

Hospitality Happenings

APRIL ~ MAY ~ JUNE 2011

THE NITTANY LION INN ~ THE PENN STATER CONFERENCE CENTER HOTEL

In Touch

W I T H T H E G E N E R A L M A N A G E R



Dear Friends of Hospitality:

In spite of all the challenges of the day, and there are many, it's hard to imagine anything much more uplifting than a sun filled spring day in central Pennsylvania. A walk through campus is invigorating in every sense of the word.

Our campus has some of the most beautiful trees, bushes and flowers, all rivaling one another for attention. In fact, I'm told that every tree that grows in Pennsylvania is represented on the Penn State University Park Campus. If for whatever reason, you've never experienced State College in the spring, please consider making the trip this year. I promise it will be a diversion that you won't regret.

In this issue, we want to tell you more about The Nittany Lion Inn being designated a AAA Four Diamond property, one of only 17 such properties in Pennsylvania. It's been a long and interesting journey and there's some 'inside history' that I think you will enjoy about this exciting accomplishment. There are many wonderful people that made it all possible and we're grateful for the support we have enjoyed and we especially thank each of you for your loyal patronage.

Also in this issue we have the calendar of events – probably more going on in the Spring than at any other time, a delicious recipe, and our wine corner. We also have the winner of our photo contest we announced in the last issue and I think you'll agree that these Penn State visitors really know how to have a great time!

Thanks for reading for all these years and remember to send in your feedback for a chance to win a free weekend in Happy Valley!

Jim Purdum

General Manager

BY DESIGN

At the end of last year, the Nittany Lion Inn was named a four-diamond property by AAA. This fact by itself is exciting, because there are only 16 other four-diamond hotels in Pennsylvania. But the real story is what it took to achieve this prestigious rating, and what it means to our guests.

"It took literally decades," says Jim Purdum, General Manager of Hospitality Services. "Back in the 1980s, there was a lot of discussion

continued on page 3



PENNSTATE



Penn State Hospitality Services
200 West Park Avenue ~ State College, PA 16803
www.pennstatehotels.com

Wine Corner

Lamb chops are one of the most indulgent and rustic foods around. For centuries, lamb has been celebrated for its tenderness and savory flavors. Lamb has an affinity for preparations that harness the deep and intense character of the meat. Such intensity of inherent flavor demands a wine that can stand up to any potential flavor combination.

My suggestions for this tender cut of meat are the Robert Mondavi Cabernet Sauvignon and the Sterling Vintners Merlot. Robert Mondavi Cabernet Sauvignon comes from cool-climate Central Coast grapes and has been blended with Syrah and small amounts of Cabernet Franc, Petite Sirah, and Sangiovese.

Cabernet Sauvignon is a really "red" red wine with strong tannins, high acidity, and powerful flavors, usually black currant. The style of wine produced from Cabernet Sauvignon grapes varies considerably

from one geographic region to another. Major variables include the climate, soil and winemaker's touch. The Sterling Vintners Merlot grapes come from the Paris Valley Ranch vineyard in Monterey, situated in the southern end of the valley. Merlot based wines usually have medium body with hints of berry, plum, and currant. It also has an early ripening, compared to the later-ripening Cabernet Sauvignon, which tends to be higher in tannin. So for your next dinner party sit down and relax and leave the pairing to us.

Shad Heim

Cheers!



**Mark your calendar for these exciting
Wine Dinner Dates in 2011**

June 30, 2011 – Grillin' and Chillin'

October 13, 2011 – Eberly Wine Dinner

November 17, 2011 – Beaujolais Festival

Some of our entries to the photo contest: Winner on page 5!



continued from page 1

about what direction the University wanted to go with the Inn. There were interests around investing in the property and enhancing the scope and breadth of services and there were others who weren't completely convinced that the University should even be in the lodging business. Leaders of that era like Steve Garban (Senior Vice President for Finance and Operations at the time), Walt Conti, (President of the Board of Trustees at the time), University President Bryce Jordan, Trustee Ned Book and other influential alumni really believed the Inn could serve a larger purpose.

"Walt, Ned, and Dick Benefield came to see me," says Steve Garban, "and they had a vision of upgrading the Inn to its full potential. They wanted the Inn to have a closer relationship to its academic department and to really be the show place it was meant to be. We didn't have four diamonds in mind at the time, but certainly those guys had the long-term foundation of it in mind. So we decided to go for it and present it to the Trustees and to President Jordan.

"President Jordan had a great growth outlook and he never hesitated," adds Garban. "He said 'let's do it,' and the Trustees also saw the vision and felt we could do it too. If Penn State was going to have a world class hospitality program, it needed world class hospitality to go with it. The Inn could support the University's mission by satisfying the significant hospitality needs of the University. It all fit, and we made the decision to have the University stay in the hotel business."

But it became so much more than just that one decision. According to Purdum, "Walter Conti's influence was the tipping point. He said it could be done. Dick Benefield knew it could be done, and other officials felt it was the right time to make this strategic investment."

The team was assembled and planning began. One of the most important decisions that had to be made was for a manager who could bring the Inn through such major renovations. Garban notes, "We felt that an alum would be a good choice, and we immediately hit upon Dick Benefield to lead the expansion. The problem was that he kept saying no. He didn't feel he was the right person, but we all knew he was. He had an outstanding reputation in the hospitality field and the experience to do it right. At first I didn't

feel he would take the job. He had too many reasons not to. But in the end, after much encouragement from the others, he agreed to take it only if he could report to me. We jumped at it, and Dick came on board. It was the best decision we ever made."

Benefield had three charges: He would work on the food quality, he would bring the college program closer to the business, and he would oversee the renovations of the Inn. Just after that, Benefield wanted to bring in Jim Purdum, a young protégé of his from the Bloomsburg days. He knew that Jim could help him do it right. Jim agreed and they began to move forward very quickly. Benefield and Purdum had a free hand and in working with the deans, they were able to accomplish what had only been dreamed about for such a long time.

In 1992, the hotel was reconfigured; in 1995 and 2004 additional investments were made in renovating both the original (1931) wing and the 1954 addition. Then Sr. Vice President for Finance & Business Gary Schultz supported those efforts along with Sr. Associate Vice President for Finance & Business, Bill McKinnon. Guest room counts stabilized at 223 after 14 years of construction, and change. According to Purdum, renovating the lobby and enhancing service standards were the final steps before the Inn would be eligible for a four diamond review. "AAA standards are very detailed and cover virtually every aspect of the guest experience. We needed to get the physical plant up to those standards and once that was accomplished, our incredible staff delivered on the service standards that ultimately made the difference in achieving this challenging, exciting and ambitious goal."

Steve Garban sums it up with a poignant comment: "Benefield's and Conti's vision was to have a place to be proud of. I wanted our alumni to see it as their home – their "living room" – and I was enthusiastic to see it come to fruition. My memories of the Inn from school are special and it can live up to the memories of generations of students who have followed. Benefield and Purdum have gone way beyond our "renovation" idea. They have taken it to the next level and it's a big deal. The four-diamonds designation is just frosting on the cake."

More entries to the photo contest: Winner on page 6!



Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday



Please note that this is just a sampling of the sporting events, exhibitions, and activities in the Centre Region. For a complete listing or information, see calendars on the web pages www.gopsusports.com or www.happyvalley.com.

Check pennstatehotels.com for great packages!

<p>4</p> <p>PSU Baseball vs. Illinois</p>		<p>5</p> <p>6</p>		<p>7</p> <p>Event: Morning Bird Walk, www.shaverscreek.org</p>		<p>8</p> <p>Concert: Dave Brueck Quintet & Ramsey Lewis, www.cpa.psu.edu</p> <p>Men's Tennis vs. Michigan</p> <p>Men's Golf vs. Rutherford Intercollegiate</p>		<p>9</p> <p>Event: Big Brothers/Big Sisters Rummage Sale, 7:30 a.m., Snider Arena</p> <p>Event: Happy Valley's Got Talent, www.thestatetheatre.org</p> <p>Event: Int'l Children's Festival, 863-3927</p>		<p>10</p> <p>PA Centre Chamber Orchestra, www.centreorchestra.org</p> <p>Men's Tennis vs. Michigan State</p> <p>Dance: Brio Dance Company: To Gloria With Love, www.thestatetheatre.org</p>	
<p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>Women's LaCrosse vs. Lehigh, www.gopsusports.com</p> <p>Baseball vs. Mount St. Marys</p>		<p>13</p> <p>Women's Softball vs. Kent State</p> <p>Baseball vs. Pitt</p>		<p>14</p> <p>Event: Morning Bird Walk, www.shaverscreek.org</p> <p>Concert: Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, www.cpa.psu.edu</p>		<p>15</p> <p>Concert: Disney's Imagination Movers Live, www.bjc.psu.edu</p> <p>Baseball vs Purdue</p> <p>Women's Tennis vs. Minnesota</p>		<p>16</p> <p>Event: Underground Artisans marketplace, Schlow Library, 1 p.m.</p> <p>Event: Out of the Darkness Walk, www.outofthedarkness.org</p> <p>Event: Wisecrackers Comedy Club to Benefit PAWS, www.centrecountypaws.org</p> <p>Concert: The Met Opera: Live in HD, www.thestatetheatre.org</p>		<p>17</p> <p>Women's Tennis vs. Wisconsin</p> <p>Baseball vs. Purdue</p> <p>Women's Lacrosse vs. Ohio State</p>	
<p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>Theater: The Boys Next Door, 814-863-0255</p>		<p>20</p> <p>Women's Softball vs. Michigan</p> <p>Baseball vs. Maryland</p>		<p>21</p> <p>Event: Morning Bird Walk, www.shaverscreek.org</p>		<p>22</p> <p>Men's Tennis vs. Purdue</p> <p>Baseball vs. Ohio State</p>		<p>23</p> <p>Event: Clearwater Conservancy Watershed Cleanup Day, www.clearwaterconservancy.org</p> <p>Event: Wild About Animals, www.wildaboutanimals.net</p> <p>Baseball vs. Ohio State, www.gopsusports.com</p> <p>Concert: Met Opera Live in HD, www.thestatetheatre.org</p>		<p>24</p> <p>Easter Sunday</p> <p>Men's Tennis vs. Indiana</p> <p>Softball vs. Longwood</p> <p>Baseball vs. Ohio State</p>	
<p>25</p> <p>26</p> <p>Concert: Wiz Khalifa, www.bjc.psu.edu</p> <p>Baseball vs. LaSalle</p> <p>Lecture: Training the Iraqi Federal Army, www.pamilmuseum.org</p> <p>Baseball vs. Bucknell</p>		<p>27</p>		<p>28</p> <p>Event: Morning Bird Walk, www.shaverscreek.org</p>		<p>29</p> <p>Concert: Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, www.thestatetheatre.org</p>		<p>30</p> <p>Event: Dog Job 5K & 1.5K Walk, www.petscomefirst.com</p> <p>Concert: Four Shillings Short, www.acousticbrew.org</p> <p>Women's Softball vs. Purdue</p>		<p>Event: A Revolutionary Affair, www.pamilmuseum.org</p>	



Chef Schilling

Spice Crusted Lamb Chops with Cilantro Yogurt Sauce

Makes 4 servings

Spice Rub

- 2 tbsp coriander seeds
- 2 tbsp cumin seeds
- 2 tbsp fennel seeds
- 2 tsp kosher salt
- ½ tsp white pepper
- 2 - 2 ½ pound of chops
- 2 tbsp oil for cooking loin

Combine, coriander, cumin, fennel seeds in blender, or food processor and pulse do not turn to powder. Add salt and pepper











Sauce

- 6 tbsp plain yogurt
- ½ tsp coriander seeds
- 2 cloves garlic finely minced
- 1 tsp honey
- 3 tbsp fresh lime juice
- 4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 cup loosely packed cilantro leaves, finely chopped

Put yogurt in a coffee filter and suspend over a bowl. Let stand 20 minutes. Crush coriander seeds and combine with garlic, pepper, honey and lime juice in mixing bowl. Beat in olive oil then fold in chopped cilantro.

Cooking the Chops

Pat chops dry with paper towel. Press spices onto chops coating surface completely. Heat skillet on medium heat until hot, add oil, and then add chops. Cook about 9 minutes per side for medium rare. Be careful as not to overcrowd pan, you can cook in batches if necessary. Serve with your favorite side dish.

		 Become a fan of ours on Facebook.					Softball vs. Purdue, www.gopusports.com 1 
 Follow us on Twitter!							Event: A Revolutionary Affair, www.pamilmuseum.org
2	 3	 4	Event: Morning Bird Walk, www.shaverscreek.org 5	Event: Friends of the Palmer Museum Art Gala 6	Event: Native Plant Sale, www.pawildflower.org 7 	 8 Event: AAUW Used Book Sale, www.aauwstatecollege.org	
Event: AAUW Used Book Sale, www.aauwstatecollege.org			Event: Birding Cup, www.shaverscreek.org				
9	Baseball vs. Niagara 10	11	12	Softball vs. Northwestern Baseball vs. Minnesota, www.gopusports.com 13	Concert: Met Opera Live in HD, www.thestatetheatre.org 14 Softball vs. Northwestern Baseball vs. Minnesota	Event: Celebration of Service: Honoring PA Veterans, www.pamilmuseum.org 15 Baseball vs. Minnesota	
Event: AAUW Used Book Sale, www.aauwstatecollege.org			Penn State Graduation				
16	Baseball vs. Villanova 17	18	19	20	Event: Master Gardener Plant Sale & Garden Fair, 9 a.m., Larson Ag Res. Ctr. 21	22	
23	24	25	 26	Event: Happy Volley Club Championships 27	Concert: Andrew Sosters Tribute Show, www.pamilmuseum.org 28 Event: WWII Revisited Living History, www.pamilmuseum.org	29	
Event: AACA Car show, www.pamilmuseum.org 30 	Event: Boalsburg Memorial Day Celebratons 31	Concert: Folk College w/Simple Gifts, www.folkcollege.com					

WIN!

A HAPPY WEEKEND IN HAPPY VALLEY!

All you have to do is fill out the form below, clip it, and send it in. We'll put all the names in a hat and in April, May, and June we'll choose one lucky person to enjoy a free weekend here in the Centre Region (certain weekend restrictions may apply).

If you would like to receive periodic announcements from us about dining and event specials, please fill in your e-mail address below. Your e-mail address will be kept confidential and will not be used for any other purpose nor will it be given to anyone else for any reason.

Comments about our newsletter/your wine suggestions:

Name (please print)

Address

City/State/Zip

Phone/E-mail

More entries to the photo contest: Winner on page 6!



Clip this coupon and mail to:
 Ms. Fran E. Levin
 Sales and Marketing
 Penn State Hospitality Services
 200 West Park Avenue
 State College, PA 16803

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		1	2	3	4	5 Concert: Bill Cosby, www.thestatetheatre.org
<i>Traditional Penn State Reunion weekend</i>						
6	7	8	9	★ 10	★ 11	★ 12
<i>Special Olympics PA Summer Games</i>						
★ 13	Event: Flag Day Celebration, www.pamilmuseum.org 14	15	16	17	Event: Strides for Nature 5K/Fun Run, Millbrook Marsh, 8:30 a.m. 18	★ 19 Spikes vs. Williamsport, www.spikesbaseball.com
<i>Camp: 2011 Weather Camp, www.outreach.psu.edu, 814-863-5100</i>						
20	21	22	23	24	Concert: Gaelic Storm, www.thestatetheatre.org 25	★ 26
<i>Event: Second Mile Golf Classic, www.thesecondmile.org</i>						
<i>Spikes vs. Auburn</i>						
<i>Camp: 2011 Weather Camp, www.outreach.psu.edu, 814-863-5100</i>						
★ 27	28	29	★ 30 Theater: National Theatre Live, www.thestatetheatre.org			
<i>Spikes vs. Mahoning Valley</i>						



Michael & Connie McNamara, Wellsboro, PA
Carol Peccarelli, Lambertville, PA
Nancy Wagner, Boalsburg, PA

AND THE WINNER IS...



Congratulations to this great group of guys from Canada! Their visit to Happy Valley last year personifies the Penn State experience!

CHEF WILLY DONATES DINNER FOR EIGHT!

Recently, Chef Willy Benedetto of the Penn Stater graciously offered his award-winning talents to an auction benefitting the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture during their annual conference. His item included dinner for eight at the Tait Farm near Sate College. The custom, multi-course menu will feature foods of the season (summer 2011), grown locally and including summer vegetables and Over the Moon Farm organic, grass-fed meat. The food harmonies will be provided by Chef Willy, who is passionate about local foods and sustainable agriculture. The prize brought in \$2,906 for the organization! Congratulations Chef Willy!