

## **A Trip to the Mariemont Inn Is A Trip Back in Time** **Ohio hotel offers charming amenities blended with the latest in technology**

By Felix Winternitz, Travel Writer

MARIEMONT, OHIO - Imagine a grand hotel nestled in the middle of an English Tudor village. Now imagine it's only a few hours' drive away.

Welcome to the Mariemont Inn, a 45-room charmer that recently completed a multi-million dollar renovation. The hotel - which opened in 1926 - offers every benefit you'd expect or desire, and then some.

The lush rooms and suites offer amenities such as 42-inch LCD televisions (cleverly hidden beneath paintings that rise up into the wall), Herman-Miller ergonomic chairs, complimentary high-speed Internet access, Tempurpedic beds, LED reading lights in the headboards, fireplaces and silent refrigerators in every room, fogless bathroom mirrors and more. A magnificent lobby features dramatic pillars and fascinating medieval imagery. The hotel restaurant, The National Exemplar, is recognized city-wide for its fine dining and creative menu. An on-site gymnasium offers elliptical machines, stationary bikes and treadmills. Elegance is the key word here. The proprietors have taken an Old World charmer and infused it with new life to rival any hotel in Cincinnati, its neighbor to the west.

"Our goal was to cater to the businessman and the businesswoman, the corporate traveler, primarily, while also making this just a great place for people to come in, relax, unwind and enjoy themselves," notes general manager Bill Spinnenweber, the second generation in the family of owner/operators. "What that guest wants is plenty of room, peace and quiet, and a place to stay that's near the action. We've got it all."

You'll want to plan at least a weekend for your stay at the Mariemont Inn, if only to leave time to stroll this fascinating and scenic community (pop. 3,000). The entire village is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. One of the first planned communities in America, Mariemont is also one of the few with its own official "town crier," dressed for the part in powdered wig and colonial garb. The village square is peppered with Tudor-style buildings - the striking Mariemont Inn, Mariemont Theater, an assortment of restaurants, a Graeter's ice cream parlor and the Mariemont Strand, a collection of gift shops and gourmet eateries.

The town is framed by the neighborhoods of Indian Hill and Terrace Park, and sits on the bluffs overlooking the Little Miami River. The architecture is far-ranging by intention, with public buildings, private businesses and grand homes sporting influences of Tudor, Greek Revival, Colonial, Norman Revival, Georgian Revival and other styles. Stroll along the tree-lined streets and you'll encounter timber, stucco, red brick and white wooden trim. Steeply pitched slate roofs, striking chimneys, cast-iron street lamps and narrow casement windows also define the town "look," as do grassy medians and public English gardens.

The 100-foot-tall Mary Emery Memorial Carillon offers concerts each Sunday in Dogwood Park. The summer music programs are ambitious, with more than a dozen songs pulled from the American songbook each Sunday evening. And, the residents of the village have access to all the cultural amenities of a larger city - orchestras, art museums, theaters and the like - as the town is just a 10-minute drive from downtown Cincinnati.

A trip to Mariemont is like a trip to no other Ohio town. That's exactly what village founder and Cincinnati philanthropist Mary Emery - the heir to her family's manufacturing fortune - had in mind when she broke ground on the model community in 1923. (The silver spade she employed still rests under glass in the town hall today.)

Emery was the proprietor, owner and only financial backer of Mariemont. She quietly purchased one square mile of orchards and cornfields, and proceeded to name her dream village (pronounced "Mary-Mont") after the family's summer home in Newport, Rhode Island. Emery - seeking to make it a "national exemplar" - hired one of America's best-known urban designers, John Nolen, to map out and build the oasis from scratch. Now, the owners of the Mariemont Inn have done Emery and Nolen one better, by creating a dramatic tourist attraction that's sure to lure travelers to this quaint village.

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#### **Two-Day Visit Itinerary**

##### **Day One**

Check into the historic Mariemont Inn on Mariemont Square (6880 Wooster Pike, 513/271-2100), and haul out your walking shoes. Make a lunch of the award-winning shrimp & asparagus salad at the Dilly Deli (6818 Wooster Pike, 513/561-5233) and shop the Mariemont Strand shopping center.

If you've got the time, hop over to neighboring Mount Lookout, which offers a plethora of shopping opportunities in Mount Lookout Square as well as the Cincinnati Observatory, where the National Weather Service was founded.

For dinner, try the seared foie gras or steamed mussels at The Quarter Bistro (6904 Wooster Pike, 513/271-5400), followed by a movie at the Mariemont Theater next door (6906 Wooster Pike, 513/272-0222). End the evening just a few doors away, with a dish of the famed Raspberry Chocolate Chip ice cream at Graeter's on Mariemont Square (513/272-0859). Or experiment with the Graeter's "Flavor of the Month," which can range from Chocolate Almond Coconut all the way to Pumpkin.

##### **Day Two**

Begin with breakfast at the National Exemplar restaurant (6880 Wooster Pike, in the Mariemont Inn, 513/271-2103), famed for its morning meals. Specialties include The Bacado (bacon, avocado and Monterey jack folded into a light omelet) and Pope John

(Polish sausage topped with onions and swiss, and served with two eggs and a Bay's English muffin).

Next, stroll the streets, gardens and parks of Mariemont. Architecture buffs will want to keep an eye out for the Tudor, Greek Revival, Colonial, Norman Revival and Georgian Revival buildings and homes. Drive over to The Concourse public park, overlooking the bluffs of the Little Miami River.

Keep in mind that all the cultural and recreational attractions of downtown Cincinnati are just 10 minutes away (drive west on Wooster Pike, which becomes Columbia Parkway). This includes the Cincinnati Art Museum, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati Museum Center, National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, Taft Museum of Art, Playhouse in the Park, Ensemble Theatre, Cincinnati Zoo, Cincinnati Reds, Cincinnati Bengals, American Sign Museum, Aronoff Center for the Arts, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Cincinnati Pops, Taft Theater, U.S. Bank Arena, Newport Aquarium, Purple People Bridge and Krohn Conservatory.

If you take the Beechmont Avenue exit off Columbia Parkway, you'll quickly find yourself at another trifecta of Cincinnati venues: Riverbend Music Center/National City Pavilion performing arts complex, Coney Island Amusement Park and RiverDowns racetrack.

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