



The historic Bedford Village Inn near Manchester, N.H., offers superb dining and luxurious lodging. PHOTOS: BEDFORD VILLAGE INN

# BEDFORD BLENDS HISTORY, ROMANCE IN HIGH STYLE

*New England tradition meets spa life at luxurious inn near Manchester, N.H.*



ROCHELLE LASH  
Checking In

Rich, refined and romantic were my first thoughts when I arrived at the estate of the Bedford Village Inn near Manchester, N.H. This historic, sophisticated property is the real deal. There are no gimmicks. The Bedford Village Inn and its boutique resort, the Grand, are where classic lodging luxury and New England tradition fuse with indulgent spa life and excellent contemporary American cuisine. It's all powered by the quiet hum of thoughtful service against a backdrop of 200 years of history. The Bedford has made its reputation over the past 30 years as a serious date-night destination, complete with candlelight and fireplaces in a beautifully appointed 1810 farmhouse. And it's a great choice for a special occasion, such as Valentine's Day. This country complex handles more than 100 weddings a year

in a reception hall that once was a dairy barn. The milking room now is an elegant lounge and the hayloft has been turned into splendid rooms and suites. The fine inn also has a great location, not far off I-93. It's a perfect stopover for Montrealers on the way to Boston, or Ogunquit, Maine. New Hampshire is a no-tax shopping haven, and Manchester is a centre for French-Canadian heritage dating to the 1800s. **Resort features:** With the recent openings of Luxe, a full-service spa, and the luxurious wing called the Grand, the Bedford took its hospitality to another level. The AAA four-diamond destination offers 64 deluxe accommodations, a resort-wear boutique, conference and banquet spaces, an outdoor heated saltwater swimming pool and four delightful dining options: the Dining Room, the Tavern, Corks and the Lobby Bar. Several elements set the scene, especially the grand and graceful decor. The Bedford is filled with authentic or reproduction Federal antiques and faded kilim rugs. And the Americana artwork recalls the hotel's farm origins, with prints of hunting scenes, barns and lots of cows.

Throughout the inn, you're treated to a rich riot of fabrics and textures, vintage leathers and colonial accents, as well as quintessential country features such as fireplace lounges and French doors opening to summer gardens. I enjoyed the peacefulness of the Study, which has a Queen Anne card table, hardcover books and posh magazines such as Fortune, Yachting and Art & Home. The Bedford has 14 guest rooms in its original building and 50 in the Grand wing. All are beautifully appointed, with ebony furniture and four-poster beds with 18-inch mattresses and soft sheets. You'll have the best of everything: Molton Brown toiletries, marble bathrooms, and fireplaces in many rooms. **Dining:** The Bedford is a highly sociable place with terrific food and drink, all day and all evening. You can pop in for the daily happy hour at the Grand's Lobby Bar, sample the Sunday wine special or couple up for a Valentine's dinner. The cuisine throughout the hotel is exceptional, and accompanied by perky cocktails, well-chosen wines and local craft beer. The Bedford Village Inn's Tavern is rich with decor detail: brass railings, leather seating and hunting prints. It hops all the time, with hungry clients



Graceful antique decor helps make the Bedford Village Inn a romantic destination and a great choice for a special occasion.

### IF YOU GO

- Bedford is on the outskirts of Manchester, N.H., a 4 1/2-hour drive south of Montreal.
- The Bedford Village Inn and the Grand at Bedford Village Inn: 603-472-2001, bedfordvillageinn.com; 2 Olde Bedford Way, Bedford, N.H. Affiliated with Preferred Hotels & Resorts.
- Prices are approximate and fluctuate. Jan.-April: Rooms in the Inn and the Grand start at around US\$200 Sun.-Thurs., or US\$280 Fri.-Sat. (suites cost more); from May-Dec., starting at US\$260 Sun.-Thurs., or US\$330 Fri.-Sat., including outdoor swimming pool/hot tub, fire pit, fitness room, Wi-Fi, in-room coffee, evening turn-down, long-distance calls, afternoon cookies.
- Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce: 603-792-4100, manchester-chamber.org. New Hampshire Tourism: visitnh.gov.

Cobb salad are among the favourites. The Dining Room is actually a series of seven intimate spaces for breakfast, lunch, dinner and brunch, all excellent. Dinner might start with mushroom toast, crab cakes, foie gras or clam chowder and follow with fish, seafood, duck or steak. Save room for rich endings such as white chocolate croissant bread pudding, a seasonal soufflé or red velvet cheesecake. For brunch, there are indulgences such as duck hash, Monte Cristo French toast or blueberry buttermilk pancakes. **Quebec heritage:** Manchester is one of the New England communities that attracted mill workers from Quebec during the late 1800s. The francophone population was so significant that the newcomers built their own institutions, including the elaborate Gothic revival Ste-Marie Church, Lafayette Park, L'Avenir National daily newspaper and La Caisse Populaire Ste-Marie (now St. Mary's Bank), which was founded in 1908 and is said to be the United States' first credit union. The diner Chez Vachon (chezvachon.com) still dishes out poutine and crêpes.

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