

Little Washington *Continued from page 1*

NUMEROUS SHOPS

Locavores will enjoy meals and to-go fare made from premium farmstead ingredients at the Stonyman Gourmet Farmer, where you can dine or just relax in the elegant outdoor garden.

At the Shops at The Inn at Little Washington, you'll find imported sets of knives with inlaid handles and china, as well as cookbooks, baked goods (including the Inn's homemade granola), scarves, ties and home accessories that reflect the inn's whimsical, yet impeccable, taste.

During the Christmas in "Little" Washington Festival and Parade on Dec. 6 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Artisans Market will feature baskets, pottery, soaps and other affordable works by more than 30 local artisans and craftsmen, plus food and wine vendors including Etland Barbeque. At 1 p.m., the parade will swing through town with the high school marching band, bagpipers, llamas, Waggin' Hearts therapy dogs, carolers and Santa.

NEARBY FLINT HILL, SPERRYVILLE

For a stunning scenic drive, head east via Fodderstack Road toward Flint Hill, about six miles away. There's very little traffic and no stoplights anywhere in the county, so driving is very relaxing. Grab a bite to eat at 24 Crows, a friendly café with reasonably priced, local seasonal foods, or at the popular Griffin Tavern and Restaurant. You can also browse through Flint Hill Vintage for antiques and collectibles.

For more galleries, shops and a completely different experience, head west on Route 211 to the town of Sperryville, home to artists and hippies since at least the '60s. At Sperryville Pottery you can watch potters shape clay into cups, pitchers and other objects, and knitters will be delighted at the selection of locally spun artisan yarn at The Knit Wit. There are also several eateries including Stonewall Abbey, Rae's, Rudy's Pizza and Thornton River Grille.

Continue west on Route 211 to the Glassworks Gallery. Walk across the red suspension bridge and shop for hand-blown art glass made on site. You'll find freshly roasted boutique coffee nearby at Central Coffee Roasters.

SCENIC ROADSIDE STANDS

Throughout the county, roadside stands offer local apples, produce, honey and homemade jams and preserves. On the way home, stop at the Epicurious Cow in Amissville for local, natural and organic produce, cheese and meats.

The best days to visit are Thursday through Sunday, when most shops are open. For more information about places to stay, packages, events and attractions,

visit the county's Web site at

www.visitrappahannockva.com

or call (540) 675-5330.



Whatever your taste, there's a gallery to suit. This rooster forged from iron by sculptor Nol Putnam is at the Caulfield Gallery.

The Inn at Little Washington Indulge your spirit and splurge



The exterior of The Inn at Little Washington gives way to a theatrical and whimsical array of rooms that suggests an English country house.

The Inn at Little Washington opened about 30 years ago in a converted garage, where the most expensive item on the menu was less than \$9. It quickly evolved and is now considered one of the world's best inns and restaurants.

Although the inn's exterior is very unassuming, when you walk inside, you're transported into another world with richly designed rooms in the style of an English country house. This setting, with its sense of theater mixed with magic and whimsy, was created by Joyce Evans, a London stage and set designer, and Patrick O'Connell, proprietor and chef.

The International Herald Tribune selected the inn as one of the top 10 restaurants in the world and described O'Connell "as a rare chef with a sense of near perfect taste, like a musician with perfect pitch."

O'Connell describes his cuisine as "refined American." The kitchen operates 24 hours a day, and the menu has highlighted local food since the restaurant opened, long before it became chic to do so.

Complemented by a 15,000 bottle wine cellar, the menu changes daily and features dishes such as Chilled Goose Foie Gras with Rhubarb Riesling Sauce and Fleur de Sel; Crispy Seared Black Sea Bass on Braised Baby Bok Choy; Garlic-Parsley



Accommodations include private outdoor areas.

Crusted Lamb Chops with Parsley Risotto and Asparagus; Pan Roasted Loin of Veal and Braised Veal Check with Ravioli of Virginia Country Ham and Fontina Cheese, Brussels Sprouts and Forest Mushrooms; and Maryland Crabcake Sandwiched Between Fried Green Tomatoes with Silver Queen Corn Salsa.

O'Connell hopes a visit to the inn, like great theater or art, will leave guests feeling differently about life, with an enhanced sense of self-esteem. The public is invited to walk through the first floor of the main building and stroll through the paths and gardens.

The seven-course fixed price dinner starts at \$138 per person; beverages, taxes and gratuities are not included. Two chef's tables are available in the kitchen for an extra fee. Groups of up to 36 people are welcome. Reservations are required.

For overnight guests, there are 18 rooms, including suites and cottages with mountain and garden views. Rates start at \$395 per night and include breakfast and afternoon tea.

The inn was the first recipient of Mobile Travel Guide's five-star rating for both the hotel and restaurant and the first inn to receive AAA's five diamond award for both food and accommodations. It's also a member of Relais & Chateaux and Relais & Gourmand. For more information and reservations visit www.TheInnatLittleWashington.com or call (540) 675-3800.

WHAT TO BUY WHEN YOU GO



Artisan yarns at The Knit Wit, Sperryville



Glass balls at the Glassworks Gallery, Sperryville



Baskets at the Artisans Market during Little Washington's Christmas festival



Preserves at Ballard's in Little Washington



Fine jewelry at Goodine's, Little Washington



The Homestead awash in holiday lights.

Great getaways Holiday travel with all the trimmings

BY SUSAN CARVELL

Escapes Writer

In Virginia, you won't have to travel far to discover a luxurious resort, intimate inn or cozy bed-and-breakfast to share a special celebration with loved ones. From Thanksgiving through the New Year, you'll find fabulous feasts, stylish celebrations and romantic retreats designed just for merrymakers. Start a holiday tradition with any one of these good-time getaways.

THANKSGIVING GETAWAY, MOUNTAIN LAKE RESORT, PEMBROKE

Gather in the serene atmosphere of this historic mountain hideaway. The Thanksgiving package for two includes four-nights lodging, many meals, Thanksgiving Day buffet and entertainment. Rates start at \$199.99 per night. Nov. 25-29. Call (540) 626-7121 or go to mountainlakehotel.com

DECADENT THANKSGIVING FEAST, COOPER'S LANDING INN, CLARKSVILLE

A traditional Thanksgiving dinner served with gourmet flair. Your family can request its own turkey to carve. Leftovers will be boxed to take home. Four-course adult dinner, \$40; three-course child's dinner, \$20. Call (434) 374-2866 or go to cooperslandinginn.net

ROMANTIC THANKSGIVING, BLACKSMITH INN B & B, NATURAL BRIDGE



Slip away to a classic English B&B owned by a couple from Yorkshire. Enjoy a candlelight silver-service Thanksgiving dinner, hearty country

breakfast and magnificent Blue Ridge Mountain scenery. Two-night getaway for two starts at \$300. Nov. 25 and 26 or Nov. 26 and 27. Call (540) 291-4000 or go to blacksmithinn-lexington.com

THANKSGIVING DAY FEASTS, THE BOAR'S HEAD INN, CHARLOTTESVILLE

A Virginia tradition serves up Thanksgiving fare to delight diners. The Old Mill Room offers delicious four-diamond-rated cuisine. Brunch or family-style buffet from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.; a la carte dining from 5:30 to 9 p.m. Call (434) 972-2230 for reservations or see boarsheadinn.com

START-OF-THE-HOLIDAYS WEEKEND, WINTERGREEN

Welcome the holidays with traditional feasts, the courtyard grand illumination, workshops, a ski swap and family fun. With the cooperation of Mother Nature, The Plunge tubing park and Ridgely's Fun Park will open for the season. Nov. 26-28. Call (434) 325-8180 or go to wintergreenresort.com

SANTA SLUMBER PARTY, THE FOUNDERS INN, VIRGINIA BEACH

Start a family tradition that includes overnight accommodations, milk and cookies turndown service, a personalized letter from Santa and breakfast with the "jolly old elf" himself. Packages from \$189 for a family of four. Dec. 4, 5, 11, 12, 18 or 19. Call (757) 424-5511 or go to FoundersInn.com



CHRISTMAS TEA, KESWICK HALL, KESWICK

Mothers, daughters and grandmothers can share the tradition of tea at Keswick Hall's Villa Crawford, beautifully decorated for the holidays. Dainty sandwiches, scones with homemade marmalades, freshly baked pastries, and plenty of tea. Priced from \$19 per person. Dec. 5, 12, 19, 26. Call (434) 979-3440

JOSH GIBSON

NEW YEAR FESTIVITIES, THE HOMESTEAD, HOT SPRINGS

Bid farewell to the old year with elegant dining and dancing at this resort in the Allegheny Mountains. Enjoy Mo'Sol's energetic mix of Motown, funk, soul and hip-hop or the Big Band sounds of the popular Radio King Orchestra. Packages starting at \$325. Call (800) 838-1766 or go to thomestead.com