

Cognoscenti

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## The 1801 First Napa, California

Warning: This is not your grandmother's bed & breakfast! Before we tell you about all the things **1801 First** offers, first we should mention some of the things that it *doesn't*: there are no lace doilies, no curio cabinets, and no overly familiar innkeepers whatsoever. Fashioning itself a "New Genre" B&B, this small, exclusive Napa lodging destination caters to those who welcome personalized attention but also savor their privacy.



*At the Inn, design and comfort come together*

Built by noted architect William Corlett in 1903, this landmark property boasts plenty of fine Queen Anne design features, like its splendid multi-gabled roof. Proprietor Darcy Tunt did the interior re-decoration herself after purchasing the place a few years ago. "Blending in more contemporary décor is another way of updating the B&B experience to make it more attractive to today's leisure guest," Darcy told **Cognoscenti Magazine** editors during a recent visit. In the appealing common area downstairs in the main house, the rounded shapes of bay windows grant the designer enough decorative license to add sharper lines elsewhere, but relaxation and comfort are still the foci.

Every morning, guests are served a gourmet breakfast cooked to order by the inn's own chef. The breakfast card changes daily, but always includes a reduced fat "gourmet spa" option along with a richer "indulgent" one. (Want breakfast in bed? That can easily be arranged.)

Because the inn is situated at the heart of Napa's historic district, restaurants and nightlife in the revived downtown core area are within easy walking distance.

## Because life is short

The central location does come with a price, however: situated on the corner of two fairly busy streets, some of the street-facing rooms have some mostly minor traffic noise issues to contend with.

Apart from the rooms and suites in the main house, two adjoining cottages and a Carriage House round out the lodging possibilities on the premises. Checking in one fine fall afternoon, we found the Carriage House an instant delight. Fresh flowers adorned the tables, caught in sunlight that streamed into the room through windows, French doors, and skylights. It was obvious: this is a room for luxuriating!

Lush tactile surfaces are encountered everywhere, with thick cotton bathrobes and lavish down bedding. All rooms have fireplaces, and Jacuzzis or oversized soaking tubs. In the Carriage House, the gas fireplace is creatively placed to cast warmth on two sides, towards bathroom as well as bedroom. And we liked the comfortable, somewhat slouchy leather recliners; like the inn itself, they're just right for kicking back in after a long day of wine tasting.

This article was written by contributing editors to *Cognoscenti Magazine*.

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