


**travel**

Head to the hills and enjoy Georgia's premier mountain resort:

# Brasstown Valley



photos by John Hewitt and Travis Hudgons



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“Here is perhaps the most splendidly striking mountain scenery upon the face of the globe,” notes a placard on the grounds of Brasstown Valley Resort. The quote continues with “An amphitheater of probably 50 miles in circuit is formed by the Brasstown Mountains encircling a beautiful and fertile valley about four miles across, interspersed with limpid streams and making upon the whole a picture unsurpassed and rarely if ever equaled for the wilderness and grandeur of its scenery.” These words, written by a surveyor, were included in the records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1836.

The breathtaking natural beauty of the region still exists some 173 years after the above reference was recorded. The beauty has been tamed just enough to allow visitors to experience the rustic yet luxurious pleasures of Georgia's premier mountain resort.

Situated on 503 acres of rolling hills and surrounded by the majestic Blue Ridge Mountains, Brasstown Valley Resort is truly a unique destination. The resort offers a total of 134 guest rooms. Guests can choose accommodations in the grand lodge or in one of the cottages that are strategically placed along the hillsides of the property.

As visitors approach the entrance to the lodge, it would be difficult for them to overlook a massive concrete turtle incorporated into the otherwise natural landscape. The image of the

turtle is a consistent design element incorporated into architectural details throughout the resort and is also used as part of the resort's logo.

Legend has it that several thousand years ago there was a great flood and a giant turtle swam through the region while carrying on its back Cherokee Indians who were fleeing the flood's waters. As the water receded, the turtle came to rest on Georgia's highest peak, Brasstown Bald. The Cherokee, having been saved from the flood by the giant turtle, then began to inhabit north Georgia.

Once one is inside the fieldstone-accented lodge, it is apparent that the resort was designed and decorated to reflect the natural beauty and historic significance of what the Cherokee referred to as “the enchanted valley.”

The focal point of the great room is a 72-foot high fieldstone fireplace that is complemented by twig furnishings and overstuffed sofas and chairs. The rear of the great room features floor-to-ceiling windows that provide a panoramic view of the mountains that slope gently into a valley of rolling hills and streams. Suspended from the ceiling of the great room are two enormous chandeliers made of naturally shed antlers that help create the rustic yet elegant ambiance that is apparent throughout the property.

Guest rooms, many of which have fireplaces, are decorated in colors derived from nature—forest greens, various shades of burgundy and rose and taupe. Bathrooms feature granite countertops,

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lighting that resembles bundles of bronze tree branches bound together by leather straps and towel bars and hooks anchored to the wall by the silhouette of a turtle. Handcrafted Appalachian-style decorative pieces are incorporated tastefully into the overall design of the rooms and the twig beds are accented with appliquéd quilts.

The white linen equipped restaurant, appropriately named The Dining Room, offers what chef **Sid Kurrimbukus** refers to as “New Appalachian” cuisine and features regional favorites such as pecan-crusted Georgia trout and fried green tomatoes. An impressive selection of steaks and seafood is also available. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are served in The Dining Room.

Brassies Grill is a more relaxed dining option for lunch or dinner by the fireplace and offers billiards, darts, television and a fire pit on the patio.

Locally created and framed art pieces are

displayed along the long walls that lead to the sauna, fitness center and indoor/outdoor heated pool. The artwork and presentation is as impressive as many gallery displays.

Carved into hillsides surrounding the main lodge is a championship golf course that is touted as one of the most environmentally sensitive courses in the country. It was painstakingly designed so that native species of plants and animals, as well as Indian artifacts, were left as undisturbed as possible. The course is open to the public and features a driving range, pro shop and resident golf pro.

Other amenities of the resort include fishing in the stocked pond or streams of the property, 9.2 miles of hiking trails, horseback riding and indulgent services of the Equani Spa.

For business travelers, Brasstown Valley offers state-of-the-art meeting facilities with more than 14,000 square feet of meeting space and can accommodate groups as large as 330 people.

