



Whitestone Country Inn

A SANCTUARY FOR THE SOUL

Story by Lyda Kay Ferree, *The Southern Lifestyles Lady*. Photography Submitted by the Whitestone Inn, Roane County Alliance, Paul Mashburn & Diana Knoblock of Harriman, Tennessee

About this time of year, as the calendar year winds down and the hectic pace of the holiday season approaches, my body and soul need rejuvenating. I yearn for a destination that offers peace and tranquility. A few years ago I discovered such a place—the Whitestone Country Inn located near Kingston, Tennessee in Roane County.

From Jackson, Tennessee, it is only a 5 ½ hour drive, but it feels as though it's a million miles from my daily routine of professional and personal deadlines.

Whitestone Country Inn began as a vision in August 1963 when innkeepers, Paul and Jean Cowell (Paul is a native of Jackson, TN who made his fortune in a chain of bookstores and a home shopping network), vacationed at a retreat in the Adirondack Mountains of New York. "The Cowells began their pilgrimage by writing their vision for a similar retreat in East Tennessee," says Wendy Long, Marketing Director of the inn. "For over 30 years the Cowells planned and thought and measured hotel rooms and built upon their vision. They looked at numerous properties, but ultimately timing, location

and other factors caused The Cowells to choose property on the shores of Watts Bar Lake."

"The property was densely wooded with pine trees and undergrowth," adds Gabe Collier, General Manager of the Whitestone Inn. After clearing the land, the construction of Whitestone began in September 1995.

"We call it a sanctuary for the soul," says owner Paul Cowell. "It is a place to relax, breathe and just be. As the complexity of daily living increases and our soul cries out for refuge-peace-shelter, the staff at Whitestone wants to provide you with sanctuary, a place where rest and refreshment come easily."

Whitestone is spread over a 600-acre hillside overlooking the 39,000-acre Watts Bar Lake with majestic views of the Smoky Mountains. Adjacent to the resort is the 5,400-acre Paint Rock Wildlife and Waterfowl Refuge offering a perfect site for birding, wildflower, and wildlife watching.

I drove down a winding, picturesque country road to reach the Whitestone Inn and entered through the middle of a barn! A Farmhouse, where meals are served, is the centerpiece of the property, which resembles a New





Whitestone Country Inn Events Calendar

NOV. 15: Beginning of Winter Festival of Lights

NOV. 24: Thanksgiving Dinner Buffet: \$27.95

NOV. 25: Beginning of Special Christmas Music & Menus for the Holiday Season

DEC. 1, 2, 3: The Whitestone Singers perform during dinner

DEC. 6-7: The Voices of Lee University Dinner: \$26.05 with concert to follow in the Chapel

DEC. 8, 10: The Whitestone Singers perform during dinner

DEC. 11: Christmas Lunch Buffet: \$26.95
Dec. 15, 16, 17: The Whitestone Singers perform during dinner

DEC. 19-20: Gordon Mote in Concert. Dinner: \$26.95 with concert to follow in the Chapel

DEC. 22, 23: The Whitestone Singers perform during dinner

DEC. 31: New Years Eve Dinner: \$40: Five course meal

England village. The Little Red School House contains two guest rooms, the gift shop and registration desk. Chapel Hill is located on the highest point of the property with incredible lake, island and mountain views; a 200-seat chapel; and a large Victorian house next door. The Chapel of the Good Shepherd is a replica of the historic chapel in Rugby, Tennessee with oak-pegged timber frame construction. Several hundred weddings are held at the Whitestone each year.

The Lion and The Lamb, adjacent to the chapel, features a spacious dining area, three elegant guest rooms, and a conference room. Between the chapel and The Lion and The Lamb, there is a heart-shaped, gas-lit marble courtyard for outdoor weddings. Oftentimes, Paul Cowell, the owner, an interdenominational minister, of-

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— PAUL COWELL, OWNER

ficiates at the weddings. Beautiful Belgian horses take guests, including bridal couples, on carriage rides.

All of the rooms are named for birds. I stayed in the Osprey Suite, one of three luxury suites in the Lion and Lamb building. Each of the 21 luxury bedrooms and suites is named for one of the birds in the Paint Rock Wildlife and Waterfowl Refuge. A beautifully handcrafted stained glass transom depicts the bird for which the room is named. My corner room was furnished with a King bed, love seat, easy chair, and antique desk, and it opens onto a treetop deck. The spacious bath has an oversized Ultra whirlpool tub beside a bay window and a spa waterfall shower with massaging and steam jets. One evening I was so exhausted that I treated myself to both amenities!

The first morning at this inn, I awakened to a misty fog before a spectacular sunrise over Watts Bar Lake. An in-room fireplace kept the early-morning chill at bay as I read and sat quietly sipping coffee.

Breakfast is included in the room rate. The inn's culinary team serves what the owner describes as "Southern country gourmet food." Breakfast consists of a hearty, home-cooked breakfast, or guests may choose a healthier menu of granola and fruit. Lunch is by reservation, or the kitchen staff will be happy to pack you a picnic. I ate dinner on the glass-enclosed Farmhouse porch on two evenings, and the food was good. One night I ordered Steak Diane (My first steak in over a year!) with a classic white wine and peppercorn-infused demi glace. The next evening I ate a healthier meal of Parmesan and herb tilapia served over a Gruyere cheese sauce. I indulged in their Whitestone Delight Pie, a popular signature dish, and sampled their hot homemade apple pie a la mode. Cranberry

sorbet was served between courses.

There is plenty to do at the inn. Activities include the following: pool, ping pong, board games, tennis (two courts), basketball, racquet ball, horseshoes, shuffleboard, croquet, fishing, boating, and hiking (12 miles of hiking trails). You may take a canoe, kayak or paddle boat to explore Watts Bar Lake and the Wildlife Refuge. An on-site spa, hair salon and a library complete the amenities.

This exceptional country inn was featured in "Southern Living" in April 2009 as well as "Southern Lady" in November/December 2009 and has received the prestigious 4-Diamond award from AAA every year since its opening. Whitestone is one of only ten AAA 4-Diamond inns and hotels in the entire state of Tennessee. It is a member of Select Registry-Distinguished Inns of America, Christian Hospitality Network, and the Bed and Breakfast Association of Tennessee. Whitestone Country Inn was voted one of the ten most romantic inns in America by America's Historic Inns. Think vacation, romantic getaway, corporate retreat, wedding or special event.

There are three choices for living next door to the Whitestone Community: The Pointe at Whitestone, The Sanctuary at Whitestone, and Whitestone Family Farms.

Whitestone Bed and Breakfast is ideally located 40 minutes from Knoxville, 75 minutes from Chattanooga, and 2 1/2 hours from Nashville. It is a perfect, central location to explore the beautiful Smoky Mountains and back roads of East Tennessee.

ROANE COUNTY

Located on one of the South's largest lakes, Roane County is in the heart of the Tennessee River Valley midway between Knoxville and



5 Things To Do In Roane County For Christmas

Spend a luxurious weekend at the Whitestone Country Inn, enjoying their spa and gourmet restaurant with special menus and performances.

Visit historic homes all decked out for the holidays, while sipping cider and listening to the sounds of the season.

Tap your toes to live bluegrass music at Bradbury Community Club or Yonder Hollow Productions.

Shop the Rocky Top General Store—part retail, part museum with plenty of one-of-a-kind holiday gifts, free gift wrap, treats, and folklore!

Take a ride on the Secret City Excursion Train, the only train in the world going through a Manhattan Project site!

Chattanooga. Lush green foliage and gently rolling hills punctuated by steep bluffs; sweeping valleys cradling clear rivers and lakes; clean air; hospitable people; and a relaxed pace—this is Roane County, Tennessee!

“Roane County is famous for its scenic lakes and water recreation, but many of our best events are in December,” says Pamela D. May, manager, Tourism/Marketing, The Roane Alliance. “The Visitors Bureau gets numerous calls every year requesting information about our historic home tours because our tours are now known as the best in the area. Many of our events and festivals are held on or overlooking the water like the Colonial Christmas Candlelight Tour in December.”

May says that Roane County is “not only a beautiful place to visit but is also convenient to the Smoky Mountains, Knoxville, Chattanooga, and Pigeon Forge. “From here you can see and do anything you want to in the East Tennessee region,” says May.



Holiday Events In Roane County

The Lighting of Historic Harriman:

Nov. 26, 6 pm, Historic Temperance Building

Rockwood Christmas Tour of Homes:

Dec. 3: 1-7 pm & Dec. 4: 1-6 pm
865-253-6711 Purchase tickets at Live & Let Live Drugstore the day of event.

Santa's Secret City Excursion Train

Dec. 3 and 10 at 11 am, 1 pm and 3 pm
Dec. 4 and 11 at 1 pm and 3 pm
The only train that takes visitors through a Manhattan Project site

Historic Harriman Christmas Tour

Dec. 10, 12 noon-6 pm & Dec. 11, 1-6 pm
www.cornstalkheights.com or call 865-376-4201
“This Old House” magazine recognized Harriman for “Best Old-House Neighborhood” in 2010. Other Harriman attractions include the Princess Theatre (under restoration) and the Rocky Top General Store.

Colonial Christmas Candlelight Tour

Dec. 10, 6-9 pm. Free
Fort Southwest Point
www.southwestpoint.com
Experience the sights, sounds and flavors of the 18th century at the only fort reconstructed on its original site in Tennessee, and all by candlelight!

WHAT TO KNOW

Whitestone Country Inn

1200 Paint Rock Road
Kingston, TN 37763
865-376-0113 or 888-247-2464
info@whitestoneinn.com
Rates: range from \$165-\$325;
inquire about packages
www.whitestoneinn.com (inn recipes included)

Roane County Visitors Bureau

1209 N. Kentucky Street
Kingston, TN 37763
865-376-4201 or 800-FUN-IN-TN
info@roanealliance.org
www.roanetourism.com

City of Harriman, Tennessee

609 N. Roane Street
Harriman, TN 37748
865-882-9414
www.cityofharriman.org

Cornstalk Heights Historic District/ Christmas Home Tours

Phone: 1-800-FUN-IN-TN
www.cornstalkheights.com