

southern mountain living

Seven Foxes & 260 Waterfalls

Getting Away from It All at Lake Toxaway

WRITTEN BY TOM COOPER

If you promise Atlantans a chance to “get away from it all” you will have takers in big numbers. It seems that many of us have become over-stressed, over-connected and over-driven, not to mention over-worked. So when a getaway invitation comes, and it involves the beautiful southern reaches of the Blue Ridge Mountains in North Carolina, this writer doesn’t hesitate. The invitation came from Marilyn Krone, an ambitious and savvy Atlanta lady, who, along with partner Sandra Baldwin, acquired The Cabins at Seven Foxes, located on a heavily wooded 7-acre parcel near Lake Toxaway, N.C.

The cabins are an easy two-and-a-half to three-hour drive from the Metro Atlanta area. Drive to delightful Highlands, N.C. (the high-end gastronomical Mecca of the Southern Mountains) and have lunch, then continue east on U.S. 64 through Cashiers and past beautiful Lake Toxaway to NC 281 and you’re there. During the height of summer, the lake’s 3,000-foot elevation makes it about 8 to 12 degrees cooler than Hotlanta, adding to the area’s promise to take you away.

The Cabins at Seven Foxes are exquisitely maintained by Linda and Bill Bergamini, a couple who live nearby and who know when to be helpful and when to leave you alone. Owners Krone and Baldwin have a keen sense of how to please their guests and have found two jewels in the Bergamini couple to make that happen.

Each of the five cabins, really more like cottages, has an animal name — Deer Lodge, Raccoon Loft, Squirrel Nest, Bear Cave and Fox Hole. The names carry over into the eclectic, Appalachian-flavored and tasteful decor Krone and Baldwin have provided for each unit. In the Deer Lodge, the largest cabin (about 1,200 square feet) and the one in which we stayed two nights, there are supposedly more than 50 images of deer. My wife and I were too busy doing nothing to bother counting them. Each cabin has a fully equipped kitchen, outdoor gas grill, picnic table, satellite TV/VCR/DVD player, phone, a gas log fireplace and AC/Heat, and the Deer Lodge has a hot tub and private porch.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TOM COOPER



PHOTO COURTESY OF LINDA BERGAMINI



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From left: The road to Deer Lodge in autumn; Deer Lodge at dusk

Nature reigns in this area: 260 waterfalls and 6,000-foot-high peaks. If you're looking for Excitement City, you made the wrong turn. This is peaceful, quiet solitude. It got so quiet the first night I was praying that a black bear would come prowling through the woods just to raise my heart rate. Nothing happened. I got up at 7 a.m.

the next morning to meet my waterfall tour guide, while my wife slept in until 10 — her all-time record.

With leaves on the trees you will not see another cabin. And while summer's shady reprieve is wonderful, the sight is even more spectacular in the fall with the vivid foliage along the mountain ridges. Frolicking animals and good walking trails make wandering about the Seven Foxes property a peaceful and relaxing experience. Adult and well-mannered pets (but no cats) are welcome in certain cottages.

Even though each cabin has an excellent kitchen, several good restaurants are nearby, including the Brown Trout Grille, the Tavern on the Falls (with a waterfall view), and Osteria del Monte. Still, my wife and I settled in so thoroughly that we didn't want to leave the property. That's how it is up there at Seven Foxes. You settle in and don't want to leave. "Combackers" or "Repeaters," as they are known, are the greatest testimony to a venue's quality. A couple from Duluth recently booked their 13th visit to The Cabins at Seven Foxes. Now that is a real testimonial. *sml*

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The Cabins at Seven Foxes

PO Box 123

Lake Toxaway, N.C.

828-877-6333

www.sevenfoxes.com