

Mountain Top Inn

Chittenden, Vermont

The magic of this inn is the idyllic pristine panoramic views of the Green Mountain National Forest from its high elevation, about 11 miles from Killington and Rutland.

The history of the property goes back to the 1870s when it was a farm and later an inn starting in the 1940s. Following a period of decline it was purchased by Steve and Lauren Bryant in 2002. As we knew the Bryants when they previously owned The Inn at Weston we had a strong positive feeling about the type of upgrading that would ensue. We were not at all disappointed.

Accommodations include inn rooms ranging from Mountain Cabin Rooms to Classic to Luxury Rooms and Suites. They also rent privately owned nearby 2-8 bedroom chalet homes. Favorites in the inn are the three new deluxe suites with double-sided gas fireplaces, whirlpool tubs, kitchenettes, flat screen TVs, two of which have fabulous mountain views.

We stayed in High Meadow and loved the view from our king bed, the easy chairs by the window, leather loveseat by the fireplace and large bath with a corner double thermal massage tub and separate glass multi-head shower. The other two suites that are a similar size are Lago Vista with a mountain and lake view and Mamie's Retreat without the view.

The next category are Luxury Rooms with lake views and a bath with a whirlpool tub with a shower. Half have king and half have two queen beds. The favorite Luxury Room is Anglers Retreat, with a queen bed, as it is the only room with a private deck with a fabulous mountain view. Another top choice is Stags Run with a log four-poster bed. Classic Lodge Rooms are more traditional with a queen or two queen beds (these are larger rooms), and standard baths with pedestal sinks. Most have lake views and all have been redecorated. The four Mountain Cabin rooms are two rooms per building that are adjacent to the inn. These pet friendly rooms have queen beds, wood-burning fireplaces in three of them, and a convertible sofa.

Dining offers the option of lighter informal fare in the Highlands Tavern or fine dining in the Highlands Dining Room. From the fine dining menu popular starters are the smoked salmon layered between potato pancakes with crème fraîche and caviar, the lump crab cake, and the Vermont onion soup with a cheddar croustade. The most popular main course is the beef Wellington with tenderloin, mushroom duxelles and foie gras wrapped in puff pastry. Other choices are grilled Gulf shrimp and diver scallops with wild mushroom risotto, pan seared tuna, Delmonico steak with Béarnaise sauce and chick pea curry with basmati rice and ginger sauce. The Tavern menu features some of the same appetizers as well as burgers, open faced turkey sandwich, and entrées including hanger steak, braised lamb shank, grilled Gulf shrimp, and chicken pot pie.

Rooms, rates, etc.— 31 rooms and suites, all with private bath. Breakfast and tea included. Winter and summer \$215-\$495.

Foliage and holidays \$255-\$545. Off-season \$150-\$295. 15% service charge. 12 private chalet homes (2-8 bedroom) \$275-\$1,800. Children welcome, third person \$45 additional. Pets permitted in cabins and in some chalets, \$25. Lunch and dinner daily. Tavern menu \$9-\$21. Dining room entrées \$22-\$34. 195 Mountain Top Road, Chittenden, VT 05737. (802) 483-2311, (800) 445-2100. www.mountaintopin.com

What to Do. This is an all-season destination inn and resort where you can easily find plenty to do without leaving the property. For a winter stay they have a Nordic ski school and snowshoe center with 80 kilometers of trails. They have snow making equipment and a pisten bully machine to keep the trails in good condition. They also have ice skating, sledding, sleigh rides with Perchons or Clydesdales, dog sled rides, and snowmobile tours. In the summer they have a large equestrian program with up to 40 horses. They offer 1-3 hour guided trail rides and as they allow cantering they can cater to more experienced riders. The 860-acre lake has a beach for swimming. They have canoes, kayaks, rowboats and a pontoon boat for sightseeing. There's an outdoor pool, tennis court, clay bird shooting range, fly fishing, mountain biking and hiking. They also offer a variety of massages. For downhill skiing go to Killington and for shopping go to Manchester for designer outlets.



Angler's Retreat is the only room with a private deck

Less than one hour east is the town of Woodstock that has been lovingly preserved. Its classic green is surrounded by examples of Georgian and Federal architecture. Four of the town's churches still ring bells cast by Paul Revere. Shoppers will enjoy browsing through the antique shops, galleries, and upscale stores in town.



High Meadow

For detailed information about this area refer to the Woodstock, VT issue V16N6 of The Discerning Traveler
www.discerningtraveler.com