



## Bed & Breakfast With Style

by Melissa Wolcott

My mother recently celebrated her 91st birthday, and since she has always expressed an interest in staying in a Bed & Breakfast Inn, I decided this was a good opportunity to do so. I chose the Sunset Bay Inn, downtown St. Petersburg, because it is nearby, and has an excellent reputation.

I'm afraid we have been spoiled by our experience there, as no other B&B can possibly compare. Our hosts, Bob and Martha Bruce, are a delightful couple who take obvious pride in their home. It was absolutely spotless inside (nary a dust bunny in sight), and meticulously cared for outside. We are in agreement with AAA, which gave the inn it's coveted 4 diamond status. Only four B&Bs in Florida (out of 600) have been awarded this honor.

I'd like to claim cleverness on my part for choosing this 91 year old Colonial Revival home in honor of my mother's 91st birthday, but it was just a quirk of fate. She was, however, pleased with the coincidence, and enjoyed the architecture and room layouts, which reminded her of homes of her youth.

The Sunset Bay Inn has 6 rooms in the main house, and 2 in the carriage house, all of which carry a theme with special meaning to our hosts. We stayed in the "Highlands Room", named for Highlands, NC where Bob and Martha were married. The room featured Williamsburg designed drapes, comforter and accessories, and was highlighted with magnolias, dogwoods and tiffany lamps. Every detail in each room is thought out and well placed. Plush robes hang in the closet, cable TV & VCRs are found in every room, and turn down service is there at the end of your day. There is a journal in each room where guests can write about their visit. Glancing through, I found nothing but high praise, and a promise of return visitors.

The house has been in Martha's family since the 50s, and has gone through extensive renovations. To keep on the historical

register, they had to adhere to strict rules about renovating. Even though it maintains its historic feel, it is also feels very contemporary with sleek modern bathrooms including jacuzzis. Guests even have fax, computer and internet access.

Their full homebaked gourmet breakfasts are a delicious delight, enjoyed in the



and a newspaper is placed at the door to your room.

Bob and Martha go out of their way to make sure you feel at home in their inn, with everything you can think of provided for you. The common areas are homey and comfortable and come complete with a pet! Their standard poodle, Amy, greets visitors, and is very well behaved — she, too, is meticulously groomed.

Although they cater to folks from around the world, Bob said many of their guests are people who live right in St. Petersburg who just want to get away for some R&R and TLC. I'll be one of them.

*The Sunset Bay Inn is located at 635 Bay Street NE, St.*

*Petersburg, FL 33701. For more information or reservations, call 727-896-6701 (800) 794-5133, or visit website: [www.sunsetbayinn.com](http://www.sunsetbayinn.com). Rates: \$150-\$240.*



*The Highlands Room*

dining room with the company of the other guests. Cookies, cake, and beverages are set out near the dining room for late night snackers. Tea and coffee are available on the landing for early risers,

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