

Where to Stay: Bird's Eye View Pick for a Foliage Getaway



Just down the street from the Cellar Door Winery, tucked down the proverbial country road, the Youngtown Inn has all the charming features of the typical New England B&B, but with a major addition, a gastronomical delight in the kitchen.

The Inn's worldwide reputation and recognition, including a *Fodor's Choice Award* for eight consecutive years, is partly due to the award-winning French chef (who also happens to be the innkeeper along with his wife, Mary Ann Mercier). Manuel is happiest tucked away in the kitchen, while the ever-affable Mary Ann can be found greeting and pampering the guests.



Innkeeper, Mary Ann Mercier

The picturesque 1810 farmhouse, a few miles outside of Camden and about a 20 minute ride from Cape Air's Rockland destination, has it all going on in the hospitality department. Chocolate-covered strawberries greet your arrival and the rooms are four-posted bed cozy with the option of a family suite or cottage if you want to bring the kids. And then there is the food, which is where it all started, in a *Love Boat* kind of way.

"We met on a Baltic cruise," says former Manhattan business woman, Mary Ann. "Manuel



Photo: Christine Twombly

was the chef on board, we fell in love and 18 years later, we are having the time of our life bringing up our three children in this wonderful place. Once guests arrive and see the nearby nature trails and what we have to offer here, they come back year after year. This is truly an escape."

When you book (and you absolutely must go), be sure to reserve dinner, because the locals love Manuel's cooking. On Thanksgiving, literally hundreds show up to celebrate. The nightly menu may include lobster ravioli, rack of lamb, steamed mussels (French style) and then the piece-de-resistance, a crème brûlée and chocolate soufflé that may induce weeping. What a way to enjoy a foliage escape!

Rates in September and October start at around \$159 a night including Manuel's breakfast, but check out the web page for specials.

youngtowninn.com ~ 800.291.8438

Youngtown Inn, Route 52 and Youngtown Road
Lincolnton, Maine