

Whispering Woods Cabins & Grill



Cindy Weaver

Couple brings an European flare to the area

BY CINDY WEAVER

Last weekend my husband and I were invited to Whispering Woods Cabins & Grill to celebrate the 80th birthday of a close friend. The address given was 4225 Hwy 177 South, Jordan, Arkansas. I had no idea what to expect as Jordan, Arkansas is a fairly small place, but I also knew it was close to Lake Norfolk. The drive from Melbourne took about 40 minutes, and believe me visiting Whispering Woods was worth it!

I found the history of this place interesting. The resort, which is located one mile above Norfolk Dam and Norfolk Lake, was built in the early 1940's by Cecil and Irene Jennings. It was originally built to house workers that were building the dam and the restaurant was a country store.

The present day owners are Richard and Kim Quiblier. Richard was born in Washington D.C. to Swiss parents. He went to Switzerland at 16 and trained in Lausanne, Switzerland to become a chef. He worked there as a chef for 20 years. When he returned to the United States, he became the executive chef for Prom Management Group, which cater major golfing events such as the US Open and the PGA Tour. Kim was born in Devon, England, and her English accent is delightful! She traveled and settled in the United States as well. She became a Hospitality Service Manager, coordinating venues at major golf events all over the country. I asked them, "How did you two end up in Jordan, Arkansas?" They quickly told me they were ready to settle down, but they wanted to continue using their talents and experience in the food industry. They googled "small resorts for sale," and Whispering Woods popped up. They moved to Arkansas on June 29, 2015, and were open in time for the July

4th weekend in 2015. During the 18 months as owners/managers of the resort, they have had two major renovation projects. The business at Whispering Woods has more that doubled since their opening, hence, the need for additional renovations!

The Grill is open for lunch from 11-4PM and for dinner 4-9PM Tuesday-Sunday. The inside dining areas will seat over 70 and the courtyard and outdoor deck, which overlooks Lake Norfolk, seats over 50. The lunch and dinner menus have an amazing selection and can be viewed at WhisperingWoodsAR.com. Their specialties are steak, salmon, walleye, pastas, and homemade desserts. There is a selection of 10 to 12 different side items available that are made fresh daily. There are daily specials, for example, prime rib is featured on Wednesday nights and lobster on both Friday and Saturday nights. One other unique menu item is the featured Burger of the Month. This month's burger is called "Hunk of Burning Love". The Burger of the Month description is on the website as well. If you have a sweet tooth, which I do, they offer 10 to 12 different homemade desserts. Beer and Wine can be ordered to compliment any meal and the wine selection is extensive. The beer and wine list can be viewed on their webpage.

There are 11 fully furnished cabins with large-screen tvs, satellite services, Wi-Fi, outdoor grills and picnic tables, refrigerator, stove, microwaves, and dishes and cooking utensils. There is a playground area for children and a fire pit to enjoy the chilly fall, winter, and spring evenings. The cabins are reasonably priced with an off-season discount. There are four cabins that overlook the lake, and three cabins that have two bedrooms. We stayed in

Cabin 10, "Summer Breeze." It has a nice wooden deck with seating to enjoy the beautiful view of Lake Norfolk.

Richard and Kim have brought their European flare to this southern resort and are pleased with the increase in business. They shared with me that they have a large fan base here in Melbourne! Their future plans are to have all the cabins remodeled with a rustic theme within the next two years and to landscape all of the resort. When they first opened, they gave themselves seven years to complete these plans, but it looks like they will be able to complete all remodeling and landscaping in four years.

I also want to mention that due to the increase in business, Richard and Kim are currently looking for two more chefs, an Executive Sous Chef and a Sous Chef. These positions are posted with a complete job description on their webpage.

The 80th birthday celebration was a lot of fun and relaxing. We plan to visit The Grill at Whispering Woods again, and hope to stay two nights the next time in the cabins so we can enjoy the atmosphere and the delicious food another night! As mentioned, you can view the cabins, look at the menus, and learn more about Whispering Woods at WhisperingWoodsAR.com or call 870-499-5531. The stay pretty booked so reservations are recommended. When you visit tell Richard and Kim you read about them in *the Melbourne Times* and that Cindy sent you!