



Glenmere Mansion's expansive gardens were re-created using the original 1911 plans from landscape architect Beatrix Farrand.

In the Country

New York Escapes

Three storied residences, all within an hour-and-a-half drive of Manhattan, recall the spirit of country estates of yore. **NANDITA KHANNA** checks in for the weekend.

The tradition of owning grand weekend estates an hour or so away from bustling metropolises is hardly anything new. (For further proof, see Edith Wharton or Henry James.) And for quite some time, those chic spots were well-guarded secrets—places that were kept quiet by those who lived there and strictly off-limits to those who didn't. But in the last year, in several such communities outside Manhattan, local entrepreneurs have added “innkeeper” to their résumé. In the spirit of

the Wheatleighs and the Lenoxes, they've transformed three distinct turn-of-the-century homes into elegantly preserved retreats, each outfitted with modern trappings and housing a restaurant helmed by a top chef. These aren't just charming hotels for frazzled New Yorkers; they're clubhouses for locals, places to gather and socialize over dinner or drinks. (Some regulars, as in the case of the Glenmere Mansion, in Chester, New York, even choose to drop in via private chopper for dinner.) Whatever one's method of arrival, the valet comes standard. **CONTINUED »**





Meals can be had on Glenmere's lakeside terrace, with sweeping views of the grounds; the elegant Princess Suite, above.

cortile below, features a bold Charles Hewitt monotype from the Klein Museum outside Stuttgart, Germany, and a leather luggage rack handmade in Spain. Subtle touches—an ever-so-dim night-light emanating from under the bed, heated Carrera marble tiles in the bathroom—are homages to DeSimone and Stenberg's favorite details from hotels they've visited during their own travels.

Michael Foss, once the private chef for Steven Spielberg, runs the kitchen. In the Supper Room he does formal dishes such as pan-seared foie gras and pork tenderloin with an apple cider sauce and braised cabbage, while at the Frog's End Tavern the less fussy menu leans toward elevated comfort food: an apple

relish-topped turkey burger on brioche, or a pizza with figs and Maytag blue cheese.

DeSimone and Stenberg have put as much emphasis on the service as they have on the design and food—and it shows. Guests can take meals anywhere on the grounds, from the bougainvillea-filled cortile to the wraparound terrace. And the staff has been known to arrange for guests' dogs to be boarded nearby. "Most of all we wanted Glenmere to feel like you've come to visit your rich uncle's estate," says Stenberg, "where you're free to wander and do as you please."

Rooms, from \$550. At 634 Pine Hill Rd.; glenmeremansion.com.

COCKTAIL HOUR
**DRINKS
BY
DESIGN**

In keeping with the property's country-club feel, Glenmere has introduced a Small Bites on Starry Nights menu, which pairs martinis with shareable plates like deviled eggs topped with caviar and prosciutto-wrapped feta.



GLENMERE MANSION

Tucked into the scenic Lower Hudson Valley, this 150-acre country retreat eloquently combines past and present in a very grand fashion.

With its salmon-colored stucco façade and azure shutters, the Glenmere Mansion is something of an Italianate folly, located smack-dab in the dairy farmland of Hudson Valley. That's exactly what caught the attention of the estate's owners, Dan DeSimone and Alan Stenberg, who live in nearby Tuxedo Park, New York. DeSimone first spotted it during a leisurely Sunday drive through the area in 2006. "When Dan returned home we called our broker immediately," says Stenberg, a former public relations executive who, like his partner, DeSimone, a surgeon, is a first-time hotelier. "When we learned of its history, we had to have it." The duo spent the next three years on a top-to-bottom \$30 million redo, transforming the estate into a 19-bedroom retreat that quietly opened earlier this year.

The 1911 villa, built as a country house for real estate mogul Robert Goelet IV, was designed by architecture firm Carrère and

Hastings (who did the New York Public Library and the Frick Collection). Stenberg and DeSimone worked closely with New York-based interior designer Scott Snyder to maintain the historic integrity of the villa, which over the last 25 years had fallen into disrepair. They even consulted the original landscape plans for the European-style gardens; eventually lilacs, peonies, and forsythia were decided upon.

Despite its lavish public spaces—an elegant drawing room has a self-playing grand piano, the library is dark-paneled mahogany swathed in silk and velvet—nothing at Glenmere feels precious. The amicable staff encourages guests to explore each nook and cranny, settle into a chaise with a good book, or lounge in one of the six canvas-draped cabanas surrounding the heated pool.

Each of the 19 rooms evokes the mansion's heyday without feeling too stuffy. The window-lined Princess Suite, with its view of the