

Sleeping Around

BY JOUANNE MYERS

Ecce

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When Kurt Kreider and Alan Rosenblatt were trying to think of a name for their new bed-and-breakfast sitting high atop a hill 300 feet above the Delaware River, they came up with 40 different names, and their friends added to the list. They were stumped, until one day Kurt was clearing brush off the bluff and heard a clatter—it was the old tin sign the previous owners had erected, lettered ECCE (*et-chay*), Latin for “behold.” And so it was named.

I searched, unsuccessfully, for the Latin word for “breath-taking,” to describe my reaction—and everyone else’s—to seeing the view. Latin is much too literal—the closest I could come was *paradisum*, for “paradise.” Kurt and Alan have truly found a view of paradise, and they’ve made it into a B&B.

Ecce has five guest rooms, each appointed for utmost comfort. Guests are supplied with cable TV and DVDs; refrigerators stocked with water, soda, and juices; coffeemakers with a wide choice of coffees and teas; baskets of snacks and goodies; and Jacuzzi tubs and bath salts in the large bathrooms (which are also equipped with showers). We stayed in the junior suite, the only room lacking a view of the cliffs and river, but it was large, inviting, and comfortable—and of course you can’t see the view in the dark.

Ecce’s halls are full of art, with an impressive collection of framed sheet music from Alan’s grandmother’s career as a silent-film piano accompanist. The common rooms on the main floor and the large deck also are appointed for guests’ comfort and enjoyment. There’s a large closet full of board games, DVDs, and VHS tapes, should guests need distraction from the wondrous view or watching eagles soar.



B&Bs attract a certain type of clientele—those who aren't seeking the anonymity of modern, plastic, antiseptic hotels. Kurt and Alan take advantage of this, hosting a 5 p.m. cocktail hour every day so their guests can meet and mingle. Over wonderful hot and cold hors d'oeuvres and fine wines and spirits, the hosts make the most of their own charm and bring out the best in their guests. They suggest things to do and places to dine, and if you'd like to order dinner in, they'll gladly go pick it up for you. Because it was raining so hard the evening we arrived, we chose to order in.

Before you leave the cocktail hour, you're asked to put in your breakfast order. The two main categories—Stuffed Baked French Toast and Eggs in the Clouds Benedict—are made not only to order, but to your imagination. When we came down in the morning, the sun was just burning off the fog that was lifting from the river below, the coffee was ready, and fresh fruit, granola, and cereals were arrayed for those who didn't want to wait for the “real” food. And, of course, the Sunday *New York Times* was there as well.

We sat on the deck marveling at the view, chatting up our fellow guests. Each table was

served the cook's treat of heart-shaped mini-pancakes with a heavenly topping of strawberries and whipped cream. Then came the main attractions—the Eggs in the Clouds were eggs served over either lox or spinach and nestled in a cloud of meringue—truly spectacular. The French toast was baked in a ramekin with whatever special ingredients had been requested—mine were bananas, chocolate, and almonds. The only sounds heard during breakfast were the ohhs and ahhs of very satisfied taste buds and tummies!



Open just a year, Ecce has already received several awards, including a Recognition Award from the Upper Delaware Heritage Alliance, for Kurt's research into the site's history (memorabilia about the bluff, the family that built the original structure, and the area are displayed in the dining room), and a Sullivan County Showcase Award for “Unique/Most Interesting Renovation.” When you visit, you'll agree that every accolade is well-deserved—Kurt and Alan make the most of Ecce's spectacular view, with their guests' comfort always in mind.

How can you improve on perfection? *Ecce, paradisum!* ▼