An Apple Pie Getaway

Discover this hideaway northeast of Atlanta for a warm and friendly stay.

PHOTOGRAPHS: MARK SANDLIN

left: Homemade dessert encourages conversations around the table. **above:** A beautiful Christmas tree adorns the upstairs landing, and co-owner Max Chosewood always picks out a twenty-footer to grace the two-story living room. **below, left:** Enjoy breathtaking mountain views in a cozy setting.

Come home for the holidays—to Max and Judy's home. Unlike any other bed-and-breakfast we've encountered, The Lodge on Apple Pie Ridge in North Georgia welcomes you just like family. If you like inns where you don't speak to anyone, you'll probably be happier elsewhere. But if you want a unique destination where everyone fits in with warm hospitality, make your way to this glorious log cabin built just for you.

A Cabin in the Woods

Max and Judy Chosewood designed the lodge to accommodate their large grown family as well as guests. They raised cattle and chickens here for decades before they decided to open an inn. To prepare, they took innkeeper classes. We can't imagine them needing it. The Chosewoods seem to innately understand how to help everyone feel as if they belong.

When you pull off the lonesome country lane about a half-hour north of Gainesville, Georgia, and into the lodge's drive, a sign asks you to "toot and go slow" down the hilly single-lane road to the immense log cabin. There, Judy opens the door with a broad smile and takes you around to see her pretty home. A huge living room centers around a stacked-stone fireplace flanked by picture windows that look toward gentle mountains in the distance.

Judy and Max share many stories about their home. They salvaged the heart-pine floors from an old potato chip factory. The brass chandeliers in an upstairs common area once hung in the downtown Atlanta Rich's store.

The upstairs common area opens into four luxurious guest rooms. The rooms boast satellite televisions and individually controlled heating-and-cooling units. Two of the rooms include whirlpool tubs, while the other two offer excellent views from the ridge. Yet another guest room tucks into the lower level near the exercise room.

Gather Round the Table

Just like when you go home, you better arrive hungry. As soon as you get your tour and settle in, Judy sets out hors d'oeuvres and her delicious homemade peach tea.

A wonderful dinner awaits at The Beef Baron, just 15 minutes away. The menu focuses on great steaks—try a New York strip or filet topped with sautéed onions and mushrooms ($16.96-$21.95)—chicken, and seafood dishes. The menu is huge, as is their M.O.A.B. burger, an 18-ounce triple-stack with cheese ($22.50). But go easy on the meal, as Judy is sure to have a tasty dessert waiting.

After a peaceful night, wake up to another big meal. In addition to eggs and bacon, you'll be plied with fluffy biscuits. Make them sweet with homemade jams and jellies.

When you take your leave, Max and Judy will be on hand to say their good-byes. If you're like most folks, you'll already be planning your next visit to your newfound family in the woods. ANNETTE THOMPSON

The Lodge on Apple Pie Ridge: 2154 Apple Pie Ridge Road, Alto, GA 30510; (706) 776-6012, 1-888-339-1374, or www.lodgeonapplepieridge.com. **Rates:** $139-$159, includes snacks, evening dessert, and breakfast for two. ◆