

## Heidi Fuller-love's Hot Hotels - The Review

### SERENBE ATLANTA GEORGIA

Atlanta is the home of Coca-Cola, southern rap music and the world's largest drive in restaurant (The Varsity), stay at Serenbe and sample a slice of that hip southern style.



**Figure 1** I imagined a concrete block in the midst of an urban sprawl so Serenbe was a BIG surprise..

**First impressions:** Told I was staying twenty minutes from Atlanta's international airport, I imagined a concrete block in the centre of an urban sprawl studded with drive-in hamburger joints, so Serenbe came as a big surprise. Built to resemble an olde-worlde English hamlet (only with heritage-style Atlantan houses, instead of thatched roof cottages), this unique community project is like something out of *Gone With The Wind*. Owners Steve Nygren and wife Marie, who had a chain of local restaurants, wanted to escape the rat race, so they bought an old farmhouse in the 1990's, and moved in with their three daughters, to create a sustainable community. The three gorgeous daughters (all grown up) now run the place and their community has restaurants, art galleries, boutique-y little craft shops, a spa and even a theatre, all surrounding the main farmhouse that dates back to



**Figure 2** Steve Nygren and wife Marie decided to create a sustainable community just a short drive from Atlanta.

**Why go now?** Apart from that relatively toasty winter weather (Atlanta is only a four hour road trip from Florida), there are some fab foodie festivals in Atlanta, including The Beer, Bourbon and BBQ festival, with seminars from barbecue pit masters and lengthy bourbon tasting sessions.

**Room stuff:** With furnished apartments and rooms dotted around the community there's plenty to choose from, but when the weather's bad you'll probably want to cosy up in one of half a dozen rooms in the old farmhouse. Right next to the restaurant where breakfast is served, these vintage-style rooms have cool beige walls, big plump beds and lashings of lavender goodies in ample bathrooms.

I stayed in The Southern Swan, an apartment next to the Daisy café. With heavy luggage, the steep steps up to the Swan's lounge-cum-kitchen are a bit of a trial, but the gleaming modern space with wall-length windows makes the effort worthwhile.

Up another steep flight of stairs, I loved the bedroom with its thick carpet, and quirky layout, including a king-size bed and walk in shower set right in the centre of the room.





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Figure 3 I loved the bedroom with its thick carpet, and quirky layout.

**Food stuff:** ‘We live on Serenbe time, here’, locals quip to explain the slow service at The Farmhouse, but chef Thaddeus Barton’s farm-to-table-food is generally worth waiting for. Dish not to miss is the fried chicken, made to Marie Nygren’s secret recipe: grilled, rather than deep fried (so no oily fingers), and served with homemade buttermilk chive biscuits, and a silky-sweet butternut squash puree.



**Figure 4** chef Thaddeus Barton's farm-to-table-food is generally worth waiting for.

### **Check out?**

- Swimming with whale sharks at Atlanta's aquarium ([georgiaaquarium.org](http://georgiaaquarium.org))
- Doing a beltline bike tour with ([biketoursatl.com](http://biketoursatl.com))
- Shopping at North Georgia Premium Outlets shopping mall ([premiumoutlets.com](http://premiumoutlets.com))



**Figure 5** Shopping at retail paradise Buckhead with my personal shopper provided by Simon Premium Outlets.

### **Eat at?**

[St Cecilia](#) an elegant, high-ceilinged eating space where you should order chef Craig Richard's flounder cooked in hay.

[South City Kitchen](#) , the best place in town for traditional Southern food, including the iconic shrimp and grits.

**Check in? Visit [Serenbe, Atlanta Georgia. USA.](#)**