



A Time Set Apart

BY KAREN EAKINS

One-hundred-year-old junipers line the walkway of Tulsa's Linnaeus Teaching Gardens, which staffs volunteers who teach successful gardening techniques.

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A mother and daughter find a quiet retreat tucked in northeast Oklahoma.

There was an audible snap followed by a communal laugh when our instructor, Lisa Bracken, queried the nine of us, “Is it possible to relax your toes?” Indeed, it was.

We obedient students of the level-one yoga class were fortunate that fine, clear August morning—not only did we have a highly trained instructor, we had an ecofriendly yoga barn whose floor-to-ceiling windows overlooked the rolling meadows of The Canebrake, a resort in Wagoner, an hour southeast of Tulsa. And that calm prevalent in the yoga barn didn't stop there—it flowed across the property.

Girlfriend getaways and mother/daughter adventure

trips are a common excursion sought out by many women, but I was looking for a quieter retreat, a chance to spend some in-depth time talking with the woman I'd been blessed enough to know not just as my mother but as a close friend. The Canebrake was tailor-made.

OVER THE RIVER, THROUGH THE WOODS

The Canebrake is a labor of love whose execution can be credited to the Bracken family's vision. Barth and Linda Bracken raised Tennessee walking horses here. And business was good—so good it wore them out. Consequently, the Bracken family gathered to ponder the feasibility of keeping the property, and if so, how to use it. Such was today's Canebrake born.

Son Sam and his wife, Lisa, who built careers

in the Colorado hospitality business, agreed to serve as the resort's hands-on operators. Other family members are involved in facets including finance management, decorating and long-range planning.

Barth and Linda's son-in-law, Buddy Johnson, is Oklahoma City's chief research librarian and responsible for the resort's name. Canebrake is a bamboo-like grass that once covered much of eastern Oklahoma and acts as a filtering agent. The name not only reflects the area's topography, it also embodies what the family hopes guests will experience and take away: a chance to filter out life's stressors and leave refreshed. And the owners' desire to make each person feel welcome was warmly expressed by every staff member we encountered.

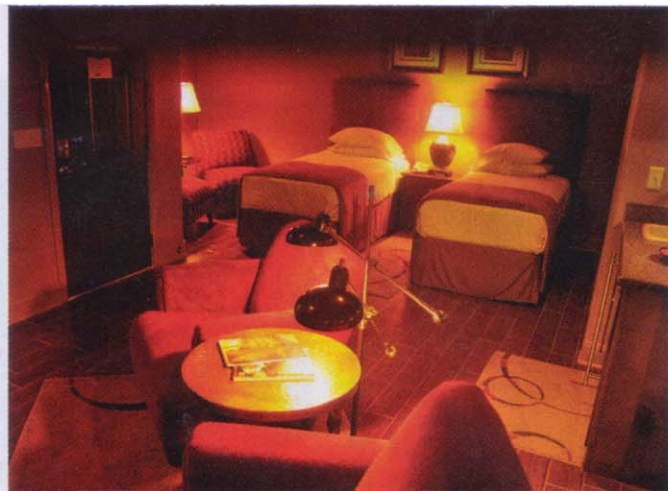
Temptations In T-town

A little time in Tulsa offered more mother-daughter pursuits: **Linnaeus Teaching Gardens:** This delightful teaching facility—inspired by Carl Linnaeus, the Father of Botany—includes a rock, flower, vegetable, meditation and herb garden, which employee Julie Almond called the "scratch-and-sniff" garden. Linnaeus is located next door to the Tulsa Historical Society, whose front yard is graced by the bronze *Five Ballerinas*, an homage to American Indian dancers.

Frankoma Mansion: John Frank was an artist passionate about two things—his wife, Grace Lee, and ceramic art. Leaving a University of Oklahoma professorship, he founded Sapulpa's Frankoma Pottery in 1933.

The elder Franks have passed and the company has been sold, but the unique, Bruce-Goff-designed Frank home is now open for tours. Daughters Joniece and Donna entertain visitors with family stories and the chance to view rare Frankoma pieces, including many "first pieces"—the first item of every new design fired, which was signed "To Honey from Honey," a token from John to Grace Lee.

Queenie's Plus and Ri Le: Local eateries are often a delight, and Tulsa's options are no exception. Utica Square's Queenie's Plus, a ladies-who-lunch spot, is decked out with silver-topped tables and hot pink and orange chairs. Mom and I give the cheese dream sandwich (grilled cheese with bacon on 12-grain bread) two thumbs up. The Vietnamese Ri Le's is tucked away in south Tulsa. The owner whipped up spring rolls and three dishes we were stunned and delighted to learn were made of soy. It helped offset The Canebrake's chocolate torte—well, somewhat.



CANEBRAKE

A PLACE OF CALM

A 15-unit retreat center and four cottages—named Redbud, Sunset, Dogwood and Moss—are elegantly appointed and nestled in the woods. Open only to adults older than 16, these hideaways are accessed on foot or by staff-driven golf cart. The property has been minimally mowed to allow for the growth of native grasses in the meadows and includes a trail system marked along five interconnected ponds.

The horse barn has been converted into the Guest Services Building, which holds a gift shop, a sand volleyball court, a bar hosting live music on Wednesday evenings and the Canebrake Kitchen, a 65-seat restaurant with dark earth-tone decor, colorful, mini-pendant-style lighting fixtures, alfresco dining on an adjacent stone patio and an open kitchen.

We perched on tall barstools and enjoyed the show unfolding in front of us as sous chef Dan Savala surprised us with goodies such as cherry tomatoes and mandarin oranges in a balsamic reduction. The menu includes experimental dishes using flowers and herbs grown on-site; vegetables, poultry and meats regionally acquired; and desserts that delight the senses. The triple mocha mousse torte is a don't-miss sensation—even if half of it has to be savored the next day.

Also a nice service is the opportunity to brown-bag a healthy continental breakfast the evening before. It allowed us a peaceful early morning walk before returning to our cottage for a shared meal.

Great food, unsurpassed service, yoga, fresh air and peace—sigh. Leaving The Canebrake unrested and non-refreshed head to toe? I doubt that's even possible.

In Wagoner, The Canebrake resort offers quiet cottage suites suited for relaxing and reenergizing.

PLANNING YOUR TRIP

For more information, contact (918) 485-1810 or www.thecanebrake.com. For travel-planning assistance, contact your AAA Travel agent or visit AAA.com/travel.

H&A

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