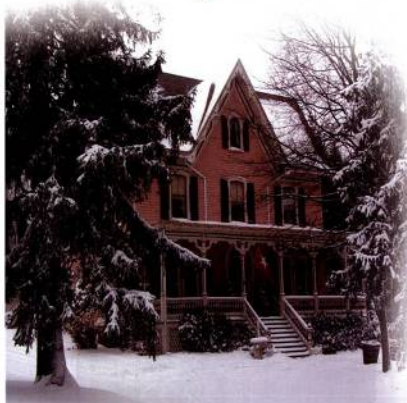


Sleeping Around

STORY BY JAY BLOTCHER
PHOTOS BY JAMES FALLARINO

Lefèvre House Bed & Breakfast

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Built in 1870, Lefèvre House is a former farmhouse transformed by Charles Clement and Maurice Zinken into a visually stunning bed-and-breakfast. Married legally in Holland in 2001, the pair have made Lefèvre House a union of their distinctive tastes and backgrounds—Clement's Louisiana roots and Zinken's Dutch heritage. The couple collaborated on the intricate design work and every decorating detail. Throughout the elegantly appointed structure, a down-home American coziness sits side by side with a sleek European modernism. Whimsy and chilly beauty have never worted so well together.

Opened in September 2003, Lefèvre House is a boutique B&B, generous in antique and modern details. Everywhere one looks, there are visual treats—from the cut-glass water tumblers in each room, to Clement's moody and sensual artwork, to the Versace bedding on the so-called Plantation beds. This antebellum-era four-poster sleep furniture stands high off the floor, accented by massive, intricately carved headboards. But their imposing strength is offset by voluminous duvets, comforters, and bedclothes that guarantee a blessed sleep.

The house offers five different bedrooms, each with its own color-coordinated theme: The "Red Hot" Room suggests a stately bordello; the "Purple Rain" Room is furnished with Asian-inspired antique and modern chinoiserie; the "Green With Envy" Room is the most modern, featuring a striped-cat table based on a primitive African design, and a pea-green bathroom that must be the most soothing place in the world; the "Am I Blue" Room, decked



out in deep navy blues, is the perfect place for creative sulking, and the "Music" Room, a bedroom on the first floor, is named for its baby-grand piano.

Unlike many country B&Bs, Lefèvre House does not suffer from a case of the cutes. No gingham wallpaper, no dollhouse touches. Modern artwork hangs throughout the house and much of it is for sale. The bathrooms suggest a European hotel, with elegant shower stalls and wall-mounted toilets, all fixtures by designer-of-the-moment Philippe Starck. Any one of these bathrooms is the perfect place for a gay peacock to linger, since mirrors are generously sized. The communal living room provides roamy chairs, sofas, and day beds, and is draped in shades of chocolate brown and apple green that exude a quiet

masculinity. Taste special note of the antique opium table, which—like many of the antique pieces—comes from Clement and Zinken's previous home in Belgium.

In spring, summer, and fall, breakfast is served on the endless porch. In the winter, you're seated in the grand, modern dining room. When my husband, Brook, and I visited, General Manager James Fallarino (the owners were in Holland that weekend) concocted a breakfast repeat that we didn't suspect the usual B&B fare: a savory apple and sweet potato soup, followed by a French toast plate that was as visually striking as it was tasty, and concluding with a modest fruit cup.

Lefèvre House is also available for private functions. After the state halted New Paltz Mayor Jason West's political mission last year (see "Life in New Paltz: One Year Later," page 50), scores of same-sex weddings were held here on the front lawn. The terrace, adorned in red grasses suggesting a tropical retreat, features a hot tub for parties of a more intimate stripe. ▼

JAY BLOTCHER, an Ulster County resident since 2001, collects rare bottles of Thomas Hardy's *Ale* and seeks the best pesto recipe known to civilization. More abstract details about this intriguing peacocks writer can be found at www.jayblotcher.com.

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