfast was served. I'm not a grits fan but they requested that I try their cheese grits soufflé with collard greens and I loved them! From the herbal tea to the beautiful rustic décor I felt the ease one always feels while sitting in someone's country kitchen while breakfast is in the skillet.

After a wonderful meal a hayride took everyone out to the animal pastures. They gave us animal feed and we proceeded to participate with their daily chores of feeding the horses, pigs, goats, llama's and sheep. We were able to touch and interact with most all the animals that would allow us. Of course, they were behind fences except a pig that escaped regularly and a curious goat that jumped the fence to mingle with us. After the animals had grown tired of us we moved on to some of the 900 acres of hiking trails. I only wish we had more time to walk the many paths and visit the waterfalls that were nearby for exploration.

Not only were we sad that it was time for us to leave but we were a bit disappointed because we were going to miss the afternoon tea at the cabana, overlooking the beautiful pool. The cabana was decorated with rustic furniture and a giant porch swing with colorful billowy pillows. Truly, no detail was left unturned.

I highly recommend Serenbe Bed and Breakfast but make sure to spend at least two nights to fully appreciate and enjoy what the Nygren's approach to living and creating a balance with nature is. For reservation information call 770-463-2610 or visit www.serenbe.com.

RD'S RATING:

Type: Bed & Breakfast	On Site Restaurants: **** (Breakfast only - included)
Room Accommodations: *****	Surrounding Area
Service: *****	Activities/Shopping: *
Price: ***	Overall Experience: *****

LaPlaya Resort – Naples, Florida

by Melissa Hosp

As I stood on the 14th floor bridal suite balcony sipping my cup of herbal tea and watching a pair of Dolphin play in the warm emerald waters of the Gulf of Mexico I was in total awe of the beauty that was before me. Romantic beauty, spectacular views as well as gracious upscale appointments are the ingredients of LaPlaya Beach and Golf Resort in the pristine city of Naples Florida.

LaPlaya, located minutes from the Fort Meyers airport, is the perfect choice for the upscale destination wedding and honeymoon. The moment you enter the lobby you are transported back to a time of tropical elegance that is reminiscent of the private clubs of old Florida.

If you are in the market for a destination wedding look no further. This truly amazing property is the perfect backdrop for your unforgettable day. The lower veranda opens to a meticulously



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LaPlaya Resort



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