
The INNside Scoop

Dedicated to the Discovery of Bed & Breakfast Getaways

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MANSFIELD PLANTATION MIRRORS THE MAJESTY OF THE SOUTH

By Maxine Pinson, Editor of The INNside Scoop

As soon as I turn onto the rustic one-and-a-half mile driveway leading to Mansfield Plantation, I feel like I am being transported back into another era. Entranced, I drive over brick bridges and admire virgin woodlands on each side of the road. Shortly after passing through a handsome gate, embellished with matching lanterns, I spot the main house. A tunnel of magnificent, moss-draped live oaks provides the grand entrance to the old home and reminds me of a welcoming committee anxiously awaiting my arrival.

Mansfield Plantation boasts an impressive history. The original plot of land, 500 acres perched on The Black River, was granted in 1718. However, it was another fifty years before construction on the main house began. Over time, Mansfield became one of the largest and most profitable rice plantations in South Carolina.

}Mansfield Plantation, a member of the National Register of Historic Places, is acclaimed as one of the most well-preserved antebellum rice plantations in the United States.

Today Mansfield Plantation covers nearly 1,000 acres and is owned/operated by a descendent of the original Parker family, John Rutledge Parker and his wife Sallie. After an absence of ninety-two years, this amazing property is once again in the Parker family—and I cannot imagine anyone resurrecting Mansfield in a more splendid manner than John and Sallie Parker have done with their combined talents, refined taste, love of history, and cultured graciousness.

The guest quarters are located in three guest houses on the property: The Old Kitchen House, The Schoolhouse, and The North Guesthouse. All are within walking distance of each other as well as to the main house. The Old Kitchen House, circa 1800, was constructed away from the main house as a fire precaution. It contains two bed chambers, with private entrances, and a scenic view of the marsh and Cypress swamp. The Schoolhouse was originally built circa 1840 for the Parker family's children and includes two guest rooms. It also features a front porch.

The North Guest House, built around 1930 as a guesthouse for frequent visitors and hunting groups, is the largest of the three guest houses and includes four suites. Though each of Mansfield's guest rooms and suites is distinctive with its own charming attributes, The Mann Room (see photograph on page 2) is my personal favorite. As found throughout The North Guest House, the woodwork in The Mann is exquisite and the rooms are tastefully appointed with fine furnishings.

Breakfasting at Mansfield Plantation is always a special treat, prepared by innkeeper Kathryn Green, served in the formal dining room of the main house. The antique mahogany table glistens with sterling silver flatware and fine china; candles glow, and a fire blazes in the fireplace on chilly mornings. Fresh flowers or cut greenery, grown on the property and arranged by Kathryn, provide an artistic centerpiece. The food is both delicious and attractively presented. Kathryn is a multi-talented individual whose capabilities never cease to amaze her guests, and her desire to please is apparent in all she does to make one's stay at Mansfield a memorable one from beginning to end.

I have made more visits to Mansfield Plantation than any other bed and breakfast inn. Each time I visit, I make a new discovery that instills within me a yearning to start planning for my next visit even before I leave. I know of no place where one can get a better value for their money than at this magnificent old plantation—a phenomenal place that truly mirrors the majesty of the South, both the old and the new.

Strong Points

Hospitality plus, location & setting, scenic views, landscaping/gardens/grounds, historical significance, authentic slave village w/chapel on grounds, décor & furnishings, attention-to-detail, original art, full gourmet breakfast, outdoor hammocks & swings, wildlife/bird-watching, private entrances available, TV/DVD w/satellite, mini-fridge & coffee pot in rooms, private A/C & heat, BBQ grill available for guests, library, bicycles, hiking trails, conference rooms, data port available, baby grand piano, private boat landing, wedding facilities, creative packages & special events (including educational programs, tours, workshops for writers), dogs allowed, outstanding Web site.

