

SAVANNAH AT ITS BEST

If you have not stayed at The 1895 Inn, you have not seen Savannah at its best.

This is not an ordinary bed and breakfast. Inside this inn is more like a museum with all the comforts of home and staffed with friendly, accommodating, skilled and knowledgeable owners.

Beautiful pieces of art including paintings, ceramics and furniture pieces decorate the entire house including bathrooms. Some have been in the owners' family for generations. Volumes of books, some quite old or classical, fill shelves throughout the house. You can browse at will.

Ed, principle operator of The 1895 Inn, is exceptional and another reason for choosing this inn. Ed treats all guests to a guided tour of the house and makes you feel that his inn is your own home. His accommodating, friendly, funny and personable manner will make you think he is an old friend by the time you leave. Ed is also a wealth of knowledge about Savannah and will assist you in any way he can. (I told him that he should write a Savannah guide book.) Ed will carefully mark out tourist spots and superb eateries on maps he provides. He will even arrange for one of the local trolley tours to transport you back and forth from the main trolley station.

Hot, gourmet breakfasts are a delight with extraordinary dishes served on beautiful china. In fact, Ed puts out a different set of elegant dinnerware for each breakfast that he serves informally at 9:00 a.m. Guests often arrive earlier to chat with Ed as he prepares the morning meal, a homey feeling.

The 1895 Inn is immaculate. (Ed says he likes to clean!) Yes, some floors may creak slightly but that is part of the charm of this century old house. Ed lives downstairs (on the first floor) and this bed and breakfast is 24/7 for him. Therefore, the owners personally care for the inn and its guests and not hired staff. His partner (Bob) is both a business man and a painter and you can see some of his art hanging on the inn's walls.

The 1895 Inn is also small and cozy with only four bedrooms—two on the third floor, and two on the fourth floor. Each has its own unique and elegant decor. So, the inn has the feel of a private home. (Indeed, the 1895 Inn was a private residence before Ed and Bob bought this house.) It has beautifully decorated and impressive living and dining rooms on the second floor. Upstairs on the third floor is a sitting room filled with large bookshelves, large TV, DVD and a very comfortable couch. (Rooms also have TVs and DVDs.) DVD movies fill two drawers and Ed puts out chocolate cake at night—but who can eat after dining out in Savannah restaurants! Ed also puts out wine and cheese in the living room from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m., a treat to tide you over before leaving for a local restaurant. Finally, make sure to visit the bathroom near the kitchen even if you don't need its facilities!

An added delight is Dudley, the inn's small, lovable and charming three-year-old dog who likes potatoes.

The inn's location is ideal—within a short walk to most all important historic Savannah attractions and restaurants. Ask Ed for recommendations. In fact, Ed gives everyone a brief overview of Savannah as part of his welcome. Yes, the inn is across from a fire station but it went almost unnoticed—we never heard roaring sirens. Yes, the inn is near a main intersection (East Oglethorpe and Abercorn) but has the feel of a small town especially with so many beautiful tree lined streets and squares. Nightly noises including traffic never disturbed us. In fact, except for soft, soothing music always playing from the living room, the house remained remarkably quiet and peaceful during our four-night visit.

Beds and mattresses can be an issue in some bed and breakfasts. Our bed (in the Colonial Room) was as comfortable as our bed and mattress at home. And no squeaks. (But it was a high, four poster bed.) Some guests may complain about having breakfast only at 9:00 a.m. or having to fraternize with other guests. But this is part of the bed and breakfast experience. And, my gosh, the inn only has four guest rooms!

Disadvantages? No elevator, no pool, spa or 24/7 restaurant. The 1895 Inn is not a place for children (under 21) or those with some disabilities. (Yes, you must climb stairs to enter or leave the inn and to reach your rooms, and our mattress was on a high bed.) However, the tub/shower in our room was low and easy to get in or out. Remember that this is a bed and breakfast, once a fashionable, private residence, and not the Hilton.

Still, rooms have the usual hotel amenities as toiletries, hair dryers, irons (including ironing boards) and lots of clothes hangers. Towels are very fluffy and Ed turns down the beds nightly putting out tasty pieces of chocolate.

Staying at The 1895 Inn is a big part of visiting Savannah. Its cost is in line with many others in the area, even less expensive than many and well worth it. The 1895 Inn definitely ranks among the very best, if not the best, bed and breakfasts that you will ever visit. The 1895 Inn does not advertise. Apparently this is not a necessity since Ed told us his inn has the highest occupancy rate in the area. I can believe it. Repeat guests and word of mouth are apparently enough.

Bed and breakfasts have their own charm and qualities. If you don't care for a bed and breakfast experience, stay away.

However, people who do not stay at The 1895 Inn have missed one of Savannah's jewels.