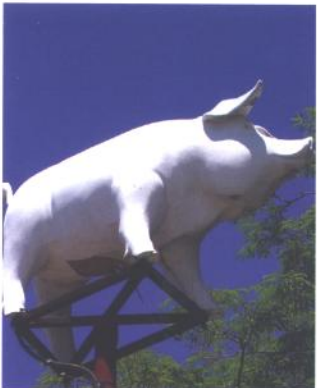
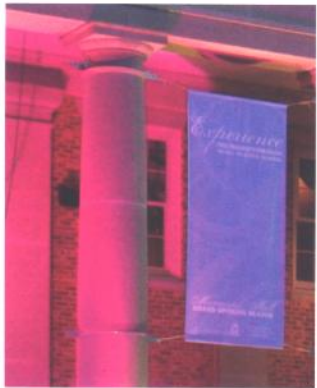
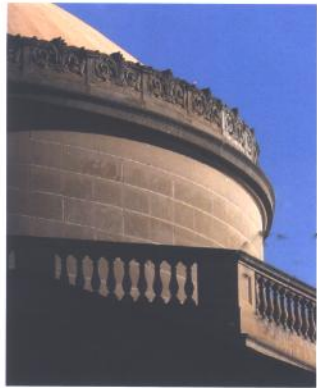
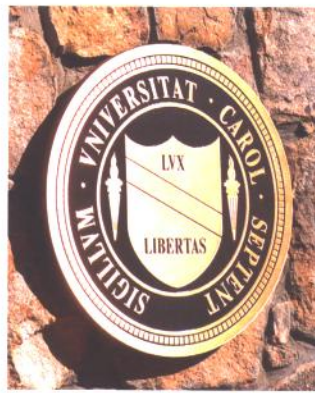


PERSPECTIVES

of Chapel Hill & Carrboro



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An Award-Winning Publication of the Chamber of Commerce



» The town is named after a chapel that once stood on the hill now occupied by the Carolina Inn.

the university's living room

BY LEA HART

On certain Fridays throughout the fall, a change comes over the Carolina Inn.

Morning finds the business traveler checking out. The elegant lobby is quiet as guests enjoy breakfast at the Carolina Crossroads Restaurant and Bar.

As morning turns into afternoon, a transformation takes place. It can be felt as cars arrive flying Tar Heel flags and guests enter the lobby dressed in Carolina blue. UNC-Chapel Hill flags fly throughout the Inn and blue and white balloons adorn the common areas. It is college football season and these fans aren't as much visiting the Inn as they are coming home again.

Many of these UNC-Chapel Hill alumni return every year during football season. They choose to stay at the Inn because of its long history with UNC-Chapel Hill. Some request specific hotel rooms for each stay. Others want to park in the same parking space. For these guests, it's about tradition.

"It's almost like they're part owners of the hotel, they're so connected to it," says Mark Nelson, director of sales and marketing for the Inn.

Whether they are alumni, or even visiting with the opposing team, there's excitement and a friendly rivalry that takes over, says Greg Hilker, director of operations for the Inn.

"It's almost like you're back in college again yourself," he says.

It is just part of the reason the Inn has become known as the University's Living Room.

Originally built in 1924, UNC-Chapel Hill has owned the Inn throughout most of its existence. Everyone from Eleanor Roosevelt to Michael Jordan has passed through these doors.

"You never know who you're going to see here," says Nelson.

By no means just for Carolina fans, the Inn offers a range of amenities to locals and visitors.

The business traveler will find complimentary WiFi, and a location convenient to Research Triangle Park and the airport. Locals and travelers alike enjoy the Carolina Crossroads, a Mobil Four Star Award Winning restaurant that features such dishes as pan-seared halibut with a spinach risotto. Or they might take pleasure in a traditional afternoon tea at one of the tables or plush sitting areas in the expansive lobby.



The holiday season brings the Inn's elaborate "12 Days of Christmas" displays, accompanied by special events throughout December.

"Families come in to get into the Christmas spirit, to see the decorations and walk through the Inn," says Hilker.

Spring at the Inn means "Birdhouses on Parade" featuring a display of unique birdhouses crafted by artists. From late spring to early fall, live music resonates from the Inn's shady front lawn each Friday as part of the "Fridays on the Front Porch" music series.

Come Halloween, guests may want to seek out the ghost that legend says haunts the Inn. The story goes that the spirit of former Carolina professor and longtime resident of the Inn, William Jacocks, still resides at the Inn. But don't worry, "he's a friendly ghost," Nelson says. Jacocks' ghost is known as a prankster, sometimes locking doors or moving chairs.

With the support of UNC-Chapel Hill, the Inn works to combine the classic feel of a historic Southern inn with the modern day amenities that travelers seek. Whether it plays host to football fans, business travelers, or visiting dignitaries, Nelson says the Inn strives to be everything to everybody; Hilker feels its notable success in that endeavor is due in part to the staff.

"It's not just a job," he says. "Everyone truly has a warm spot in their heart for the Inn, and that extends to the town of Chapel Hill and the university." *P*

