

CHECKING IN

# Main Street fixture turned into social hub



ROCHELLE LASH

Scott Pasfield and Nick Barletta have created an engaging, hospitable getaway in tiny, tranquil Montgomery, Vt., about 12 kilometres from Jay Peak and less than a two-hour drive southeast of Montreal.

The INN operates in a fine manor house that has been a fixture of Main Street since a lumber baron built it during the 1890s. By the time the couple got their hands on it, the manse had seen better days, so they got to work.

“Every surface has been renovated — painted, varnished or stencilled,” said Pasfield, the creative half of the team. “And the infrastructure — plumbing, electricity, emergency systems — has been overhauled,” added Barletta, who handles operations.

After two years of refinishing, redecorating and rebuilding, The INN is a sociable hub, humming with a lively lounge, monthly arts events, 11 guest rooms and appealing spaces for weddings and meetings.

With a view of Main Street’s majestic trees, the new summertime outdoor deck is ideal for breakfast, lunch or late-day drinks. The couple also built a covered bridge entrance that reflects the six covered bridges in the historic Montgomery area.

“The look is part ski chalet, part hunting lodge and part gentlemen’s club,” said Pasfield.

Together, they have amassed an eclectic and entertaining collection of serious antiques, cool curiosities and vintage decorative items, and this is what gives The INN so much character. The furniture ranges from period wing chairs to a red vinyl couch. Everywhere one looks, there is a fabulous eyeful of art, fine glass and deer mounts. A 250-pound black bear is The INN’s new mascot, perfect for a photo op.

The bedrooms, all renovated, are bedecked with such discerning details as original wainscoting, built-ins and wood veneers — remember the original owner was a lumberman. The new bedding includes down pillows and pillow-top or gel-foam mattresses. There are no TVs in the



Room No. 6 at The INN in Montgomery, Vt., has a private balcony and view of the Trout River. PHOTOS: SCOTT PASFIELD/THE INN



The richly furnished lounge at The INN, 12 kilometres from Jay Peak, is filled with antiques and vintage curiosities.

guest rooms, but the lounge has a large-screen HDTV as well as low-tech fun like chess, backgammon and yes, books.

Barletta is an accountant and a former executive with American Express and Pasfield is a globe-trotting photographer who recently produced the compelling book, *Gay in America*, portraits from his travels across the United States. They turned their favourite vacation destination into a way of life and they have built The INN into a gem that recently won a first-place, \$25,000 prize on the Travel Channel’s reality show, *Hotel Showdown*.

Apart from the dramatic, detailed decor, The INN’s major draw is its personal approach and creativity. If you arrive in late afternoon, you might wind down with Nick’s Martini, which is gin and olives stuffed with blue cheese. The lounge also serves other craft cocktails, Vermont cider, micro-brews at \$5 and retro drinks like root beer floats.

Scott’s Breakfast Special — with a secret ingredient — is panko-encrusted brioche French toast, often with sautéed apples, bacon and eggs.

IF YOU GO

Montgomery Center, Vt., is a one-hour, 45-minute drive from Montreal via Highway 10 east and Route 139 south through Sutton, Abercorn and the U.S. border to Routes 105 and 118.

**The INN:** 802-326-4391, [theinn.us](http://theinn.us); 241 Main St., Montgomery Center, Vt.

**Jay Peak Ski & Summer Resort:** 800-451-4449, [www.jaypeakresort.com](http://www.jaypeakresort.com); Route 242, Jay, Vt. Some activities accept Canadian dollars at par (with cash only).

Chef Jason Chartrand — he is American, but his family is originally from Montreal — mans the kitchen on Thursdays to Sunday nights. His starters include duck wraps, a pear and beet salad and baked feta. Blackened salmon is his signature main course, and

he dishes out hearty favourites like mac ‘n’ cheese, steaks, chops, burgers and fried chicken with biscuits and gravy.

**SPRING-TIME ACTION**

The INN is the host venue for the monthly Celebration of Expressive Arts (CEA) at which a trio of artists — musicians, visual artists and writers — present their work. Pasfield and his superb photography will co-star on the first CEA of the season, April 26. The CEA Dinner Concert Series starts June 13 with Myra Flynn, an indie singer-songwriter whose sensual style combines jazz and soul.

The snow season will wind up in a few weeks — although it sometimes runs into May — and sportsmen will turn to golf, hiking, mountain-biking and fishing or canoeing on the nearby Trout and Missisquoi rivers.

At Jay Peak, the Pump House indoor water park splashes all year-round, and the resort soon will open an entertainment pavilion with a 120-seat movie theatre, a climbing gym and a virtual-reality arcade. Jay’s State-side Amphitheater opened in 2014, will showcase Southern U.S. rockers Widespread Panic June 19; and the second annual Jeezum Crow Festival, July 24-25.

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