



Sanctuary for the Soul

Whitestone Country Inn Offers a Four-Diamond Retreat, Right in Our Backyard.

Written by Clay Allen
Photos Courtesy of Whitestone Inn

When you arrive at Whitestone Country Inn in Kingston, Tennessee, you are instantly struck by the majesty of the view. Even though the inn is no older than 16 years, you feel like you have been transported back in time. This is probably because it took so much time to plan the resort.

Paul Cowell and his wife, Jean, began the process of planning a resort in 1963 when Cowell came to a realization. As he was sitting on a balcony in the Adirondack Mountains of New York, Cowell envisioned a place that wasn't just for vacation or getting away. He wanted to build a place where you could have a vacation with purpose. As a pastor in Knoxville for many years, Cowell believes that there should be a place that one can approach with a retreat mindset rather than a vacation.

In the same way, part of Cowell's vision for Whitestone Inn was to create a place for those who serve in ministry. Whitestone serves as a place where pastors and missionaries can come and enjoy a retreat at discounted rates.

In fact, Cowell believes in this ministry so much, he started the Christian Hospitality Network. This is a group of hotels, resorts, and bed and breakfasts that have agreed to give missionaries and pastors at least 25% off, and they are located all across America.



As for Whitestone Country Inn, Cowell has painstakingly planned every detail of the resort to create the most relaxing and inviting environment in East Tennessee. In the 34 years it took to plan Whitestone, Cowell measured every hotel room in which he stayed, documented amenities, copied menus, took pictures, and memorized how best to do it. As a result, all of the 22 rooms

have a king-sized bed, flat screen television, spa-tub, and a fireplace. Other amenities include tennis courts, floating golf green, basketball court, horseshoe pit, shuffle board, paddle boats, carriage rides, walking trails, library, three conference rooms, corn-hole, free Wi-Fi, croquet, and a newly expanded spa. Much of Cowell's research ended up at the resort, almost nail for nail. The School House building was inspired by a schoolhouse he found in Vermont, and the chapel is designed to look like the chapel at Rugby, Tennessee.

Because of the romance of fireplaces and the beauty of the estate, Whitestone rarely sees a drought in business. It also helps that they host between 80 and 100 weddings every year. This means that around 9,000 guests come through for weddings alone. Most of the couples that choose Whitestone do so because they attended another wedding there and fell in love with it. So much so, that Whitestone has hosted weddings from as far away as Georgia, Connecticut, and



Arizona. Cowell likes to think of Whitestone as the "Marriage Place". They have many guests that are celebrating anniversaries, eloping, honeymooning, and even renewing their vows. Cowell is still an ordained pastor and does, from time to time, officiate the ceremonies.

In addition to the customary resort and wedding business, Whitestone also regularly hosts companies looking for a place to hold off-site events and executive retreats. With three conference rooms, plenty of common areas, and several outdoor gathering spaces, anybody can find Whitestone a place of productivity as well as relaxation.

The breakfast buffet at Whitestone is complimentary, and the lunch and dinner menus are very reasonably priced. The dinners served at Whitestone are five-course meals, but the atmosphere still has a very casual elegance. The dining experience at Whitestone is just as relaxing as the rest of the time you'll spend at the resort. You'll

enjoy delicious food, truly helpful servers, and great views of Watts Bar Lake.

One of the most enjoyable amenities at Whitestone Country Inn is the view. When you arrive at the resort, you drive up a hill, and then through the barn to see the 600-acre estate open before you with the backdrop of Watts Bar Lake and the Great Smoky Mountains.

The story of Whitestone Country Inn is even in the name. Cowell was looking for a biblical name that was subtle, but still reflected the vision he had for the intentional rest he wanted to foster. He and his wife got all the way to "W" before he found it. Whitestone is a reference to Revelation 2:17, and the verse talks about when those who overcome finally meet God, He says, "...and I will give him a white stone, and a new name written on the stone..."

Whitestone Inn is a AAA Four-Diamond Resort and has been since opening in 1996. The resort is also a member of Select Registry, the only guidebook in the country with a mandatory

inspection, and has been voted a "Top 10 Most Romantic Inn" by American Historic Inns. Whitestone has even been featured in magazines like *Southern Living*, and *At Home Tennessee*, and was also a part of the "Good Life" series on HGTV.

If you're looking for a romantic weekend, wedding venue, place for a corporate retreat, or just a place to get away, you'll find it at Whitestone Country Inn in Kingston, Tennessee. You can book rooms and check availability online, as well as tour the estate and get to know this "sanctuary for the soul."



Whitestone Country Inn

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