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Fact Sheet

APPLEWOOD INN, SONOMA COUNTY

- Profile:** The Applewood Inn is a luxurious Mediterranean country-style inn set on six acres nestled among renowned vineyards and the sun-warmed Russian River. The historic inn, which borders the majestic redwoods of the Armstrong Redwood State Preserve, is named for the on-site apple orchards that produce eight varieties of apples. Built as a home in 1922, the historic Belden House was meticulously renovated to a 9-room inn. The Piccola Casa with 7 guest rooms was completed in 1995. The Gate House with 3 guest rooms and the restaurant were added in 1999.
- Honors:**
- *Sunset* magazine named Applewood Inn one of West's Best Small Inns in 2001
 - Applewood Inn has received the *Wine Spectator's* Award of Excellence annually since 1998
 - Applewood's wine list received from the Sonoma County Harvest Fair: Best of Show 2001; Double Gold 2002; Double Gold 2003
- Location:** Located in the western heart of the Sonoma County wine country, one mile from Armstrong Redwood State Preserve, Applewood Inn is 13 miles from the Pacific Ocean, one and a half hours from San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge and two and a quarter hours from the Sacramento area.
- Reservations:** (800) 555-8509
- Address:** 13555 Highway 116
Guerneville, CA 95446
(707) 869-9093
- GPS:** Latitude: 38 degrees, 29 minutes
Longitude: 122 degrees, 59 minutes
- Owners:** James Caron
Darryl Notter
- Executive Chef:** Gabrielle Dery
- (more)

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Rooms: 19 rooms

Events & Weddings:

Applewood Inn offers function space in the great room, solarium and library of Belden House, the inn courtyard and the restaurant and private-dining room facilities. The inn hosts many events including weddings, rehearsal dinners, wedding dinners, reunion get-togethers, winemaker dinners, celebration parties, meetings and retreats.

Dining:

Applewood Inn offers fine and casual dining, meeting and event catering, an on-site cooking school and casual Wine Bar dining, all directed by Executive Chef Gabrielle Dery. The Applewood Inn's restaurant serves dinner seven days a week. Signature California-Provencal cuisine is on the seasonally-changing, fresh-from-the-garden menu Tuesday through Sunday evenings. "Tutto Italiano" evenings are Sunday and Mondays with a regional Italian cicchetti menu of small plate offerings. The award-winning wine list features more than two hundred seventy-five Sonoma County and 25 Italian wines.

Cooking School:

In 2003, Applewood Inn started La Buona Forchetta (The translation is "a person with a hearty appetite who knows and appreciates good food - a gourmet.") Cooking School. One-day demonstration classes are held twice a month in the kitchen of Belden House. Weekend long Culinary Vacation classes that include visits to local wineries and artisan food purveyors are held several times a year.

Facilities:

The guest rooms are elegantly decorated in a Mediterranean Country house style of vibrant colors with a mixture of antiques, wicker and contemporary pieces. The restaurant serves up to 60 guests at individual candlelit tables. Two-river rock fireplaces bookend the main dining rooms lofty beamed ceilings. A glass-enclosed deck overlooking a garden and an elegant copper wine bar provide some of the restaurants most romantic features. The gated outdoor pool courtyard with glorious views of towering redwoods includes a jetted spa and massage pagoda.

Gardens:

Casual beds and borders of native California plants mingle with more formal roses, camellias and rhododendrons to separate and define the terraced gravel parterres and Mediterranean courtyard. An organic kitchen garden and an orchard are included on the 6-acre property.

Credit Cards:

MasterCard, Visa & American Express

WWW:

www.applewoodinn.com

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Executive Management Biographies

Jim Caron & Darryl Notter, Innkeeper/Owners

The words that the Zagat Survey in 2004 used to describe Applewood Inn were superb, warm, welcoming, fabulous and ultra-romantic. The creative inspiration behind those words belongs to the daily hands-on involvement of innkeeper/owners Jim Caron and Darryl Notter. Together they have used their exceptional individual skills and experience to create a unique destination in the beautiful Russian River wine region of Sonoma County.

Caron's family life provided the influence for his culinary creativity that inn guests experience every morning at his farm fresh breakfasts that Zagat's called "delicious to-die-for" and every evening in the inn's restaurant. He learned his brilliant cooking skills in the kitchens of his Italian grandmother, Nonna Carolina, and his mother. In his mother's kitchen he watched as she lovingly fixed elaborate family meals each evening as well as county fair prize-winning baked and canned foods. It was natural that working with food would influence Caron's career choice. For more than 20 years he managed Brentwood Markets in the Old Italian neighborhood of South San Francisco. He knew the names, families and special needs of all his clients and gave them individual attention that kept the markets thriving. Today, he uses those skills to motivate the inn staff to provide excellent and personal customer service.

Like most San Francisco natives since the 1950s, Caron as a child spent holidays in the Russian River resort area with his parents. As an adult, Caron continued to seek out the rejuvenating atmosphere of the redwoods and the river. In 1985, when the Brentwood Markets were sold to a large corporate grocery store chain Caron and Notter purchased the Applewood Inn. Caron uses his management skills not only at the inn but to assist tourism organizations locally and statewide. He is currently a board member of the Russian River Wine Road.

(more)

2-2-2 Applewood Inn Executive Bios

“Our goal at Applewood Inn is to provide each guest with a personalized experience that will make their Russian River getaway as special as the holiday I always enjoyed in this beautiful setting. I have trained our staff to be experts at providing the individual attention that marks my greatest satisfaction in my life’s work,” says Caron.

Notter received a degree in Interior Design from San Francisco’s Academy of Art College. Following Notter’s career path would provide perfect training for all innkeepers aspiring to provide the kind of luxury experience that Applewood Inn delivers. His work in restaurants can be seen in the seamlessly run service at the inn’s restaurant. His experience with event planning for a catering company hired by Bay Area’s luminaries is reflected in every event at Applewood Inn. Guests who have Notter’s expertise in planning their event know that they have never had a better-planned more creative event. Few know that they have hired an event planner that once catered a picnic in Golden Gate Park for Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands. In the warmly-vibrant, romantically-lit, artfully-arranged rooms throughout the inn are evidence of Notter’s skill as an artist and interior and lighting designer.

“I view every guest room, every garden and each building individually and as part of the whole inn experience. Through the sensual use of color, the arrangement of the furniture, the design of the lighting, the quality of the linens and every product we choose for every room the inn should create a feeling of relaxation and serenity. We want every wedding, honeymoon, anniversary; every celebratory occasion held at the Applewood Inn to be memorable,” says Notter.

Even after establishing the inn as a premier luxury destination, Caron and Notter continued to expand on their initial dream. They knew that the 10 guest rooms in the historic Belden House would not be adequate to providing the types of services they wanted to offer their inn guests. In 1994, they began expansion of the inn with the addition of The Piccolo Casa. The restaurant and Gate House were added in 1999. The Cooking School was inaugurated in January of 2003 and spa services for guests were added in 2004. Updating, refining and refreshing of rooms, grounds and guest services is ongoing. The inn today is so well run that guests are unaware of the occasional vacations that Caron and Notter enjoy in Europe. The staff knows that when they return there will be new ideas, new creativity and renewed energy brought to this incomparable inn.

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Executive Biography

Gabrielle Dery, Executive Chef

Chef Gabrielle Dery's culinary vision for the restaurant at Applewood Inn is combining the inventive with the traditional, cooking with peak-of-season ingredients, using organic products from the restaurant's kitchen garden and orchards, and making each dish delicious and healthy.

"Guests at the Applewood Inn restaurant want to experience the new, innovative and unique in both ingredients and preparation. I have designed a menu that gives them that and more. My work is of the earth cooking from the passion of my heart. For me it has to be about more than technical proficiency and food architecture," says Chef Dery.

While growing up in agriculturally rich Berkshire County in Western Massachusetts, Chef Dery learned to enjoy the bounty of what nature provides each season. In fall, apples were used in everything from sauce to doughnuts, maple trees were tapped for syrup in the winter and spring dandelion greens were used in salads and the flowers for wine. It was the foundation of the seasonal produce-rich cuisine she specializes in today. Her culinary education was with Madeline Kamman trained instructors at the renowned Cambridge School of Culinary Arts. Chef Dery's career began as sous chef at award-winning Chef Jody Adam's Cambridge restaurant Rialto. While there Chef Dery cooked for Jacques Pepin and Julia Child and the restaurant was named *Gourmet* magazine's best restaurant in Boston. Next on her professional resume, was Drew Nieporent's Myriad Group restaurant, Lucca. Her desire to work in the Sonoma County wine country brought her to Zazu restaurant. The restaurant received a prestigious three-star rating from the San Francisco Chronicle during Chef Dery's tenure as sous chef.

Since 2003, Chef Dery has been Applewood Inn's Executive Chef in charge of all aspects of the inn's culinary program including curriculum and teaching at the inn's cooking school La Buona Forchetta. At the restaurant she has created a harmony between the original and the traditional; the delicious and the healthy. Her passionate cuisine matches the artisan food grown locally with the incredible Sonoma County wines on the restaurant's award-winning wine list.

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A FEW OF APPLEWOOD'S RAVE REVIEWS

“Weekend warriors wax poetic about this “woody” retreat “tucked away in Russian River Valley” that’s “worth the drive” on a “foggy, curved highway” for “superb” French-accented California cuisine and wines from a “great” “very local, very exclusive” list served by a “knowledgeable,” “helpful” staff; the “warm, welcoming” and “ultra-romantic” setting and “delicious to-die-for” breakfasts” (for inn guests only) make it a “fabulous” “overnight” destination as well.

Zagat Survey, 2004

“Guerneville restaurant continues to prove itself one of the county’s finest. Chef Dery’s presentations are pretty, but simple – her style seems to be anchored in delicacy and balance. The restaurant has a brilliant wine list.”

3 1/2 stars out of a possible 4

Press Democrat, December 2003

“Rooms are spacious and luxurious to the point of sheer hedonism. The inn’s restaurant is a marvel. Almost anything off the menu is authentically Northern Italian meets-Sonoma and delicious, from the rack of lamb and Ribeye steak to the gnocchi. The wine list is a particular joy.”

Wine Enthusiast, July 2003

“A charming country inn hidden among the redwoods delivers five-star amenities and an acclaimed California Provencal-style restaurant.”

Robb Report, May 2003

“Applewood Inn & Restaurant is an oasis of luxe just a short drive from the awe-inspiring Armstrong Redwoods State Reserve.”

Food & Wine, August 2002

“Dishes are a blend – Very Northern California, very delicious – of organic, gourmet, innovative, and homey, served in a barn like (a fancy clean barn, that is) dining room.”

Sunset, August 2001

“The 35 Chardonnays, 37 Pinot Noirs, 40 Zinfandels and dozens of Cabernets, Merlots and other varietals and blends make Applewood a good choice for those with a serious interest in Sonoma County Wines.”

Appellation 2001

2-2-2 Applewood Inn Reviews

“For relaxed country dining at its best, head to the cozy Applewood Inn
Restaurant in Sonoma County.”
Country Home Magazine, October 2000

“Applewood Inn...sets a standard for small wine country inns.”
Wine Enthusiast, July 2000

“It’s their discerning eyes for both attic treasures and newfangled comforts that make Applewood Inn
both laid-back and luxurious.”
Gourmet, May 2000

“The retreat is ideally suited for the wine country.”
Conde Nast Traveler

“Calling the Applewood Inn “lodging” is like calling champagne a fizzy beverage.”
Reno Air Approach

“Don’t miss the prix fixe menu in the dining room, with temptations that just may include poached
pippins.”
Travel & Leisure

Favorite Places: “Applewood Inn is one of those special places that you want to keep to yourself, yet
can’t stop talking about.”
Travel Holiday

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Applewood Inn's Sonoma County Adventure Tours

Sonoma County offers fabulous adventures to visitors of all interests. Below we share some of our favorites. Let us know 48 hours before your stay and we will arrange one or more of these exclusive day trips for you.

Divine Food & Wine Adventure

We are blessed with rich terrain, ideal climate and innovative farmers and winemakers who take advantage of nature's gifts. With this adventure you will experience the French concept of *terroir* – the notion that the unique and sensual tastes of wine, and of life, have their origins deep within the soil of a place. The Applewood Inn has an award winning Sonoma County wine list. With credentials like that we can arrange for you to have some truly unique experiences with special winery friends of ours.

This adventure includes breakfast at the inn, winery experiences at some of our favorite wineries, a gourmet box lunch from the Applewood Inn kitchen and a bottle of wine from our private wine cellar, a Chef's choice Connoisseur's four-course gourmet wine and food tasting dinner prepared especially for you. Cost per person: \$110

Outdoor Adventure

Wild twists of terrain, microclimates that range from mild in winter to dazzling in spring, summer and fall, and a local priority on fun conspire to create Sonoma County's winning environment for outdoor recreation. We will arrange the adventure of your choice whether it is a map to some of the best hiking trails, horseback riding in Armstrong woods, cycling quiet back roads, paddling a kayak along the Russian River or teeing it up in the redwoods. Let us know which of the many options you are interested in exploring and leave the arrangements to us.

This adventure includes the outdoor activity of your choice (We have arranged discounts for our guests with Armstrong Woods Pack Station, California River Tours and Burke's Canoes. Call or e-mail for prices), breakfast at the inn, a gourmet high-energy health box lunch prepared in the Applewood Inn kitchen, energy drink and our Adventurer's four-course gourmet wine and food tasting dinner prepared especially for you. Cost per person: \$100 (Does not include adventure)

(more)

2 – 2 – 2 Applewood Inn Packages

Art &Artisans Adventure

In Sonoma County, inspiration comes in many forms. The sensual elements that make it such a rich travel destination – terrain, climate, and culture – pair with the area’s leisure diversions to establish a perfectly bohemian atmosphere for creativity and celebration of the arts. We have a special affinity for the arts at Applewood Inn as we hope you will see by the artistic detail that is part of every room in the inn and in the restaurant. Today’s tour includes breakfast at the inn, visit to Roshambo Winery, appointment-only visits to artist’s studios, a visit to The Gallery at The Quicksilver Mine Co where you will be able to enjoy your gourmet box lunch from Applewood Inn’s kitchen and a bottle of wine chosen to complement the lunch in the sculpture garden and our Artisan four-course gourmet wine and food tasting dinner prepared especially for you. This adventure includes 10% discount at each of the studios and the gallery and winery exclusively for Applewood Inn guests. Cost per person: \$100

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History Backgrounder

The Applewood Story

The abundant business opportunities of the bustling communities along the lower Russian River of the early 1900's were not lost on a young Santa Rosa banker named Ralph (Rooster) Belden whose lovely wife Gretchen (Pet) had grown up in Guerneville, the river's principle settlement. The area was fast becoming the premier resort area for San Francisco families who crossed the Bay in ferries and then transferred to the old lumber trains, miraculously transformed into comfortable passenger cars.

The vast redwood forests in the scenic Russian River Valley just north of San Francisco had provided much of the lumber for the rebuilding of the city after it's (in)famous earthquake of 1906. As the forests began to thin the railroad companies saw the advantage of creating a second boom for the area (and themselves) by transporting city-weary travelers to the rural "wilds." Logging camps became resorts, railroad right-of-ways were divided and sold as house lots and the race was on.

All this new wealth needed a bank to hold it and Ralph Belden felt he was just the man to handle the job and the money. The young couple purchased a 60-acre apple ranch just south of the Guerneville bridge in an area called Pocket Canyon. Friends and family were aghast when the bold and colorful couple hired a socially prominent San Francisco architect, John Warnecke, and proceeded to spend the princely sum of \$25,000 to construct a home at the heart of the farm large enough and gracious enough to reflect their new position in society.

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2 – 2 – 2 Applewood Inn Backgrounder

The lovely California Mission Revival home was completed in 1922 and it's Mediterranean inspired rose stucco walls and Spanish tiled roofs housed Rooster, Pet and their son John (Bunny) for the next several decades.

In the early 1980's the home underwent extensive renovation and was turned into a luxury 10-room bed & breakfast inn. The current owners, Jim Caron & Darryl Notter, left jobs and careers in San Francisco and purchased the inn at the end of renovation in June of 1985. The inn was opened for business and hosted its first guests in October. A formal grand opening and celebration was held the following December.

In the ensuing years Caron and Notter have expanded on their initial vision for the property and have positioned it to be the premier inn of the Russian River Valley, one of Sonoma County's outstanding wine appellations. The inn's name was changed to the more welcoming **Applewood Inn** in 1991. The **Piccola Casa** with 7 new guest rooms was added in 1995 and an additional 3 in the **Gate House** followed in 1999.

Wonderful home-schooled chefs themselves, Caron and Notter realized early-on a need to provide their guests with a level of dining on par with the accommodations at Applewood. They began preparing fixed-price dinners a few days a week for their guests and a few privileged locals. The number of guests and days grew and soon they had to turn over the kitchen and their toques to exceptional young chefs that were eager to create a name for themselves in this well respected wine country establishment. The kitchen and dining rooms in the original **Belden House** were soon outgrown and a spacious new restaurant and wine cellar were constructed along with the **Gate House** in 1999.

The inn and the restaurant at **Applewood** continue the tradition of gracious hospitality established by Ralph and Gretchen Belden more than 80 years ago and embraced by Caron and Notter who are the lucky caretakers of this magnificent property.

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