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MOUNTAIN SPLENDOR

*One of the South's most romantic inns,
The Swag masterfully combines rustic and chic with
peaceful hideaways, hiking and natural beauty*

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top to bottom: The Swag Main House and lodge, constructed from reassembled historic log buildings. Cozy fireside dining.

VEILED IN A STAND OF TREES, “Roger’s Hideaway” perches at the edge of an expansive green bald known as Gooseberry Knob, a short walk from the high alpine lodge and cabins of The Swag in Waynesville, North Carolina. The hidden viewpoint holds two log chairs and a placard marking distant peaks of the Blue Ridge Mountains—Mount Mitchell, Mount Pisgah, Cold Mountain and others.

A majestic spot to admire the scenery or watch the sunrise, the rustic outpost is one of many special corners of repose created by The Swag’s original owners Deener and Dan Matthews. Nearly 40 years ago, the Matthews turned their unique family retreat at 5,000-foot elevation into a luxury inn that continues—with new proprietors Annie and David Colquitt at the helm—to offer an exquisite mountain getaway. Guests enjoy an amenity-filled, all-inclusive stay with delightful cuisine and well-appointed rooms, most with woodburning fireplaces. Just out the door, hiking trails lead into Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

The Colquitts, who purchased The Swag in 2018, have made recent enhancements infusing fresh vitality while preserving the inn’s mountain character and genial ambiance. “It’s important that



we stay true to the experience our guests have cherished for generations,” says Annie.

The couple has overseen renovations and updates in the hand-hewn log lodge and added two new guest accommodations, as well as a three-treatment-room spa and outdoor firepit. An enhanced food and beverage program inspired the addition of a new bar, wine cellar and lovely outdoor dining porch designed by Atlanta’s Summerour Architects. Just last year, The Swag joined Relais & Châteaux.

Executive chef Jake Schmidt, formerly of Grove Park Inn, excels at creating menus from what’s fresh in The Swag garden and available daily for three sumptuous meals. Noon cookouts on Wednesdays and Saturdays are a veritable feast, when he packs up his kitchen ensemble and orchestrates a gourmet picnic spread at Gooseberry Knob. Selections may include bison and beef burgers and mahi-mahi on the grill, cast-iron fried chicken and a smorgasbord of colorful salads, fresh-cut fruit and tempting sweets for dessert. Schmidt also offers cooking classes featuring seasonal ingredients.

Special events highlighting regional culture are a long-standing tradition at The Swag. Throughout the season from April to November, naturalist-led hikes and presentations on nature, local history, art, music and storytelling are offered to enhance guests’ experience and discovery of the Smokies. But equally appealing, most would agree, is taking time to feel the serenity of the amazing setting—to unwind in one of the hideaway nooks or a comfy chaise on one’s private porch. theswag.com



clockwise from top left: Four-course meals often include fresh produce from the Swag garden. Gooseberry Knob above the clouds. A two-story cabin. Porch views overlooking the Blue Ridge mountains. Cozy fireside dining. The Swag’s new bar.

