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COMMUNITY PROFILE BY EUAN BEAR

Rooms of Their Own

The Donomar Inn, Jeffersonville

It has been just about a year since long-time sweethearts Moira Donovan and Mary Bouvier bought the former Hapgood farm and began stripping wallpaper, painting, ripping up shag carpet (pink!) and laying floors. And the Inn has been "unofficially open" only since last September, when a local lesbian couple asked them to make rooms available for their out-of-town civil union guests.

But it's definitely open now, even though Bouvier calls it "a work in progress." She was the one who took the lead on the renovation. Fortunately, there was no need for extensive structural repairs to the building that had been a close-to-the-mountain B & B before the two women bought the building (but not the business). Just the (not-so) minor matter of creating roof where three skylights alternately leaked into or overheated the breakfast area.

The other major challenge was laying a new wood floor in the J. Timothy Donovan bedroom (the only masculine room in the house) during which Bouvier found that some previous owner had leveled the floor with cement. "I had to go get a masonry bit and drill every nail hole for the [historically accurate] square-head nails that weren't all that sharp," she remembered.

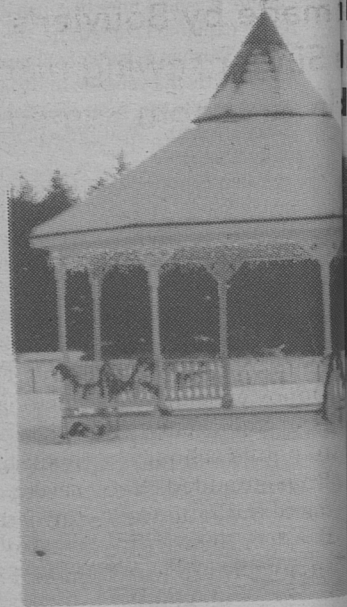
All the rooms are named for the two women's female ancestors, except the J. Timothy Donovan room, named for Moira Donovan's dad. Personal history touches create a family atmosphere: a quilt made by Bouvier's grandmother hangs on the wall and her treadle Singer sewing machine ("The only thing she ever owned.") stands in the room named for her, the Mary McQuade room. In the Isabel McAllister suite, the women have put a round couch salvaged from Donovan's great grandmother's housed and restored, along with a scrapbook of early 20th century family photos and documents, and paintings of tugboats: Donovan's family owned and ran tugboats in New York City and the ferry from



Bridgeport, Connecticut, to Long Island. In the hallway stand a chair that Mary McQuade hand painted and caned and an easel she used.

The inn is just a mile or so up Route 108 (south) toward the ski area at Smuggler's Notch, which is another five or six miles along the road. Several of the six guest rooms have killer views of Mount Mansfield over the lighted gazebo and across expanses of field and forest. Other amenities include a whirlpool tub or two, a hot tub on the deck, space for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing, gas fireplaces in several rooms, a library, a formal dining room, a living room with the only television in the house, a professional quality kitchen in view of the breakfast area, decks on both floors, and the tasteful Victorian (not a contradiction in terms!) decorating sense of the innkeepers.

Speaking of the innkeepers, they met on a blind date 15 years ago, and both have been teachers - Donovan still teaches high school English at People's Academy in Morrisville. Bouvier spent four years teaching



multimedia studies there. The spouses (civilly united on July 7, 2000) lived and raised their three kids (Kyrie, now 19; Marnica, now 22; and Ari, now 26) in Waterville, a small town of about 700 souls just across the Lamoille River from Jeffersonville. Bouvier coached the local kids' basketball team for several years.