

PHOTOGRAPHS: WILLIAM DOCKEY



# Golden Days at Combsberry

*An 18th-century estate turned bed-and-breakfast makes the perfect place to bask in the glow of the season.*

On a sunny Saturday morning, you open the shutters of your room at Combsberry Bed and Breakfast to a perfect vision of autumn on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Even the leaves, mounded like piles of glistening gold on the lawn, seem to bask in the glow of the day.

Guests come here to enjoy the luxury of a country estate that has savored the beauty of seasons like this one for well over two centuries. Built in the early 1700s, the house at the edge of Island Creek off the Choptank River was kept by the same family for 140 years. Its current owners, Dr. M. S. Shariff, a cardiologist, and his wife, Ann, opened it as a bed-and-breakfast in 1996.

"Fall is our busiest season," innkeeper Cathy Magrogan says as she watches her Jack Russell terrier,

Katie, romp playfully in the leaves. "People love this time of the year and the way the leaves look on the waterfront. They like to listen to the Canada geese. Sometimes there are

so many you think you could almost walk across the water on their backs."

Swans drop in too. A pair swims gracefully across the creek as guests Francine and Andrew Klimchak, a couple from Herndon, Virginia, sit down to breakfast at a sunny table near the kitchen.

"Have you ever seen a swan land?" Andrew asks. "It's like life's going to end. They

flutter and sputter and thrash around. Then they land and settle down and go back to being swans again."

After renovations that transformed the inn into a comfortable retreat, Combsberry has gone back to being a swan again too. It's a place that

would add magic to a honeymoon or an anniversary. Each of the seven guestrooms has a view of the water, and several have fireplaces and whirlpool baths. A king-size, canopied four-poster bed graces the Magnolia Suite, and a spacious balcony overlooks the grounds where 17 large magnolia trees grow. Guests will notice the magnolia theme throughout Combsberry.

You might spend an afternoon on a sailing charter, have an elegant meal in Oxford or St. Michaels, and toast the end of the day with a glass of sherry beside the fireplace and green-paneled walls of the library.

Or even better, just settle back in a hammock on the lawn beside the creek and watch autumn put on a wonderful show. *Les Thomas*



*Innkeeper Cathy Magrogan enjoys time outdoors with her Jack Russell terrier.*

**Combsberry Bed and Breakfast:** 4837 Evergreen Road, Oxford, MD 21654; (410) 226-5353. **Web site:** [www.combsberry.com](http://www.combsberry.com). **Rates:** start at \$250 and range up to \$395 (Magnolia Suite). Oxford Cottage, a two-story private cottage, is \$350. ◊