

Arlington Inn Review July 2006

The grand old mansion on Route 7A in Arlington, (Vermont's famous covered bridge town) sits back about 35 yards from the highway. With its bunting and grandeur evocating old world elegance, you cannot help notice it as you pass by. "I'd like to stay there," I had thought every time I drove by the place. Well, I finally got to do it in early July 2006 and what a pleasant surprise..

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Like so many other grand old mansions in Vermont, The Arlington Inn, was built as the private home of a rich industrialist. The building dates back to 1848. Of course, it has had many owners since then, most of whom have been innkeepers. The current owners, Elizabeth and Eric Berger, bought the inn in 2002. They have turned it into a fine dining establishment as well as offering 18 elegant rooms and suites. Some of the rooms are separate from the main house, such as the Carriage House and the Old Parsonage. A Carriage Barn has been renovated and turned into a conference center. A large colorful garden complete with gazebo, waterfall, and a pond sits at the center of the property.

There's a classy, but not pompous, laid-back atmosphere about the Arlington Inn. The carpeted circular staircase in the main foyer creeks with each step you take. Somehow I find this comforting... How many guests have climbed those stairs in over the years? What were their lives like and what were they thinking about as they descended to the wide foyer? Do you get the feeling? It's that unexplained mental dimension that sweeps through you in an elegant building of the past.

Don't expect perfection in all the modern conveniences here. This is a stately old Greek-Revival home, not your glitzy tinsel town motel with exactly 10 electrical outlets in each room. If you abhor plasticity in all its forms, you'll be happy here. They do have wireless internet, jacuzzis in some rooms, air conditioning and fireplaces. There's TV sets too, but in a touch that kind of describes the scene, the one in our room was draped with a white lace cover!

It is against this backdrop that you will experience the cuisine of an experienced and professional chef, Eric Berger. Chef Berger has 30 years of experience and apprenticeship under well known Swiss and German chefs. He knows his stuff and you can tell it as soon as you start on the appetizers.



Dining

We began with Maine Crab Cakes and Grilled Pancetta Wrapped Shrimp. I always have crab cakes in fine dining establishments. You can quickly tell what you are in for later by the filler or binding used to keep the crab bits together. When it appears to be all crab, you can breathe a sigh of relief and expect some further excellent cuisine. I was not disappointed, the crab cakes, served with delicious seafood sauce, were prepared without any cutting of corners!



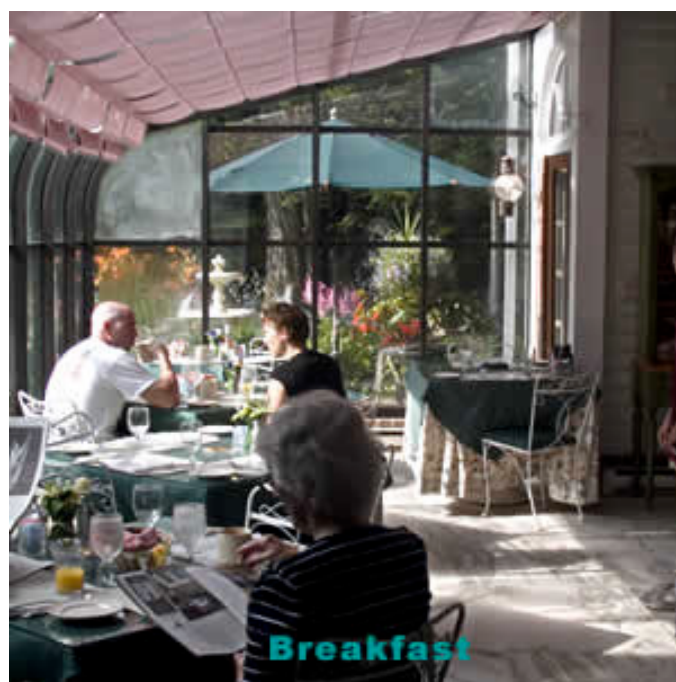
A favorite, that is always kept on the menu, is the Arlington Inn Mixed Grill. This consists of a Petite Filet Mignon, Duck Breast and Loin Lamp Chop. It is served with a sprig of garlic. What is not mentioned on the menu and what people always talk about is the way the mashed potatoes are served with this dish. They potatoes are contained in a deep fried chinese egg roll. It is almost like a potato skin and makes a wonderful combination. If in doubt, choose this main dish above anything else.

My companion enjoyed Baked Atlantic Salmon with a Grapefruit Beurre Blanc. I had a sampling and it was deliciously moist with a fine lemony jellied glaze.

Breakfast

A full breakfast is served in a garden solarium. You can order a traditional breakfast or a house speciality. The breakfast tables were covered in green tablecloths. Breakfast is one of my favorite meals. It can be a good start to the day and when you are sitting in a solarium like this, enjoying fresh coffee and a full breakfast, cooked to order, what can be better? I even had this thought of sneaking back here one morning, when in the area, and enjoying the breakfast instead of going to some cafe in town.

The dining room and solarium are open to the public every day except Mondays.



The Arlington Inn offers an excellent "get-away" experience. There's lots to see and do in this area of southern Vermont and the inn offers an atmosphere of replenishment. You should feel rested and leave with fond memories.

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July 2006

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