

Restoring History

By Kelly Sisson



Historic. Luxurious. Relaxing. These are just a few of the words that can be used to describe Kilburnie Inn as it stands today on Craig Farm near Lancaster, SC. But over the years, Kilburnie has undergone many changes—even a change in location—to become the wonderful inn that it is today.

Believed to be the oldest surviving dwelling in Lancaster, the structure was built in 1827 by Joseph Lee, a local dentist, who used it as his private residence. Less than 10 years later, Lee sold the home to Ann Beard Phifer-Crawford who named the home Kilburnie, honoring her late husband's ancestral home—Kilbirnie Castle in Scotland. For more than a century after that, the owner and inhabitants of Kilburnie continued to change, but the name remained intact.

In 1979, Kilburnie was honored when it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, its architecture recognized as "outstanding in its style and grace." But sadly, after this recognition, the beautiful antebellum home which had been vacant for some 40 years was in such a state of disrepair that it faced demolition. But fate had other plans. With the encouragement of the local residents, Lancaster native John E. Craig Jr. and New Yorker Johannes Tromp rescued Kilburnie from destruction and moved it to historic Craig Farm on Feb. 6, 1999. The move was followed by a meticulous restoration, bringing Kilburnie back to its pre-Civil War splendor.



Today, the once private residence serves as a luxurious bed and breakfast—its handsome pine floors draped with intricate Persian rugs. Its walls adorned with exquisite artwork by local artist Jim Shore. The inn boasts four guest rooms and one large honeymoon suite—each named after a historical figure. All beautifully decorated in the style of their namesake, the rooms feature antiques of yesteryear but are equipped with all the creature comforts of today, including a fireplace and hydro-therapy bath. But the interior isn't the only part of Kilburnie to be savored; the surrounding landscape is just as amazing. Beautiful trees, pastures and fields envelop the bed and breakfast, making it the perfect setting for weddings and other special events.

But what's a bed and breakfast without the breakfast? Current host and innkeeper Johannes Tromp, with years of experience as a chef, caterer and restaurateur, will fulfill all your breakfast wants and needs. Each morning he prepares guests a two-course breakfast from his extensive list of delicious recipes that is sure to satisfy even the most discerning palette. His culinary creations include freshly baked muffins, poached pears with blueberries, broiled grapefruit, oven-shirred eggs and herbed goat cheese omelets. Tromp's cooking is truly a gourmet experience.



More than fantastic food and beautiful suites, guests find Kilburnie possesses an abundance of entertainment options to choose from—options diverse enough to please everyone, no matter where their leisure interests lie. For those in tune with the outdoors, several nature walks lie within the surrounding land (Kilburnie's backyard is even a certified wildlife habitat), and five state parks are in close proximity to the inn. For history buffs, a number of Revolutionary and Civil War battle sites are only a short drive away. For those who crave outdoor sports, several attractive golf courses, hiking trails and water sport areas are located nearby. And for those who still want more, guests can make day trips to cities such as Greenville, Spartanburg and even Myrtle Beach.

Since its official opening in May 2000, Kilburnie Inn has become a favorite getaway of many and even received the South Carolina Heritage Tourism Award. A shining example of restoration, Kilburnie Inn is the perfect place to spend time restoring your senses, rejuvenating your mind and relaxing in a place of beauty and history.

