

Miles River Getaway * Kayaking Wine Tour * The Dish on Oxford Inn

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OCTOBER 2006

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Slumber Party

A group of old girlfriends settle in for a relaxing overnight at Easton's Miles River Guest House.



A weekend with a view:The private guesthouse comes complete with riverside pool and patio, encircled by flower beds and a picket fence.

IF YOU KNOW ME, YOU KNOW THAT THERE'S a trio of girls whose faces occupy a space in most of my childhood memories and whose infectious laughter is as comforting to me as a pair of jeans fresh from the dryer. Although Holly, Sally, and Whitney are busy juggling careers and wifely duties, we try to rendezvous every other month, if only for dinner and a good two hours of nonstop talking.

When *CL* decided to review the Miles River Guest House, capable of sleeping four, I quickly volunteered for this excellent excuse for our first pajama party together since I wore headgear.

Miles River Guest House

8862 Quailsar Rd.
Easton, Md.
410-822-5553 or
milesriverguesthouse.com

“And what’s best of all the guesthouse is totally private—you never bump into someone like you do at a B&B.”



A horse farm lines the lane to the Howards’ colonial-style home and adjacent guesthouse, where perks include use of the pool and boat slips at the dock. The cozy downstairs bedroom sleeps two comfortably, while the dining room is outfitted for an “at home” dinner and leisurely breakfast.

I arrived on Saturday afternoon, about an hour ahead of schedule, anxious to investigate the sleeping arrangements (translation: to claim the best bedroom) and to spend some time with owners Will and Dorothy Howard before the onslaught. The Howards’ lane cuts through their eleven-acre waterfront property and ends at the guesthouse, a mini version of their white colonial-style house only feet away.

Once inside the guesthouse, I felt as if I had entered an Irish pub. And wasn’t far from accurate. I found out that in 1988 Will opened Legal Spirits, a beloved Easton bar. And the guesthouse is adorned with the watering hole’s same masculine décor: hunter green walls, sports memorabilia, and a mahogany bar that separates the kitchen from the living room.

This is a place where a man’s man

wouldn’t mind camping out for the weekend. With two comfy leather couches facing a big, flat screen HDTV, brick flooring—and two bathrooms—this is an ideal place to bring a guy who’s allergic to the dosage of crocheted, cramped quaintness typically served up in a B&B.

The Innkeepers After the Howards moved to their current home, they decided to build a playhouse for their four children, which could double as guest quarters for visiting family and friends. When their kids flew the nest, they decided to turn it into a full-time rental guesthouse. “We wanted to create a place that we would like to go to,” says Will, a native of Easton, who, with his wife and four children, own and operate the Visitors’ Television Network, a production house for destination video tours. “And what’s

best of all, the guesthouse is totally private—you never bump into someone like you do at a B&B.”

And he's right. Other than Will bringing us some fresh pool towels, the only evidence of the family was running into their adorable, mellow yellow lab, Murphy, who freely roams the property and loooves to have his ears scratched.

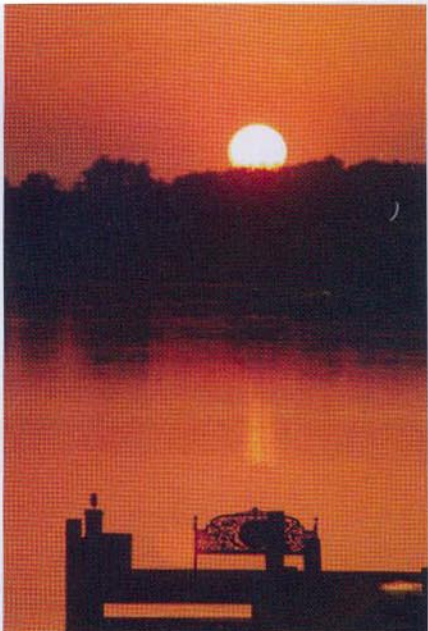
The Rooms Holly and Whitney took the downstairs bedroom, a tiny space with only a double bed (which Holly pronounced as soft as a piece of Hubba Bubba) and a dresser. Across the hall was a spacious bathroom equipped with a washer and dryer cleverly tucked into the closet that two can comfortably navigate.

Sally and I took the upstairs master suite, replete with a king-size bed, two armchairs, couch and adjoining bathroom. The Chesapeake-theme décor was complemented with duck and sailing prints.

Special Touches Our collective favorite detail was the jukebox, loaded with a random selection of hits from the likes of Barbara Mandrell, Guns N' Roses, and Brenda Russell. While Whitney, the more wrinkle-conscious of us four, appreciated the iron and ironing board in the downstairs bathroom, I zoomed in on the thick, white terrycloth robes hanging in the master bathroom. If it hadn't been 108 degrees that July day, I would have pulled on one of those soft suckers and parked it in front of the living room's gas-burning fireplace.

What's for Breakfast Unlike a B&B, where you have to operate on the owner's timetable for breakfast, here you can eat whenever you please thanks to the kitchenette, outfitted with stove, mini fridge, dishwasher, and six-seat dining room table.

So not to disturb us in the morning, Will delivered our breakfast (chopped fruit and pastries) the day before. If you prefer to cook breakfast, let him know, and he'll leave the makings in the fridge for you. (Word to Will: Perhaps it would be wise not to present two boxes of pastries to four girls until the very minute they're



Destination relaxation: Take a seat for sunset over the Miles River.

to be eaten. The cheese Danish, chocolate croissant—even most of the fruit—were consumed before sundown.)

Diversions With both Easton and St. Michaels located within ten minutes of the guesthouse (Oxford is twenty minutes down the road), there's plenty for visitors to do. (Check out the Howard family's company website, destinationvideo.com, for travel information on Talbot County.) Since I live, and frequently dine, in Easton, I chose to sup in St. Michaels at Shore Restaurant & Lounge.

On-site diversions include a two-seater kayak and canoe, dock where visitors arriving by boat can tie up, tree swing, and pool, which we floated around in the next morning like a pod of well-fed seals.

Romance Factor Besides Sally kicking me a few times in her sleep, there was no romance to speak of that night. But with the fireplace, it would be a fine venue for a winter weekend tryst. If you choose to visit in the summer, be warned: Before you partake of a moonlit skinny dip, keep in mind that the entire back half of the Howards' house faces the pool area...

What It's Going to Cost Two-night minimum; \$250 per night weekdays; \$300 per night weekends. 