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PRESS RELEASE

AURORA INN REOPENS AFTER MULTIMILLION DOLLAR RENOVATION

Luxury Inn Expected To Be Among Best In Finger Lakes Wine Region

AURORA, New York - The Aurora Inn, located in the heart of New York State's Finger Lakes wine region, has reopened after a multimillion dollar renovation aimed at creating one of America's finest new country inns. Quiet comfort, impeccable service, exquisite decor and an enchanting waterfront setting are hallmarks of the Inn.

Perched on the eastern shore of Cayuga Lake, in one of the tiniest (population 400) but most historic villages in the area, the red brick Federal-style Inn features 10 luxurious guest rooms and suites with porches, fireplaces and marble baths, and a stunning new restaurant with lakeside dining. The Inn offers a perfect setting for weddings, small corporate retreats and meetings with a beautiful banquet room that opens onto a terrace, with gardens and lawns that roll down to the water.

The Inn was built in 1833. In the mid-19th century, Aurora became a major stop on the Erie Canal for boats carrying agricultural products from area farmers to New York City. Henry Wells, of Wells Fargo stagecoach fame and the founder of American Express, founded Wells College there in 1868. During its colorful past, the Aurora Inn was a favored overnight destination for travelers borne by coach, canal boat and rail, and it has long been a popular spot for students from Wells, Cornell University and other nearby colleges. The Inn was deeded to Wells College in 1943 and, despite several additions and renovations, it struggled financially until it closed in 2000 in need of major restoration.

To breathe new life into the Inn and help revitalize Aurora's economy, Pleasant T. Rowland, a Wells College alumna and the creator of American Girl® dolls, partnered with the college to establish the Aurora Foundation. The Foundation, which managed the Inn's refurbishment and continues to manage its operation, is now working to renovate some of the College's other historic commercial buildings in the village. The Pleasant T. Rowland Foundation is financing the projects and income from the Inn and other properties will benefit Wells College.

Inn Designed To Be Warm, Welcoming

Decorated in an eclectic mix of antiques and Oriental rugs, with designer fabrics and wall coverings in hues of caramel, red, and charcoal, the public rooms at the Inn are intended to be warm and welcoming to both locals and visitors from afar. Four original fireplaces uncovered during the restoration are the focal points of the dining room, bar, parlor, and reception area. Hanging above them are exquisite early portraits of the original owners and managers of the Inn painted around 1842 by noted artist Charles Loring Elliott.

The Aurora Inn features an unusually fine collection of historic and contemporary art. In addition to the four Elliott portraits, the public spaces of the Inn feature a handsome collection of landscapes by noted 18th century artist John Barrow. On loan from the John D. Barrow Art Gallery in nearby Skaneateles, the landscapes feature scenes from the Finger Lakes area. Contemporary works on display at the Aurora Inn include watercolor botanicals by Sergei Bendor and chine collé prints by Steven Barbush, a respected local printmaker whose work is also in the collection of the Johnson Museum of Art at Cornell University.

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The charming new restaurant at the Aurora Inn serves breakfast, lunch and dinner and specialize in old-world “comfort food” made with fresh regional products. A combination of banquettes, intimate booths and cherry tables provides seating for 55 in the main dining room. With a bank of windows and French doors that open onto a porch and tree-shaded veranda, the restaurant offers spectacular views of 38-mile long Cayuga Lake, ringed with farms and vineyards. In summer months, an expansive veranda off the dining room is one of the few places in the Finger Lakes where one can dine outdoors overlooking the lake and the extraordinary sunsets of the region.

In the lounge, a pair of unusual Orkney chairs flank the fireplace, and leather booths and chairs combine with the handcrafted mahogany bar to create a stylishly informal atmosphere. The bar serves wines and spirits from around the world and showcases the outstanding white wines from the Finger Lakes region.

Guest Rooms Blend Old-World Comfort With New-Age Amenities

The spacious guest rooms are a masterful marriage of old-world charm with high-tech creature comforts and amenities. The rooms on the second and third floors all have large windows and deep balcony porches furnished with rocking chairs and swings that overlook the lake or village. There are fireplaces in all of the rooms on the second floor. Botanical print fabrics and wall coverings in shades of taupe and gray with yellow accents complement plush armchairs and writing tables. Comfortable Regency-style beds are made up with Frette linen and down duvets. All guest rooms have marble-clad bathrooms, in-room safes, high-speed Internet access, and custom-built armoires containing LCD flat-panel televisions and other amenities.

Two large suites share the fourth floor, each with a cozy seating area and well-equipped kitchenette. The color scheme in the suites combines soothing taupes, grays and creams with red accents. Bathrooms in the suites each have a deep-soak whirlpool bath with an overhead skylight through which bathers can look out at the stars.

Inn Offers Spectacular Setting For Weddings, Corporate Retreats, Meetings

The banquet room features a 1958 mural by artist Glenn Shaw showing scenes of the village and the College as they appeared in the 19th century. Originally hung in the front hall of the Inn, the mural is now the centerpiece of the beautiful banquet room, where its rich colors inspired dark green paneling and coral furnishings.

Designed with special events in mind, the banquet room can accommodate up to 90 guests for dinner and up to 125 for a cocktail reception. French doors extend the space out to a stone cocktail terrace with sweeping views of the lake. The Inn also offers lakeside lawn weddings for up to 200 guests under pristine white tents.

State-of-the-art audio-visual amenities coupled with a “world-away” setting make the Inn an ideal place for corporate retreats and business meetings. Graceful hospitality is the standard for anything from a small boardroom gathering to a week-long strategy session.

Local Vineyards, Historic Sites, Unique Shops and Restaurants Offer Diversions

Although guests may never want to leave the quiet comfort of the Aurora Inn, leisure and recreational opportunities abound. Especially enticing are tours of local vineyards. Both Cayuga Lake and nearby Seneca Lake have wine trails leading to dozens of vineyards that offer tastings, gourmet food and picnic areas with breathtaking lake views. Other options include boating or fishing on the lake, hunting for bargains at local antique shops, taking a barge ride on the nearby Erie Canal, playing golf at the 9-hole Wells College course or exploring back country roads. Bicycles are available for rent and the Inn will prepare picnic lunches for guests.



Little more than a mile from the Inn is the world-renowned MacKenzie-Childs, maker of whimsical handcrafted tableware and home furnishings. Visitors to MacKenzie-Childs can take a weekday studio tour to watch the artisans at work, tour the restored Victorian farmhouse, stroll through the gardens, shop in the retail store and enjoy a seasonal afternoon tea.

Other diversions in Aurora include the newly renovated Fargo Bar & Grill and Pizzaurora, “the pizzeria with pizzazz,” both located just across the street from the Inn. A block away is Dorie’s, a charming luncheonette and restored soda fountain with a shady deck that overlooks the lake. The Village Market next door to the Inn features fresh produce, baked goods and other specialty foods.

Less than 30 miles away is Seneca Falls, the site of the first women’s rights convention, where the Women’s Rights National Historical Park includes the home of suffrage leader Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Even closer, the city of Auburn features the modest but moving home of Harriet Tubman, who led hundreds of slaves to freedom through the Underground Railroad, as well as the much grander home of William H. Seward, former New York governor and Abraham Lincoln’s Secretary of State.

The Aurora Inn is located on scenic State Route 90, about a half-hour north of Ithaca and one hour from both Rochester and Syracuse, New York. Aurora is an easy five-hour drive from the New York City area.

Rates for the guest rooms range from \$200 to \$300, depending upon the room and season. For more information or to make a reservation, call (315) 364-8888 or visit www.Aurora-Inn.com.