

Waynesville, N.C.: Stay small, stay safe at The Yellow House Bed and Breakfast

Sideroads

BONNIE EAST

Welcome to Sideroads! A new *Smoke Signals* occasional column taking you on off-the-beaten path getaways from North Georgia. Research is showing that Americans are still eager to travel, but they want destinations away from big cities, offering unique experiences and coronavirus-safe practices.

In the coming months, I will introduce you to unique places, lodging ideas, dining establishments, and points of interest. I am eager to share stories of remarkable small business owners who are passionate beyond words about what they do.

Come with me to Waynesville, N.C., about a three-hour drive from North Georgia. Perhaps you've passed through Waynesville on your way to Asheville. If so, do a U-turn and go back. It meets all our requirements with an additional feature: pet-friendly venues.

Waynesville is packed with treats

At the center of the map, Waynesville's Main Street Historic District is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places and is full of shops, restaurants, and galleries. Move in any direction outside the city limits and you're just minutes to Smoky Mountain National Park, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and Pisgah National Forest.

Lodging is always important and our family (me, my husband Jeff and our dog Diesel) found a gem. Let me introduce you to Innkeepers Chad King and Josh Larson of The Yellow House Bed and Breakfast. Here you'll find a beautiful historic home dating back to the 1800s with traveler-friendly features: luxury bed and bath linens, remarkable coronavirus-safe efforts and two of the seven suites designated as pet-friendly. Diesel had his own welcome basket upon entering the room. Jeff and I had butter toffee cashew bars, baked fresh that day, a snack assortment, and beverages we chose ahead of time.

The house has been through various owners over the last 140 years and has fun history of being a social club and speakeasy at one time, the driveway was curved so that early owners could see the "Feds" coming. And while it's been repainted, owners have retained the original yellow color since it was first built.

Chad and Josh bought the B&B just last October. They left the corporate world once they realized the innkeeper tribe and hospitality was their true calling.

"Sanitary is the new chic!"

While they continue to renovate landscaping on the five lush acres that includes two ponds, Chad and Josh were forced to quickly add focus to safety policies. Their new mantra is "Stay small, stay safe."



Tracie Horner, owner of The Patio Bistro. PHOTOS BY BONNIE EAST



Innkeepers Chad King and Josh Larson of The Yellow House Bed and Breakfast.



Gourmet breakfast prepared fresh by Chad and Josh.

"Sanitary is the new chic!" Chad chuckles. "We removed throw pillows, decorative clutter, and open beverage stations. Instead, we iron pillowcases and provide snack and beverage trays for each room that have been sanitized and covered."

"We now offer our gourmet breakfast delivered to rooms, upon request, at no additional charge," adds Josh. "It was originally offered for an upcharge but it is now standard for guests who prefer this option to feel safe."

Guests can also opt to eat on the large covered veranda, which has a beautiful view of the grounds. Tables are appropriately spaced and seating times can be chosen to avoid other guests.

"We've also gone the extra mile to reserve only one of the suites upstairs at a time, to ensure that guests do not have to pass other guests on the staircase," said Josh. "It's important for guests to come here, relax, and not worry." In addition, there are four rooms with private entrances if you prefer to avoid contact with others.

For my stay, I chose to eat outside. Chad baked lemon and ginger scones for starters, along with a fruit, cream, and granola compote. The main entrée was a fluffy asparagus quiche, sausage, and a summer arugula salad. Coffee, teas, and juices were offered. It was delicious and hearty.



Award-winning brisket from Haywood Smokehouse.



Joe Beasley shows off at his smokehouse alongside master smoker Clay Williamson.

Oh, and just in case you've had to cancel a wedding this year due to the coronavirus, Chad is ordained and can help you tie the knot.

"We're offering elopements as a new specialty," Chad exclaims. "People are still wanting to get married and we can help them do that in a safe yet romantic setting."

The Yellow House Bed & Breakfast partners with other businesses in a way that helps you understand Waynesville's culture. One of the local distilleries provides glass-bottled hand sanitizer at every entrance, including suites. And a local pet shop provides a bag of dog treats in the pet-friendly rooms.

When you're ready to venture out, there are more places to eat and things to do than I can write about. But I do have some pet-friendly favorites.

Lunch at the Patio Bistro

I stopped for lunch on our way in at the Patio Bistro near the successfully revitalized Main Street. Tracie Horner, the owner, is celebrating her 20th business anniversary this year, which means she knows what she's doing. Her menu changes seasonally and food items are made fresh daily. Her chicken noodle soup sells out so if you're lucky enough to visit on chicken noodle soup day, you better grab it. I had the summer salad and a delicious sampling of other fresh items. Diesel met Daphne on the pet-friendly garden patio, which is about as beautiful an outdoor setting as you'll find for lunch. And there's a clean water bowl for every dog.

Masks are required until you reach your table and tables are sanitized between parties. But there's also a commitment to community support here, as well as all around Waynesville. Inside the Patio Bistro

"Research is showing that Americans are still eager to travel, but they want destinations away from big cities, offering unique experiences and coronavirus-safe practices."

is a sign that reads, "When you buy from a mom or pop...you are helping a little girl get dance lessons, a little boy get his team jersey...our customers are our shareholders and they are the ones we strive to make happy." Top that off with great food and you've got 20 years of success.

Haywood Smokehouse for serious appetites

When you've worked up a serious appetite, you MUST eat at the Haywood Smokehouse. Has Joe Beasley got a story for you!

He started his career in competition cooking. His smokehouse in Waynesville is now blowing smoke 24/7 and has ranked in recent years with Trip Advisor and other reviewers as one of the top 100 restaurants nationwide, top 10 in barbeque, #1 restaurant in N.C., #46 in the country, and on and on. He's got enough loyal customers to open a smokehouse in Dillsboro and Franklin (N.C.) too.

Joe told me stories about sauces, dry rubs, the meaning of "living high on the hog" and how "we're only as good as our last meal. If I wouldn't want it on my plate, it's not going to be on yours." Speaking of plates, I had brisket that now ranks as my favorite beef entrée of my lifetime. I got to eat Nana's coleslaw and Grandma's potato salad, and a special recipe for burnt-ends baked beans. Just shut up. When Joe opened the smoker for me to see the briskets turning, it became clear that there are lots of corners in the Haywood Smokehouse. Because Joe doesn't cut them anywhere.

And high on the hog? "Back in the day, it's the meat that only the wealthy could afford," Joe said. "It was high on the hog's body. Poorer people used vinegar to tenderize the lower, tougher portions of the hog. That's how BBQ sauce got started." There you have it.

Plenty more to see—and taste

Shout outs go to some other great places too: BooJum Brewing Company and their Get Off My Cloud IPA (yep, I really liked it), Jose's Taco Truck (authentic street tacos), and Sunburst Trout Farm and Market (Oh my – their smoked trout is incredible). The Blue Rooster Southern Grill and Sweet Onion are another two of my favorites.

And one more thing, you're minutes from Water Rock Knob on The Blue Ridge Parkway, Milepost 451.2. In this area, you'll find the highest hike-able point on the Parkway (at elevation 6273), the highest drivable point on the parkway, and the highest visitor center on the parkway. It's a must for spectacular sunrises and sunsets! Take a camp chair and a sweater because it gets chilly up that high.

I hope you'll put Waynesville in your GPS! And I'll see you next time, just off the next exit!

Bonnie East has lived in Big Canoe for five years and is an avid off-the-beaten path traveler who collects travel brochures like they're made of gold. If you have a suggestion for a great sideroad to take, please share with her at bonnie@bigcanoenews.com.



Pet-friendly seating area at the Patio Bistro.



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