Christmas at Callaway

By Ann Cipperly

While East Alabamians can only dream of a white Christmas, they can experience a winter wonderland with eight million luminous lights stretching for miles at the Fantasy in Lights display at Callaway Gardens in Pine Mountain, Ga. Snowflake Valley, Santa’s Workshop and more than a dozen other sparkling holiday scenes are spotlighted as one of National Geographic’s Top 10 Light Displays in the world.

The annual holiday event provides visitors 15 custom scenes with classic Christmas music along a five-mile drive winding through the gardens. Visitors can drive in their own vehicles or ride on a Jolly Trolley for viewing the displays. At the end of the route, the Christmas Village displays nutcrackers and decorated Christmas trees along with shops filled with crafts, gifts and candy. Sip a cup of hot cocoa while strolling the village.

’Twas the Night Before Christmas and The Nativity on Robin Lake Beach are two scenes separate from the drive. Both of these attractions incorporate narration, music and cho-
GARDENS RESTAURANT

Overlooking scenic Mountain Creek Lake, the Gardens Restaurant is located in Callaway’s historic original golf clubhouse with wooden beams and a fireplace. The cozy setting provides fine dining with tablecloths and an upscale menu that changes each season to utilize the freshest ingredients.

For appetizers, try the pepper crusted ahi tuna seared rare with green tomatoes and avocado. The stuffed mushrooms are another good choice filled with pimento cheese resting on horseradish aioli.

The entrée choices are limited, as each dish is freshly prepared. Chilean seabass accompanied with butternut squash risotto and sautéed Swiss chard received a thumbs-up.

The featured steak on the menu is a fork-tender, bone-in Angus filet cooked to perfection and doused with cognac demi-glaze. Enjoy every bite with garlic whipped potatoes and broccolini for a celebratory holiday meal.

Before returning to the cold, order cups of steaming coffee and a decadent dessert. The flourless chocolate cake is sublime served with a drizzle of bourbon white chocolate and Grand Marnier laced berries.

PIEDMONT DINING ROOM

Located in the Lodge, the Piedmont Dining Room offers breakfast, lunch and dinner. The menu features Southern cuisine including shrimp and grits, steak, salmon and chicken. A seafood buffet is offered Friday nights, while a prime rib buffet is available Saturday nights.

COUNTRY KITCHEN

The Country Kitchen serves Southern favorites for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Situated in back of the Country Store, the restaurant...
provides a ridgetop view of Callaway. Assorted favorites are served with sweet tea in mason jars.

**CASON’S TAP ROOM**

The Tap Room is a tribute to Callaway Gardens’ founder, the late Cason J. Callaway. The restaurant and bar features sandwiches, salads, soups and desserts, as well as hand-crafted cocktails and craft beers on tap.

A singer-songwriter series is held Friday and Saturday nights.

**SPIRIT OF 52**

Located at the Mountain Creek Inn, Spirit of 52 offers a casual setting for nachos, wings, burgers and tacos, among other sandwiches and salads. Relax or watch a sporting event on the 26 flat screen televisions.

**Special Events**

Fantasy in Lights Christmas Characters Breakfast Buffet is held on Sunday mornings at the Mountain Creek Inn Ballrooms with visits from Rudolph, Frosty and others.

“How the Grinch Stole Christmas” is presented at a dinner show on Saturday nights at the Mountain Creek Inn Ballrooms.

Tickets are required for both events.

**The Lodge & Spa**

Stretch your visit at Callaway with an overnight stay at the Lodge & Spa. Roaring indoor and outdoor fireplaces set the mood for a cozy holiday retreat close to home.

Spa Prunifolia at the Lodge offers full-service with signature treatments for rejuvenation and looking your best during the hectic holiday season.

**New Year’s Celebration**

Welcome the New Year with lights, music and fireworks. Admission includes live music beginning at 8 p.m. EST. The New Year countdown is shown on the big screen at midnight.

**Winter Weekend Getaway**

While the resort is renowned for its gardens, the winter months call for time away to rejuvenate at the Lodge & Spa in a tranquil setting. Chase away winter blues with a romantic Valentine’s getaway with elegant meals.

With a short drive from East Alabama, a winter getaway at Callaway eliminates concerns for being stuck in icy weather while traveling.

For further information on one of the largest holiday celebrations in the Southeast or a winter getaway at Callaway Gardens call 1-800-CALLAWAY. For tickets to Fantasy In Lights, call 1.855.923.7580 or go to https://www.callawaygardens.com/FIL Fantasy in Lights closes Jan. 5.