

Highlander Mountain House Is Immersed In Rich Appalachian History

Highlands' Highlander Mountain House has a story to tell to all who will listen.



Highlands, N.C., positioned within the Nantahala National Forest, has a storied history full of booms and busts: Cherokee tribes, the rise of the railroad, Scots-Irish settlers—all that old Appalachia encompasses. The Highlands story comes together in the interiors of boutique mountain lodge Highlander Mountain House. Folk music hums, the fireplace crackles and the floorboards creak as you walk into what is seemingly someone's living room. Eclectic charm and hints of Southern tradition are everywhere and it is evident someone has put their heart and soul into this place, which instills a sense of warmth like no other.



A main house deluxe king room with a private balcony

The structure, reportedly built in 1885 by a sea captain from Charleston, now functions as an inn and houses 18 rooms and one restaurant. Every detail, down to historic preservation, came from the mind of Jason Reeves, designer, owner and visionary of HMM. "Here, the spirit is [that of] an English eclectic country house transposed into Appalachia with all the richness, layers, comfort and eclectic nature that would imply," he says. "[I wanted] to create a lodging and dining experience for the experiential travelers who were becoming more aware of Highlands but hadn't quite found their fit, [a place] where creatives, blue bloods, families and the curious well-traveled would feel at home and identify with the soul of the place." The interiors feature custom lighting, wallpaper and textiles from Morris & Co., Mulberry Home and House of Hackney contrasted with art from Cherokee Nation, botanicals, nature scenes and even original portraits of the late Josef Albers, teacher at nearby Black Mountain College, and Sally Mann. Clockwise from left: A main house standard queen room furnished with vintage art and a oneof-a-kind headboard; a main house deluxe king room with similar decor as well as a private balcony; the living room with a roaring fireplace off the lobby; seating at The Ruffed Grouse.



The living room with a roaring fireplace off the lobby

As special as the decor is, the location's primordial roots of soulful restoration sprinkled with the healing properties of nature shine through just as brightly. Says Reeves, "For me, hospitality is all about storytelling, so I wanted to provide a backdrop from where guests would find inspiration and want to immerse themselves in both the outdoors and in Highlands' rich history." Explore the network of trails, tributaries, waterfalls and trout streams that fill this pocket of the world, then find respite at HMH's two distinct lodging options of English countryside home and a more rustic bunkhouse feel, full of character. Expect velvet headboards, a continuation of story-worthy art, Moroccan zellige tiles and Malin+Goetz bathroom necessities. Tired from your travels, dine at the in-house restaurant or sit by the fireplace with a hearty bourbon—I'm sure someone will approach with their own story to tell. *Deluxe suites from \$300 per night, highlandermountainhouse.com*

