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The Best of Both Worlds

Boca Resident Finds Unique "Home Away from Home" in New York

Florence Launer loves her life at the Polo Club in Boca Raton, where she moved to escape the cold Northeast winters and retire to the good life. She's active on several committees, participates in a variety of community activities, and enjoys spending time with family and friends in the area. But like many retired Floridians, Florence has a second life away from the Sunshine State.

Back in her home state of New York, Florence still has many family members and dear friends on Long Island, where she was born and raised. While the Florida climate and active retirement lifestyle provided exactly what she wanted, Florence discovered, as many others have, that it can be a real challenge to balance two lives, with family and friends spread over so many miles, in such diverse communities. Fortunately, Florence has found a solution for this challenging "double life" - a perfect "home away from home" that allows her to truly enjoy the best of both worlds.

Every summer for the past three years, Florence has enjoyed spending time back in Long Island for 3 1/2 months, living at The Inn At Fox Hollow - a unique, upscale extended-stay community. Joined by her companion, Walter Berkower, Florence has discovered "the best of both worlds," as she describes it. "I get to spend time with all my family and friends in Florida... and then back in New York," Florence says. "And it's so nice to have a place of our own when we're in New York," she continues. "I love coming back, but I didn't like the idea of putting

anyone out by staying with family or friends for such an extended time. I really wanted my own place, but at this stage in my life, I didn't want the hassle of a second home. I came and checked out The Inn when it was first being built - and right away, I knew it would be perfect."

The Inn At Fox Hollow opened in 2001 and was initially designed to accommodate wedding parties from the adjacent Fox Hollow catering facility. However, in the summer of 2002, the Inn's leadership took notice when Florence and several other "snowbirds" booked extended-stay reservations. "We started to attract affluent, older folks - homeowners who had sold (their Island houses), moved to Florida, and needed a place to stay when visiting," explains Franklin Manchester, director of sales and marketing at The Inn. "These guests kept telling us how much The Inn felt like their home away from home."

With unique suites that are 550-square-feet, all with fully-equipped kitchens, the hotel seemed to be a natural choice for the extended-stay market. Management quickly took some unique steps to differentiate The Inn.

"We want to be the Ritz Carlton of extended stays," says Jose Menendez, the hotel's general manager. In addition to a hot breakfast buffet and complimentary dinner four nights a week, The Inn also provides each guest with four daily papers, as well as special touches like fresh fruit and cookie platters, which are always available with a selection of coffees and teas. Guests can sometimes even invite family and friends to dinner at The Inn free of charge. High-speed Internet access is available, along with other special amenities like a complimentary grocery shopping service. In addition to these unique touches, The Inn strives to provide guest service that is extraordinary - a culture where hospitality is "contagious," according to Manchester. And Florence has definitely noticed the difference. "The staff here is phenomenal," she comments. "Personal and friendly - they really do go above and beyond to make you feel at home."

It's a plan that seems to be working. In 2002, The Inn's occupancy rate was 63 percent. According to Menendez, that rate jumped to 78 percent in 2003 -

and he expects to hit 81 percent by year-end 2004. The average hotel occupancy rate in Nassau County is 61.9 percent. In addition to great word-of-mouth generated by happy residents like Florence, The Inn continues to attract new guests by reaching out to retirees in other ways - including luncheons and dinners hosted in Boca Raton and Palm Beach to let other snowbirds know what they have to offer.

Florence Launer is glad she discovered The Inn At Fox Hollow, because it's provided exactly what she wanted for a second home. "For one thing, my children and grandchildren are just a few miles away - so I love that. But I can't imagine a better place to live when I'm here. The Inn has all the comforts of home, without the hassle. It's just lovely. Breakfasts and dinners are made for me, but I also have my kitchen when I want to cook. And you really feel like part of a community here, with great neighbors." While she's living at The Inn every summer, Florence manages to stay just as busy as she does back in Florida. She takes dance lessons, exercises, visits libraries and museums, plays cards, goes into the city, goes to shows... and of course, spends time with family and friends. "I really try to take advantage of everything that's available to me, wherever I am. I think you just have to keep yourself busy and explore everything. I'm so happy to be able to come back to New York. This is my home away from home! It's so relaxing - it's like I bring my Florida lifestyle back to New York with me every summer. And I tell you - by the end of my time in New York, I feel kind of sorry to head back to Florida. Between my Florida and New York homes, I really do have the best of both worlds!" ■



To learn more about The Inn At Fox Hollow or the next event in Boca, call 1-800-291-8090. Or visit online, at www.theinnatfoxhollow.com.