

Hospitality House

Watermark Inn continues B&B tradition in Challis

By Rose Cheff

What do you get when a financial manager and an art teacher make their life's dream come true? You get The Watermark Inn in Challis, which combines old-time Western hospitality and European flair.

Although they were living what many consider a good life, Sahra and Adam Beaupre wanted something different.

Born in Sun Valley and raised in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, Adam ventured east for college and met Sahra while attending the University of Virginia. Sahra was born in Alabama and raised in Washington, D.C. They both loved the West, so they chose to live in Denver after college. Adam worked in finance. Sahra taught art and coached swimming,

Rick Trusnovec, who was selling his outfitting business. Sahra found out that Don and Bonnie Rowles were selling their bed and breakfast, The Benjamin Inn. In March 2012, they became the owners of a bed and breakfast and, in July 2012, Horse Creek Outfitters. The Beaupres were home.

They renamed the bed and breakfast The Watermark Inn.

"It's kind of an interesting story," says Sahra.

The house was built in 1896 and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the historic Penwell House. Former owners Don and Bonnie Rowles restored the home and named it The Benjamin Inn after their son. Interested in finding a name that fit the home, the Beaupres remembered stories Bonnie told them during the initial tour. There were many possibilities, but after Bonnie pointed out a water mark in the front entryway that was part of the original 80-year-old hardwood floor, they had their name—The Watermark Inn.

"The home was gorgeous when we purchased it," says Sahra. "We wanted to continue in the same spirit of beautification as the Rowles."

Local resident Wanda Swigert scraped, primed and re-painted the exterior with her crew, and Ron Bloxham enlarged the back deck out to Garden Creek. Several Challis and Salmon contractors helped the Beaupres remodel the ground-level area for their living quarters. Using family antiques, including 100-year-old Western saddles and tack, plus some of Sahra and Adam's personal paintings and artwork, they added their flavor to the home.

"We want the folks coming in for back-country trips to be as comfortable here as international travelers," Sahra says.

The Beaupres love the Challis area.

"People have been very helpful," says Adam. "Rick Trusnovec (former owner of Horse Creek Outfitters) is a great guy. He's helped me get more comfortable with the area. Jim Harwood, owner of local Creekside Inn Bed and Breakfast, has gone out of his way to make us feel at home and send business our way. Everyone we've dealt with has been wonderful, from our neighbors—like Jim and Suzie Crockett who bring over fresh produce and jam—local business owners—like the entire staff at Allied—to our



Sahra and Adam Beaupre in the Watermark Inn family room with Rhino and Beebe.

track and cross country. Adam dreamed of owning an outfitting business and sharing his love of outdoors with others. Sahra's artistic bent included baking and home decorating. She wanted to use those skills and her love of people to provide a comfortable haven for weary travelers.

Taking a leap of faith, the Beaupres took a year off to follow their dream. With their two dogs in tow, they meandered across the small towns of the West. In Challis, they found what they sought. Adam met

amazing guests.”

Sahra wants to offer visitors a unique experience, whether with food or ambiance.

“We want to make sure we provide the same welcoming atmosphere that the former owners, Don and Bonnie Rowles, did.”

Sahra says. “When we decided to open a bed and breakfast, I spent a month in New York with my best friend, who is a classically trained French chef. Now I can provide an even greater variety of food for our guests.”

“We want The Watermark Inn to be an adventure for visitors, not just a place to sleep,” says Adam. “With that in mind, we offer trail rides, big game hunting, fishing and photography pack trips for our guests. We also know people travel with pets, so we have a special place for them to stay. We’ve created vacation packages that include staying at the inn and taking one of our trail ride adventures.”

In accord with the Western hospitality theme, the four guest rooms at The Watermark Inn are named for branches of the Salmon River. The North Fork, Yankee Fork and Middle Fork rooms are on the second floor. The pet-friendly East Fork is located on the ground level and has a private entrance.

A stay at The Watermark Inn includes a multi-course brunch. With 24 hours’ notice, the inn also serves dinner at an additional cost.

“Our home-grown fruits and vegetables are the cornerstone of our seasonal menus,” Sahra says. “We take pleasure in serving our guests fresh, local and hearty meals. We prefer to shop locally and use local produce and goods, whenever possible.”

Working in the kitchen, Sahra is making chocolate chip cookies for the family from France scheduled to come in that evening.

“I love meeting the people that stay at our inn,” she says. “This family has children, so I want to make sure they have cookies when they check in.” ■

Call The Watermark Inn at (208) 879-5084 or visit www.thewatermarkinn.com. The inn is at 842 North Ave. in Challis.



Above, Sahra cleans up in the large kitchen after serving breakfast to her guests.

Photo by Rose Cheff



Left, the spacious front porch of the house.

Below, previous owners Don and Bonnie Rowles renovated the old house and opened the Benjamin Inn, now renamed the Watermark Inn by the Beaupres. They continue to restore and beautify the home.

Photos by Sahra Beaupre

