



www.highlandhaven.com

Story Ideas

Reinventing the Bed & Breakfast

- The Highland Haven is not your mama's B&B. Owners Gail Riley and Tom Statzell have a strict no-dolies policy. While the buildings are historic, the décor, service and high-tech amenities (flat-screen TVs, wireless high-speed internet, etc.) are anything but. Rooms and amenities are consistently updated, breakfast is hearty but healthy, and more and more businesses are meeting at the Highland Haven for functional, yet creative and relaxing retreats.
- The Highland Haven is using its 30th anniversary to announce plans for its first major expansion – a 700-square-foot, above-ground, environmentally friendly guest accommodation called the Tree House. With an eye toward earning LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification from the U.S. Green Building Council, the new energy-efficient space will be constructed largely of reclaimed and sustainable materials.
- The Highland Haven is a thoroughly modern “mom and pop” operation. Purdue University graduates, Riley and Statzell have brought their education and talents (hers in art and his in building) to their jobs. Riley handles all the interior design and oversees food preparation and presentation. Statzell refurbished the Dailey Cabin, remodels rooms, builds furniture and maintains the grounds. They possess 30 years of on-the-job training in hospitality, tourism and business. They raised their two children at the inn and are intimately involved in their local community. Among other business and charitable organizations, Gail is active on Evergreen's Art for the Mountain Community public sculpture committee, while Tom serves on the board of the Bootstraps college scholarship foundation. For the combined contributions of the Highland Haven and its owners, the Evergreen Area Chamber of Commerce named the inn 2008 Business of the Year.

The Evolution of an Inn

- The Highland Haven has a fascinating history. Its owners have literally “double-handedly” taken it from a humble roadside motel when they bought it in 1979 and transformed it into the award-winning, nationally recognized and respected inn it is today. They did all the work themselves.
- The inn had an interesting history even before Tom and Gail bought it in 1979. The Dailey Cabin is believed to be first cabin ever built in Bear Creek Canyon. Buildings were added and the site became a summer motel at some point in the early 1950s. During the school year, it was used to house local schoolteachers.

(more)

Inspiring Romance

- The Highland Haven has made a name for itself by creating one of the most romantic inns in the country (according to *Sunset* magazine, www.iloveinns.com and others). How? The gorgeous mountain setting along a gurgling creek is a good start. But the owners have worked hard to inspire romance by stimulating the senses – *sight* (the setting, inviting plush furnishings, beautifully presented breakfast, the romantic sculpture called “Intimacy” overlooking Bear Creek); *sound* (the gurgling creek, crackling fire, silence); *scent* (fresh-brewed coffee, fresh flowers, fresh air); *taste* (hot, homemade breakfast, sparkling wine, rich port, sumptuous chocolate); and *touch* (the feel of luxurious linens, plush robes, Jacuzzi jets).
- A Lover’s Lane and Sweetheart Trees can be found among the towering Blue Spruces on the gorgeous grounds of the inn. Lover’s Lane is paved with stepping-stones engraved with guests’ names and significant dates, such as anniversaries. The 30-foot-tall Sweetheart Trees are carved with hearts that include guests’ names or initials.
- Guest journals in each room contain thousands of testimonials from guests about their romantic experiences, some funny, some poignant, all from the heart. As one guest wrote:
“Baked oatmeal, fruit and egg casserole, Sounds from Bear Creek
Birds in their nest... Highland Haven gave us their best.”

Hearty, Healthy Recipes

- Owner Gail Riley put so much of her heart and soul into the inn and its breakfasts, she decided to share much of what she’s learned by publishing a book, *Colorado Cravings, Recipes and Romance from the Award-Winning Highland Haven Creekside Inn* (www.coloradocravings.com). The trick for Gail has always been to serve a hearty, satisfying homemade breakfast, but one that is healthy. The book includes her decidedly “unfussy” recipes, along with original watercolors, beautiful photographs and charming reflections from her 30 years of cooking, entertaining and decorating at the inn.
- Riley is also skilled at creating one-of-a-kind theme parties according to occasion, holiday or season. One of her favorites is the “River Runs Through It” fly-fishing party, highlighted by her popular Bear Creek Smoked Trout Pate.

Doing Business Outside the Box

- The Highland Haven has been proactively and successfully soliciting more business clientele. Their clients – which include Pfizer, Noodles & Company, Pinnacol and Conversant -- find that having the necessary business tools in a non-traditional setting spurs creativity and productivity.

The “Staycation”

- Economic woes have caused many consumers to vacation much closer to home. The Highland Haven’s marketing efforts reflect this trend. For its 30th anniversary, the inn is offering a “Friday Night Special,” during which anyone with an 80439 zip code can save \$100 when booking one of the inn’s seven premium accommodations through May 1st.
- According to Riley, people continue to celebrate anniversaries, birthdays and other occasions no matter the state of the economy. Those who live nearby can still enjoy an memorable getaway -- and *feel* like they’re miles away from everything -- without investing the time and expense involved in traveling abroad, flying or even taking a long car ride. The perfect “TET” (tough economic times) remedy.

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