

Created by: Debra C. Argen

Wheatleigh - Lenox, Massachusetts, USA

Be prepared to be pampered at [Wheatleigh](#) in [Lenox, Massachusetts](#) where a stay in the 1893 Italian villa recalls the glorious Gilded Age. Once a private summer "cottage," Wheatleigh is a luxurious 19-room hotel gem in [The Berkshires](#) with an American Automobile Association Five Diamond restaurant, ***The Dining Room at Wheatleigh***, featuring contemporary American interpretation of French cuisine created by ***Chef Jeffrey Thompson***.

Visually stunning is how I can best describe Wheatleigh built as the summer residence of Henry Harvey Cook and Mary McCay Cook, later inherited by their daughter, Georgie Cook de Heredia and her husband, Carlis de Heredia, and now owned by Susan and Linfield Simon. Designed as an Italian palazzo, Wheatleigh was impressive from the moment we entered through the twin pillars adorned with lanterns, with a large fountain in the courtyard, and the architecture of sunny limestone rich with a patina of age.



Wheatleigh, Lenox, Massachusetts

After a warm welcome by the Wheatleigh staff, Edward and I took in the architectural details of the Great Hall with its ornately embellished fireplace, Palladian windows, inviting sitting areas, piano, and views of The Berkshires. We also noticed the original Tiffany windows that seemed to be slightly curved, and learned that they were designed to be able to expand and contract with the varying temperatures.

We stayed in the Terrace Suite, where the king bed beckoned invitingly with its earth toned paisley headboard and elegantly dressed bedding of taupe coverlet, white and slate decorative pillows, and mushroom bedskirt. Glass topped dark wood nightstands flanked either side of the bed where we found a stargazing chart perfect for enjoying the dark night sky far removed from big city lights and a Bose Wave Radio/CD. Lamps and brass sconces illuminated the high-ceiling room, interesting paintings graced the walls, and two slipper chairs flanked the Bang & Olufsen television. A large mirror hung over a wood bureau, and a thoughtfully equipped desk with ladder-back chair with leather upholstery completed the bedroom ambience.

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Terrace Suite

The bathroom featured a footed soaking tub fitted with a bath tray, a large walk-in shower, and butler delivered amenities that included a choice of Bulgari, Ermengilda Zegna, or Sensha. A rectangular mirror with side sconces and a shaving mirror hung over the white marble topped vanity that held a calla lily in a brass vase, and a tall glass and metal stand held a hairdryer.



View from the Terrace Suite

Two teal jars added a touch of visual appeal between the pillars that divided the bedroom from the sitting area with its arched windows, champagne window treatments, patterned carpet on stone floor, and two tobacco love seats flanking a wood and wrought iron round table set with a bottle of VOSS water and a delectable plate of cookies.

Although there was a selection of CDs to choose from in the room, as well as a DVD and CD library, we slipped in a CD from our own collection, **Ian Shaw's, Somewhere Towards Love**, and with our butler delivered glasses of champagne in hand, went outside to our private terrace to enjoy the spectacular sunset where there were two chairs, a round stone table, and two chaises flanking a small wood table.

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Stone Table and Chairs on Private Terrace

Wheatleigh knows how to decadently pamper their guests with in-room spa services, a well-equipped fitness room, chocolate tastings on Wednesday and Friday evenings, wine tastings held each evening at 5:30 pm in the wine cellar, and complimentary in-room high-speed Internet. The Berkshires offers much to explore, and the hotel thoughtfully provides guests with complimentary use of a "Tom-Tom" navigational device during their stay.

We had a lovely lunch in **The Library at Wheatleigh** where we sat at a table by a large Palladian window and soaked up the bright autumn sunlight and enjoyed the spectacular view of the mountains. The room had a high ceiling, Delft china in glass cases lined the walls, and a white marble fireplace with blue and white ginger pots accessorized the mantle. The walls were painted various shades of butternut, burnt orange, and sienna that were accessorized with paintings, and were dramatic against the dark wood doors and the pristine white ornate molding. A green leather banquette was flanked by bottle green leather and wood chairs, a large lamp shade covered fixture hung from the center of the room, tables were dressed with woven runners and acrylic salt and pepper grinders, and a patterned sage carpet on the wood floor completed the contemporary décor.



The Library at Wheatleigh

Lunch began with aperitifs of Pol Roger champagne to complement the amuse bouche of broccoli mousse with black sesame lavash, accompanied by French baguettes and butter. A few of the highlights of our lunch celebrating autumn included Fall Greens with Blue Cheese, Honeycrisp Apple, and Spiced Nuts; Butternut Squash Soup, with Orange, Rosemary, and Chestnuts; Pheasant with Polenta; and Smoked Salmon and Artichoke Quiche, with Arugula, Radish, and Fennel.

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Salmon and Artichoke Quiche

During our stay, the evening wine tasting featured three distinctive wines, each with its own unique personality. Sebastian, the Sommelier at Wheatleigh, began the tasting with **Chateau Garraud, Grand Vin de Bordeaux, Lalande de Pomerol, 2001, France**, 13.5% alcohol, made from a blend of Merlot and Cabernet Franc that was bottle aged and offered good complexity and mouth-feel.



Wine Cellar

The second wine of the tasting was **Glen Carlou, Grand Classique 2004, South Africa**, 14.5% alcohol, made from a blend of 45% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot, 10% Malbec, 7% Petit Verdot, and 3% Cabernet Franc. This style of wine was completely different from the first wine that we tasted, and had a lovely deep color and offered more concentrated black fruit on the nose, spices, was much more aromatic, was jammy with rich black fruit, drier on the palate, and had more tannins.

The last wine of the tasting was **Domaine de la Janasse, Terre d'Argile, Côtes du Rhône Villages, 2005, France**, 14.5% alcohol, made with a blend of 55% Grenache, 25% Syrah, 10% Carignan, 5% Cinsault, and 5% Mourvedre. 2005 was a very good year for wine in France, and this aromatic Côtes du Rhône wine made from a vineyard near the Chateaufort du Pape vineyards showed especially good form and promise.



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Wine Tasting

We had an elegant dinner in **The Dining Room at Wheatleigh** where the tables



were dressed with white linens and hurricane globe gas lamps and the white marble fireplace glowed with a plethora of white pillar candles softly illuminating the room, which featured an antique mirror gracing a taupe wall accessorized with paintings and ornate white molding.

A few of the many highlights of our dinner included an amuse bouche of pistachio mousse piped on spoons and celery root mousse with diced root vegetables presented on baguette toasts; Hamachi Sashimi with Matsutake, Edamame, and Shiso; Wild Burgundy Snails with Potato, Celery Root, and Averdale Cauliflower; Foie Gras au Torchon with Apple Ice Wine, Hazelnuts, and Radish; Squab with Cepes, Butternut Squash, and Cocoa Nib Alaskan Cod with Savoy Cabbage, Sunchoke and Burgundy Truffle; and Jamison Farms Lamb with Sweet Potato, Artichokes, and Brussels Sprout Leaves.



Jamison Farms Lamb

After an enchanting evening, we had a gourmet breakfast of Burgundy Artichoke Scramble accompanied by a wedge of potato crisp that had been thinly shredded into long spaghetti-like strands, and the result offered a rich textural delight, in the sun-bathed conservatory where low background music complemented the beautiful surroundings.

The day was warm and clear and perfect for strolling the attractive grounds and admiring the sculptures in the garden, where I could imagine many a cocktail party taking place. Just beyond the sculpture garden, there was a private and secluded outdoor swimming pool, which was of course, closed during our November 2009 visit.

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Wheatleigh Grounds

Although there is much to do and see in The Berkshires, the teak chairs on the rolling expanse of lawn beckoned to us like sirens calling sailors as the day was made for lazing and soaking up the sunshine like pampered housecats. From our place on the lawn, the mountains lay directly in front of us where we could see all the way to the lake where there was not a cloud in the perfect blue sky. The landscape was stunning, tall pines trees stood like sentinels surrounded by deciduous trees, most of which had lost their leaves for the upcoming winter, with a faint white moon perfectly poised and framed by the trees. It was peaceful sitting on the lawn with the only sound that of the wind gently rustling through the trees, as we watched a bird soaring over the property, and an occasional leaf falling to the ground. The ambience at Wheatleigh was encouraging and inspirational, and sitting there I could easily understand and appreciate how The Berkshires inspired so many writers including Edith Wharton, as well as artists, and musicians; Edward and I cannot wait to return.



Debra Relaxing at Wheatleigh

Wheatleigh serves lighter fare in **The Library** with lunch served in summer and winter, Monday through Saturday from 12:00 pm until 2:00 pm, and dinner in the Summer, Sunday through Thursday from 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm, on Friday and Saturday from 5:00 pm until 9:30 pm. During winter, dinner is served Sunday through Thursday from 6:00 pm until 8:30 pm, and on Friday and Saturday from 6:00 pm until 9:00 pm. Sunday Brunch is served from 9:30 am until 1:00 pm.

Dinner is served in **The Dining Room** during the summer from Sunday through Thursday from 5:00 pm until 9:00 pm, and on Friday and Saturday from 5:00 pm until 9:30 pm. During winter, dinner is served Sunday through Thursday from 6:00 pm until 8:30 pm, and Friday and Saturday from 6:00 pm until 9:00 pm.

Read about **Wheatleigh** in the [Restaurants](#) section and in [Chefs' Recipes](#) where **Chef Jeffrey Thompson** shares a taste of **The Dining Room at Wheatleigh** with his enticing recipes for **Pan Seared Foie Gras, Puy Lentils, Baby Turnips, Green Apple Mustard Sorbet**; and **Sablefish, Parmesan Gnocchi, Cauliflower, and Shellfish Boudin**.

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Wheatleigh
Hawthorne Road
Lenox, Massachusetts 01240
United States
Telephone: +1-413-637-0610
www.Wheatleigh.com

Read other articles on **The Berkshires** in the [Destinations](#), [Hotels and Resorts](#), [Restaurants](#), [Chefs' Recipes](#), [Spas](#), and [Arts](#) sections.



For more information on **The Berkshires**, please visit the **Berkshire Visitors Bureau** website: www.Berkshires.org.



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