

# THE REVIEW LADY

OPINIONS ON FOOD AND TRAVEL FROM THE LIFE OF A PERFECTIONIST

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2009**

## Songbird Prairie Bed and Breakfast: Valparaiso, Indiana

Last month I decided to break up a Wisconsin-to-Kentucky drive by staying at Songbird Prairie in Valparaiso, Indiana for one night. It is only 10-12 minutes off I-65 and provided a welcome retreat from bad weather and a boring drive.



Tucked in a rural area with large residential lots, the inn's landscaping looked well-kept even in the dead of winter. I assume the terrain and trees in the backyard are beautiful in the spring and summer.



Entering the inn feels more like entering a friend's home than a commercial lodging property. There is a living room past the foyer where guests can relax.



A snack and beverage center is off the living room just past the stairs.



The entry to the breakfast room/sunroom is just before the snack area. Too full from dinner, I passed on snacks or drinks and headed up the stairs to my room.



There are a total of 5 rooms/suites. With the solo midweek traveler rate, I was booked in the well-appointed Purplefinch Suite. Be sure to check photos online before booking a stay if decor is important to you, since each room has a different style. (Based on what I have seen on their website; I didn't see any of

the other rooms in person.) The Purplefinch Suite is very feminine and if my husband is my traveling companion on a future trip, I'll ask about some of their more masculine rooms. The innkeepers did their homework when designing the property as the lighting is some of the best I have ever experienced. Whenever I needed something like a hook, light, or towel, it was right there in the perfect place. There were even spot reading lights in the ceiling and most (if not all) switches had a dimmer.



The bathroom was very spacious, with a huge two-person air jet tub - my favorite kind. (Air jet tubs are known for being more hygienic than their whirlpool counterparts and I wish more lodging accommodations with whirlpools featured them.)



One of the best features of the bathroom was the heated tile floors - talk about being spoiled! I have only seen them on HGTV and they were a pampering touch on a cold night.



Other notable aspects of the room included your own thermostat controls, satellite television, a reading chair, fireplace, sound machine for sleeping (loved this - first time I have seen one at an inn), and a bedside candy truffle (almost too pretty to eat). Since the inn seems best suited for couples, there was not a work desk in the room. Not a problem since I was passing through, but worth noting if you are a business traveler. You may want to ask about one of the other suites or take your work downstairs to the sunroom since it has plenty of tables and chairs. If you snack while working, you may also want to go downstairs since the in-room information advised not to eat in the room. The only other thing to mention, in case it is important to you, is that there were two scent diffusers in the room - one in the bedroom and one in the bathroom. If you are sensitive to smells you might want to ask the innkeeper to remove them during your stay. They were fine for me, I just moved the bedroom one to the bathroom overnight.

The comfortable atmosphere continued the next morning when I went downstairs for breakfast served in their sunroom. The room overlooks the landscape on the back of the property and includes windows on three sides. Thanks to their sound system (piping in sounds from just outside the windows)

and a plethora of bird feeders, there is quite a show while you enjoy breakfast. I saw bird species that I had never seen or heard of before that morning. It was a relaxing way to start the day.

Breakfast was amazing. Barbara, the co-owner/innkeeper, creates fare that is not only delicious but also artistically presented. Ice water is waiting when guests arrive with juice, coffee and hot tea available once you take a seat. The room features individual tables so guests have plenty of privacy while dining if there are other people present. The highlight of the morning was the cranberry-glazed poached pear with fresh fruit on the side. I do not normally like pears, but I would eat this every morning if I could. There was also a sweet bread pastry coated with orange icing on the plate. An omelet stuffed with fresh produce and cheese followed; it was filling and flavorful with a biscuit and bacon on the side. There is normally a third course, which likely would have been equally as delicious as the preceding two, but my stomach was much too full to keep up. I apologized to the expert chef in the kitchen, but let her know so that she did not plate it and waste any food since I was already one satisfied guest.

Unfortunately, after breakfast I had to get back on the road and leave such a lovely sanctuary. Barbara was very kind and I enjoyed chatting with her for a few minutes while I checked out.

I definitely recommend this inn to other travelers. Not only is it clean and comfortable, but breakfast is worth the trip alone if you are in the area. I am actually surprised that it is not included in [Select Registry Distinguished Inns of North America](#). It is on par with other member properties that we have visited and certainly goes above and beyond standard bed and breakfasts. I hope to be back if we are in the area again.

Rating: 4

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