

blackberry farm

by *Cristina Velocci*

After the hustle and bustle of the holidays has subsided, now is the perfect opportunity to get some much-needed R&R, and no place is better to unwind than Blackberry Farm. Situated on an idyllic 4,200-acre estate in Walland, Tenn., this intimate luxury resort nestled in the foothills of the Great Smokey Mountains provides a tranquil escape, and is just a two-hour drive from Chattanooga. Whether you're traveling solo, with the girls or with your special someone, America's No. 1 small hotel, as voted by Zagat in 2004, offers countless activities at every pace and is the perfect way to start the new year fresh.

The Beall family first opened the property to the public in 1976 as a six-room country inn. Today guests rest easy in 44 cozy cottage bedrooms furnished in elegant fabrics, English-style antiques, fine art and comfy feather beds. Though it's tempting to stay inside, curl up by the fireplace and enjoy a hot cup of cocoa or freshly made cider, go outside and take advantage of what the picturesque natural surroundings have to offer.

Start by taking a leisurely stroll along the three-and-a-half miles of paved trails on the estate, most of which connect to the Great Smokey Mountains, and explore what is said to be one of the most diverse selection of wildflowers in the world—second only to the rainforest. Other ways to explore the great outdoors include guided rides on Rocky Mountain horses, mountain biking through rocky terrain, canoeing on Walland Pond,



or taking a horse-drawn carriage ride. For the more adventurous, rent a Harley-Davidson and catch a glimpse of the back roads of East Tennessee.

Tennessee's mild winters allow you to continue to enjoy outdoor activities such as fly-fishing on the property (Jane Fonda and Jane Seymour both did). Three 18-hole golf courses are located within 30-minutes of Blackberry Farm, meanwhile four tennis courts are available on the property where courtside you'll always find fresh towels and mountain spring water to

help you recharge. Not confident against the cold? You can always take in the scenic views within the comfort of a (heated) Lexus SC430 convertible or GX470 SUV, at your disposal for a spin. There is also an indoor, full-service fitness center open 24-hours a day.

Blackberry is known to be one of America's most romantic hideaways. Couples should take advantage of one of their special packages, like the "Isn't It Romantic" package (\$475), which includes champagne upon arrival, wine pairings with dinner, a picnic by Hesse Creek and a rose-petal turndown service. Get swept away in a hot air balloon for two, overlooking the land at sunrise or sunset. And what could be more romantic than stargazing together? Away from the glare of city lights, the pitch-dark night sky allows you to see a panorama of constellations and celestial bodies.

If relaxation alone is what you seek, the recently renovated Aveda concept spa should fit the bill.



ABOVE, top to bottom: Luxury linens and furnishings complete each room; A view of guest's quarters and part of the 4,000 acres Blackberry Farm encompasses. OPPOSITE, top to bottom: A patron enjoys the newly renovated spa; "Foothills Cuisine" is prepared by renowned Executive Chef, John Fleer.

Blackberry Farm
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Walland, TN 37886
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blackberryfarm.com



Located in the property's original 1800s farmhouse, the spa offers hydrotherapy in a state-of-the-art wet treatment room with a Vichy shower and heated-tile floor. The spa's signature body treatment, called the Blackberry Mist, gently exfoliates skin, which is then soothed by a purifying herbal mask and topped off with a hydrating moisturizer and customized facial. You can also splurge on an aromatherapy manicure or pedicure, purifying stone massage or one of their other indulgent treatments.

As if the aforementioned amenities weren't enough to entice you, the biggest draw of all is the food, which earned the number two spot for Cuisine in the World on *Travel + Leisure's* "500 Best Hotels & Resorts Around the World" list. They don't call it a farm for nothing—the resort is in fact a working farm. Blackberry creates its own artisan handmade cheeses, grows its own produce, cures meats from free-range organic livestock, harvests eggs and turns fresh fruits picked from the orchard into homemade preserves and cider. This soil-to-table approach accounts for the incomparably fresh and flavorful food delivered on your plate. The man behind the palatable menu is Executive Chef John Fler, whose unique style of cooking, known as "Foothills Cuisine," has found its way onto the pages of *Food & Wine*, *Gourmet* and *Bon Appétit*. Once the personal chef of Mary Tyler Moore, Fler is now known as one of the "Rising Stars of the 21st Century," as deemed by the James Beard Foundation, for his haute cuisine mixed with Southern elements. Blackberry's series of cooking schools, wine tastings and epicurean events has put it on the map as a serious dining destination for gourmands.

Whether you're looking for adventure, romance or a well-deserved break, Blackberry delivers. So take a deep breath of that clean mountain air—what better way to start the New Year than with a clear head.



Photos courtesy of Blackberry Farm

pencil it in

January 2007

Tennessee Aquarium

Jan. 1 – 7, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. *Ho, Ho, H2O Tropical Holiday Adventure*. Talk to Santa divers as they take you on a shark-filled journey through spectacular coral reef formations where thousands of tropical fish hangout. For more information visit tnaqua.org or call 423-265-0698.

Wiggle Worm

Jan. 1 – 31. *January sale*. Wiggle Worm will be having a 20 – 40 percent off sale on select furniture, bedding and apparel in January.

Frankie & Julian's

Jan. 2. *After-Holiday SALE*. Frankie & Julian's will be closed the week after Christmas and will re-open Jan. 2 with a big sale!

Executive Women International

Jan. 9, 5:30 p.m. *January Meeting*. Chattanooga's premier organization for networking and leadership development will be meeting at the Walden Club. For more information, or if you'd like to attend the meeting, please see the chapter website at ewichattanooga.org or call Carolyn Stringer at 423-757-5641.

Blushing Bride

Jan. 11, 4 – 7 p.m. *Open House*. To celebrate its fourth anniversary, Blushing Bride will host an open house on Jan. 11, followed by a huge sale on Friday, Jan. 12 and Saturday, Jan. 13 featuring Judy Iserman's new line, The Blushing Bride Collection.

Shoe Candy

Jan. 17 & 18. *New Year, New Shoes, New You!* While you browse for shoes, you can also get a new look from Bobbi Brown. Try a new lipstick or get a full makeover—it's up to you. Shoe Candy will be taking appointments from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. both days and refreshments will be available. There will be a huge sale on merchandise throughout the month of January.

Chattanooga Theatre Centre

Jan. 19 – Feb. 3. *And Miss Reardon Drinks a Little*. This play, first on Broadway in 1971, will appear at the Circle Theatre. This comic-drama deals with a high school teacher facing a disturbing charge from one of her students as well as sibling rivalry from her sister. Visit theatrecentre.com or call 423-267-8534 for more information.

Creative Discovery Museum

Jan. 27 – May 13. *The Amazing Castle*. This children's exhibition will debut in Chattanooga. Step inside the castle's stone walls and become a part of its working community. Meet seven citizens who complete the village's duties by working together and helping one another. For more information visit cdmfun.org or call 423-756-2738.

Do you have an event taking place in February? The ladies of Chattanooga want to know about it! Send the date, time, a brief description and contact information to: editor1@blushmag.net.

