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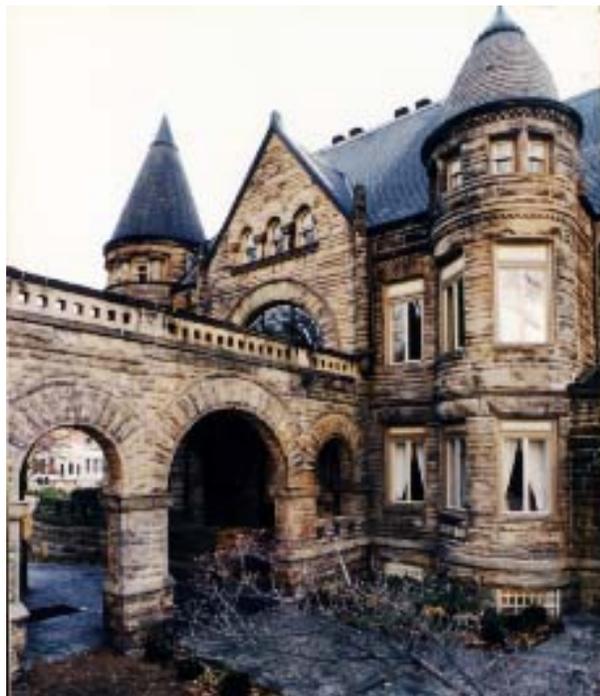
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## Buhl Mansion and Tara are, frankly, fabulous

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By Jim Mendenhall, Post-Gazette Photo Editor

SHARON -- You can't spend the night at the National Museum of Art or the Smithsonian, but you can at the 110-year-old Buhl Mansion, where the owners, Jim and Donna Winner, have hung re-creations of their favorites paintings. Remember Renoir and Rembrandt? You can study exact copies, stroke for stroke, in Sharon, Mercer County.



Built for industrialist/philanthropist Frank H. Buhl, the 100-year-old Buhl Mansion in Sharon, Mercer County, had suffered from years of neglect before it was reborn as a bed and breakfast. (Jim Mendenhall, Post-Gazette)

The stone mansion, which took seven years to build, was the showpiece of Frank H. Buhl, the steel baron. He had the Italian limestone shipped across the Atlantic.

Now a row of Victorian homes in glowing colors line East State Street in Sharon, and they are getting a face lift, thanks to the Winner family, who also own the Winner discount department store in town and the more-famous "The Club" auto theft protection device. Worldwide sales of the device have allowed the Winners to create a legacy of lively real estate ventures in the town.

Just down the street from the Buhl mansion, at 98 E. State St., is the Vocal Group Hall of Fame (724-983-2025 or 800-753-1648), another Winner addition to Sharon. Jim Winner wants to maintain the vitality in the community where his children have grown and settled.

"Why should school children have to travel around the world to see great art?" Winner asks rhetorically. "They shouldn't. Now children can come here to study the great masters. We had 100 of our favorite pieces of art re-created brush stroke by brush stroke."

If the turreted manse and its grounds with a green house and pond with swans aren't impressive enough, the reproduction of Michelangelo's "David" that towers in the center of the attached carriage-house-turned-art-gallery will certainly give you pause. Not only is this an exact full-size duplicate of the 14-foot-tall "David" in Florence, Italy's school of art, but rather than marble, it is gilded with 14-karat gold.

### If you go ...

■ Buhl Mansion: 422 E. State St., Sharon, PA 16146. 800-782-2803 or 724-962-3535.

Packages through April, per couple, are \$225 Sundays through Thursdays; \$255 Fridays; and \$350 Saturdays. Standard rates are \$200 Sundays through Thursdays; \$225 Fridays; and \$275 Saturdays. Packages include lodging,

Guided tours are offered through the Buhl Mansion, art gallery and spa on the weekend, and that alone is worth the drive from Pittsburgh while searching for antiques or visiting nearby Lake Shenango. However, for a real treat, plan to spend a night in one of the themed rooms of the former steel baron's home-turned-hotel.

Each guest room has its own feel or flavor and is uniquely decorated. The west windows of the "Artist's Loft" illuminate the curved copper spirals on the steel headboard next to a fireplace. "Mrs. Buhl's Bedroom" also has that northwest light, which streams in through the blinds as the rows of light slash across the round bed set in the room's turret corner.

breakfast, afternoon tea and dinner at Tara. The Buhl Mansion is an entirely nonsmoking facility.

■ Tara -- A Country Inn: 2844 Lake Road, Box 475, Clark, PA, 16113; 800-782-2803 or 724-962-3535; [www.tara-inn.com](http://www.tara-inn.com). Package rates vary by room by range from \$125 to \$325 on Sundays through Thursdays; \$150 to \$355 Fridays; and \$175 to \$430 on Saturdays; packages include dinner and amenities. Standard rates are also available. Tara is an entirely nonsmoking facility.

Just above it in "The Gables," an oversized round Jacuzzi tub unfolds under the planked, pitched ceiling, which angles up to the roof under the turret.

Regardless of which room you pick, the package deals include a tasty breakfast served in the first-floor closed-in porch. In the basement, a health spa with separate space for men and women and a luxurious common area with a fieldstone fireplace.

Getting some exercise is a good idea, because you want to work up a healthy appetite for the grand finale, the seven-course dinner that is offered to the Buhl Mansion's guests. Dinner is served at Tara, a 10-minute drive away in the neighboring town of Clark.

Another Winner property, Tara -- A Country Inn, named after the plantation in "Gone With the Wind," is another step back in time. Visitors enter under the quad pillared porch into the

Scarlett O'Hara room, which is complete with numerous artifacts from the stars who made the movie famous. The sumptuous Southern plantation decor reinforces the feeling of a four-star hotel.

While waiting for dinner, you can check out the Winners' collection of Civil War weapons and paraphernalia. Then you'll be escorted to Ashley's Gourmet Dining Room or to Stonewall's Tavern in the basement by a Southern belle in a full-skirted dress typical of plantation wear a century ago.

Both the Buhl Mansion and Tara, are listed on the National Register of Historical Homes.



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