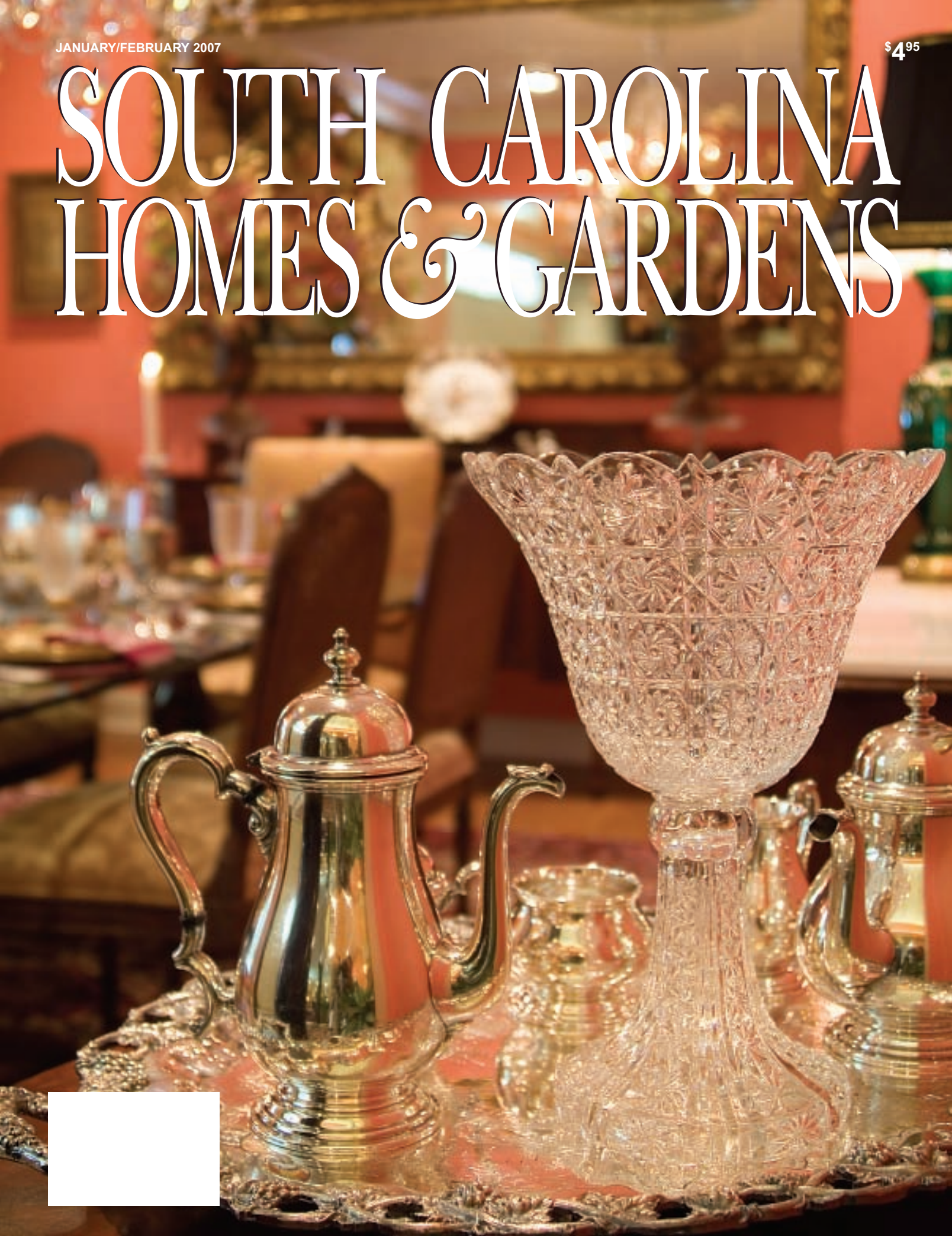


JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2007

\$4.95

SOUTH CAROLINA HOMES & GARDENS



BED & BREAKFAST

Beverly Phillips

Mansfield Plantation

Surrounded by marsh and live oak trees, wildlife and flowers, the graciousness of this place seeps into the soul of everyone who is blessed by a stay here.

As you leave the charming town of Georgetown, heading north on US 701, the short distance to the turn onto Mansfield Road covers hundreds of years. As soon as you make the turn into dense woods, you know you're not in the 21st century any more, not really. Travel 1.7 miles down the sturdy rip-rap road, over 250-year-old bridges and dikes, and you escape the pervasive hum of civilization. Along the way, you'll pass the slave village that housed the people who made the huge rice plantation one of the most successful in the South.

Established in 1718, this 1,000-acre site thrives now as an outstanding Bed & Breakfast. Its nine suites welcome those of us who seek peace and historic elegance, and a delicious breakfast. Served by innkeeper Kathryn Green in the spacious dining room that was part of the setting for the movie *The Patriot*, the repast often includes fruit with rose petals and Kathryn's delectable stuffed French toast.

When I made my way down the lonely road one dark winter's evening, the warmly lit plantation house was a journeyer's beacon. Becca, the chocolate Lab who greeted me at the front door, had found her own way to the home when she was still a pup. Always trust a dog's instinct!

Guest houses are all within a short walk of the main house. The old kitchen, separated from the main house because of the fire risk in the old days, has two suites downstairs. Both overlook the marsh and the cypress swamp. A charming new upstairs suite has dormers, separate sitting room, and footed tub in the bath.

The schoolhouse, with a front rocking porch and two suites, was the place for the plantation owner's children's lessons. "My" suite was located in the north guest house, which was built in the 1930s, making it the newest. With its soft cotton linens and plenty of fluffy pillows, the king-sized bed slept like a dream. The other downstairs suite also has a king-sized bed, while one of the upstairs suites has twin beds and the other has two full-sized four-posters.

With about 10 miles of trails and roads, Mansfield is perfect for hiking and biking. With an abundance of wildlife, including resident horned and barn owls, it is ideal for bird watching. With its dozens of huge old camellias that bloom from late November to early March and the exquisite Lowcountry scenery, it is also a place for the poetic.

If you can't stay the night, check out Teas & Tours, with either or both for an afternoon. But try to spend a night, or three, and listen to the whispers of the past. †

www.mansfieldplantation.com, Phone: (866) 717-1776. Nightly rates: \$135 to \$175.

