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TRAVEL

Sylvia Beach Hotel: A special retreat in Newport

by Charmaine Black-Olive

A gentle breeze from Nye Beach blows in through the windows as I sit in an overstuffed chair in the spacious library/study at the Sylvia Beach Hotel. A couple quietly plays chess at a nearby table in an alcove surrounded by oceanview windows while another makes some herb tea at the generously supplied coffee (sometimes wine) bar in an adjoining room.

Interesting books (no self helps) are scattered about on Victorian style end tables and shelves. A copy of *The Lost Generation* attracts my attention with the story of Sylvia Beach, the proprietor of the famous Paris bookstore, Shakespeare and Company, for whom the hotel was named.

The atmosphere of this unique, "literary" over-sized bed-and-breakfast inn is congenial and ripe for coffee and conversation. But, if you're looking for relaxation, meditative walks on the beach or just curling up with a good book, the hotel offers this as well. It also boasts a non-smoking, no TV atmosphere.

I am on my third visit to this historic hotel, originally built in 1910 and recently registered as an Historic Landmark.

My first night, I slept in the Willa Cather room which is decorated after the style of the writer. A large, hand-made, peach-colored quilt covers the bed, and a walnut, antique wardrobe and writing desk with an oil lantern give the room a pioneer flavor. Books by the author sit on a bedside table and after settling down for the night I enjoyed one of her short stories.

That evening, up in the study, Tim Scott, cellist for the Oregon Sym-

phony, played some Bach Suites for solo cello in his stocking feet. Informal talk followed the performance and many of the guests stayed up late into the night, including co-owner "Goody" Cable, who is best known for her coffeehouse Rimsky-Korsakoff in Portland. It had been Cable's dream to open a hotel where guests find the conversation more interesting than their books and sit for hours talking and exchanging ideas.

Breakfast was served between 8:30-10 am in the Tables of Contents dining room where large tables await guests for a family style breakfast. There are no quiet tables for two at this hotel. I had the pleasure of dining with Tim Scott and looking out an enormous expanse of windows at the ocean.

Breakfast offered an abundance of fresh fruits, sweet breads, juices and a tasty cheese and mushroom omelette (as much as you could eat). The hotel also serves dinner on weekend nights at reasonable rates.

During my second stay at the Sylvia Beach, I stayed in the Tennessee Williams room with its whimsical decor complete with a large, soft sculpture of a parrot in a palm tree and a gauzy, mosquito net canopy over the bed. At night I heard the ocean's lullaby and watched the tiny, day-glow stars sparkle on the wall above the bed.

Most of the hotel's 20 rooms have an ocean view and a decor done after a specific author. Among my favorite rooms are the Gertrude Stein room with its scent of dried rose petals and drawings, the Alice Walker room with the large, handpainted, African



PHOTO BY C. BLACK-OLIVE

The Tennessee Williams Room in the Sylvia Beach Hotel, Newport.

mural, African batiks and baskets and the Herman Melville room with the massive antique bed and sea chest.

In each room you will find little surprises and special touches done by the 20 different persons or "roomers" who are responsible for the decor of the rooms and are friends of the owners. The rooms are divided into three price categories: Classic, \$75 single, \$80 double, and are oceanfront with a fireplace and deck; Best Sellers, \$50 single, \$55 double, each with a view; and Novels, \$40 single, \$45 double with less of a view. All

the rooms have private bathrooms and breakfast is included in the price. Very comfortable dorm rooms are also available for older children and groups.

Staying at the Sylvia Beach Hotel is a stimulating and novel experience and I highly recommend it for anyone looking for an out-of-the-ordinary vacation. For reservation information write or call: Ken Peyton, Innkeeper, Sylvia Beach Hotel, 267 N.W. Cliff, Newport, OR 97365. Phone: (503) 265-5428.

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