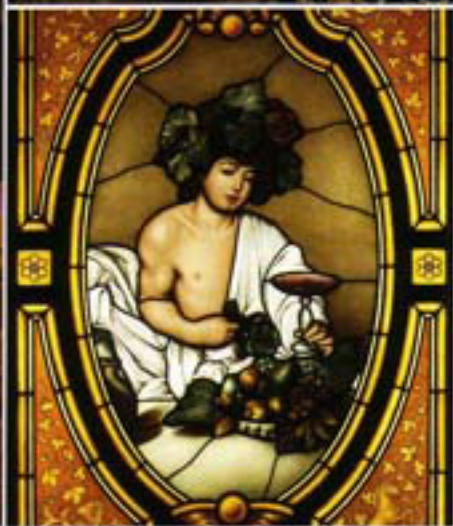




The Christina Rossetti bedchamber is one of four chambers, each with its own private bath and double whirlpool and themed after a famous literary figure from the 19th century.



A stained-glass portrait of the Roman god of wine, Bacchus, is the muse for a nightly wine and hors d'oeuvres social hour for guests.

A Scholarly RENOVATION

Fueled by a passion for books and history, a Stillwater couple brings life, and guests, to a historical home

BY JULIE PFITZINGER PHOTOS BY TOMY O'BRIEN

The elegant and refined interior of the Rivertown Inn (306 W. Olive St., 651.430.2955) in Stillwater is a true reflection not only of the passions of owners Jeff and Julie Anderson, but also of their dream to create a unique and luxurious

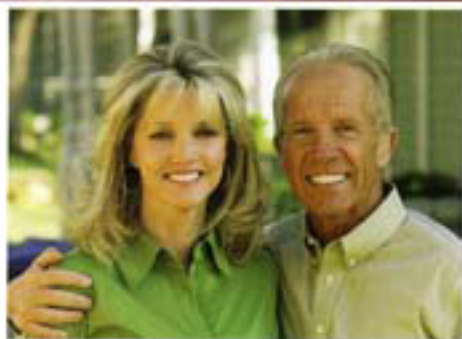
haven for couples where special occasions can be memorably celebrated.

More than 20 pieces of stained glass—including a breathtaking stained-glass ceiling—can be found throughout the Victorian home. The Andersons discovered many of the pieces during cross-country antiquing expeditions, and one depicting the legendary Roman figure Bacchus was commissioned by artist Michael Watts for the inn.

The unique names of Rivertown's sumptuous suites and bedchambers are drawn from the couple's favorite literary masters such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Lewis Carroll, Oscar Wilde and Agatha Christie. "We thought it would be interesting and intriguing to capture the spirit of these great literary figures in the design and décor of our

rooms," Jeff says. With amenities like goose-down pillows, hand-carved four-poster beds, rich color schemes and unique appointments, the rooms are embodied with a sense of Old World romance.

Perhaps what ultimately fueled the Andersons' passion for transforming the property into a luxury inn is their love for history. Originally built on its historic Chestnut Hill site by lumber baron John O'Brien, the three-story house has been a private residence, a group home and a bed-and-breakfast. "We live just around the corner, so we had driven by this property for many years," Jeff says. "When it became available in 1999, we felt it was an opportunity for us to invest in the community."



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— JEFF ANDERSON, OWNER, RIVERTOWN INN, WITH WIFE JULIE

Since Jeff and Julie recently finished restoring their own home, the original plan was to take a leisurely approach to renovating the Rivertown Inn. “We decided that wasn’t right for us and realized we didn’t want to wait,” Julie says. The work was done in phases through several years, with one floor closed at a time. Along with the restoration of bedrooms and common areas, other projects included an extensive remodeling of the carriage house to accommodate the Oscar Wilde and Agatha Christie suites (two of the inn’s most popular rooms) as well as the installation of a complete gourmet kitchen and wine room.

The Andersons credit a team of local artisans for the unique contributions each made to the precise restoration of the home: designer Ed Hawksford, master woodworker

Russ Savstrom and contractor Don Martin. “Each of them worked in collaboration with us, and they all had a major influence on this project,” Jeff says.

Every one of the bedchambers and suites boasts a fireplace, private bath and double whirlpool. According to innkeeper Lisa Lothson, the romantic ambience of the luxury home makes it a perfect retreat. “We do cater primarily to couples and want the inn to be a place where they’d like to visit for a special occasion such as a birthday or anniversary,” she says. In addition to a nightly wine and cheese reception, a three-course gourmet breakfast at the inn’s elegant dining room awaits guests each morning. “The Rivertown Inn is the only bed-and-breakfast in Stillwater with its own gourmet chef on staff,” Lothson says. The inn also offers one-day cooking

classes, wine tasting dinners and culinary weekends hosted by Chef Ray Wyatt.

The exterior of the home, including a magnificent wraparound porch, is resplendent with rich shades of burgundy, gold and sage green, and complemented by beautiful fountains and landscaping, complete with authentic English gardens created and tended to by Jeff Anderson himself. ●

Julie Pfitzinger is a West Saint Paul-based freelance writer.

NOOKS ‘N’ CRANNIES

YEAR BUILT: 1882

LOCATION: Corner of Fifth and Olive streets, three blocks from downtown Stillwater.

NUMBER OF BEDROOMS: 5 suites and 4 bedchambers. Each room features a private bath with a double whirlpool.

DESIGNERS: Ed Hawksford, woodworker Russ Savstrom, contractor Don Martin

OTHER AMENITIES: 500-square-foot professional chef’s kitchen, a European-style wine library, 10 working fireplaces, a screened gazebo and English gardens.

MOST UNIQUE ACCOMMODATION: The Agatha Christie Suite is directly modeled after a European train car, akin to the style found in Christie’s classic mystery novel, *Murder on the Orient Express*.

A fireplace sitting area and two private baths are just two of the features of the Oscar Wilde carriage house grand suite, which celebrates the flamboyant style of the famous writer.

