



THE BERRY HILL RESORT

Now That's History!

My friend said he was getting married in late December in South Boston. I told him it must be nice around Cape Cod that time of year.

“South Boston, Virginia.”

Off we flew from Sarasota to Raleigh, North Carolina, then drove two hours north to Southern Virginia. If you want to know where South Boston is—it’s near Halifax, and I don’t mean Nova Scotia!

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I researched “Best places to stay” —and the answer became obvious: “The Berry Hill Resort.” Turns out it’s a National Historic Landmark. (www.BerryHillResort.com)

We knew we were arriving someplace special as we cruised up the manicured tree-lined entry driveway for half a mile. The resort sits on a 700-acre campus—but it used to be even bigger: In 1841, James Cole Bruce bought Berry Hill from Revolutionary War hero General Edward Carrington. The land was originally part of a 105,000-acre tract granted by the English Crown in 1728 to William Byrd II. Talk about history!

The book “Architecture in Virginia” called it the finest example of domestic Greek Revival architecture in the United States. “Berry Hill is a notable achievement when realized it was carried to completion in a remote area. This isolation gives the entire composition an almost theatrical air or romanticism.”

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We were greeted by a stunning mansion with eight big columns. The mansion walls are built of 3-foot-thick brick and the steps—and even the windowsills—are made of granite. There are pavilions—or mini-mansions on either side called the “Jefferson and Lafayette mansionettes.” (The bride and groom stayed in one of these on their wedding night.) Behind the mansion is the hotel where we stayed. Since it’s on a hill, guests go downstairs from the lobby to get to the rooms! Our room had a beautiful porch and view of the side lawn. There are a total of ninety-two guest rooms, each with canopies over the Italian handcrafted beds.



We arrived later in the evening and had two quite different options for dinner: The Mansion Restaurant and Darby's Tavern. Having traveled all day, we chose the latter. This is a popular place for those who live in South Boston as well. Quite a few residents made for a lively atmosphere. I had a wonderful wedge salad with a salmon addition. My wife, Erin, had a Marinated Ribeye. We were both happy with our choices—followed by hot coffee and a dish of ice cream.

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The next morning was chilly and rainy—so we were happy to have a free continental breakfast in a small dining room behind the front desk. Afterwards we took advantage of the amenities in an adjacent building—including the work-out room, sauna, and heated indoor pool. There's also a "European-quality spa" that offers massages, body treatments and manicures.

The wedding ceremony later that day was in the mansion—and though it was raining, the short walk to the big historic building was covered. The ballroom was neatly set-up with dozens of chairs—and after a reception in the parlor upstairs—we returned to that same spacious room for dinner and dancing. It is easy to see why the Berry Hill Resort is one of the top wedding venues in Virginia. (They have professional wedding planners and an experienced culinary staff ready to help plan the big day. They're also popular with corporate meetings and even family reunions.)

We had a wonderful visit to this beautiful part of our country—and would highly recommend a stay at the Berry Hill Resort.

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