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### **“Cultural Christmas in Historic Savannah, Georgia -- Not Just for Empty Nesters”**

Escape the blaring Christmas music, the incessant crowds, or the expensive parties that don't quite measure up. Azalea Inn and Gardens, a favorite among historic Savannah's bed and breakfast mansion inns, invites empty nesters, families and snowbirds to experience comfortably cozy, cultural holidays in one of America's most beautiful cities.

**SAVANNAH GEORGIA [September 12, 2007]** After the mandatory holiday office parties, socials and gift exchanges with friends and in-laws, where might one find comfort and peace for the holidays? Azalea Inn and Gardens recommends, “coming home for the holidays” in one of America's most beautiful and admired cities, where holidays afford a culturally relaxing winter vacation.

“As Thanksgiving and Christmas approach, even the thought of holiday parties can be exhausting,” relays Teresa Jacobson, the empty-nester innkeeper at Azalea Inn and Gardens. The Jacobson's two sons and daughter-in-law now work and live in San Diego. “I identify with those who are tired of the windup to Christmas and then the exhaustion that follows, and would rather have someone take over the holiday chores.”

Innkeepers Teresa and Micheal Jacobson discovered Savannah when their son and daughter-in-law were attending the Savannah College of Art and Design. “Aside from wine dinners with friends, our lives were fast paced. Then, we discovered Savannah and its relaxing pace,” Teresa assures.

“Many guests have commented that returning to the inn in the evening is like coming home, especially for the holidays. We prepare a family feast on Thanksgiving and Christmas with all the fixins'. And, we do the cleanup while guests relax in front of the fireplace with a nightcap of sherry or port,” the vivacious innkeeper assures.

### **The International Family Christmas**

Last Christmas a family who has adopted four international children (now age 12-15) chose to spend Christmas in Savannah at Azalea Inn and Gardens. Three of the four children wrote comments in the guest book –

“I love this place its homy [sic]. I think I spelled that right?!” wrote Nora from Peru.

“Thanks for taking us in even if you don't have many kids around. Thanks for leting [sic] me cook with you too! I will miss all of you guys,” wrote Isabelle.

“...It's home to me. Thanks for letting us stay,” wrote Jesse.



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Between Christmas and New Year's, Maxx (a 13-year-old Polish young man) visited with his adoptive parents from Germany. Maxx wrote his thank you in Polish and was kind enough to translate. "It was very fun here and am very happy about the stay. Maxx, Mom and Dad," he wrote.

### **SAVANNAH: A HOLIDAY FEAST OF "SOUTHERN LIGHTS"**

Temperate winter holidays (weather 70F to 40F) in Savannah afford an ideal escape from snow or simply a short road trip from nearby South Carolina, North Carolina or Florida. Missing the bustle of spring's high season, guests become an intimate Savannah participant, not simply a Savannah visitor.

"More and more, it is the husband who recommends the bed and breakfast getaway," Teresa shares. "One husband commented, 'What's not to love about an amazing breakfast, wine and dessert waiting in the afternoon, and total relaxation with more pillows than I have at home?'"

Part of the fun is to pause at street cafes, engage in conversation, and exchange pleasantries and life experiences. The city's "Southern Lights" celebrations – a composite of ongoing holiday and highlight activities – point to small venues and holiday attractions beginning before Thanksgiving and continuing through New Year's.

With flashbacks to history, (as is unavoidable in Savannah – Est. 1733), a kingpin among the Savannah 400 social elite, Samuel Hamilton, said that Savannah would be the best-lit city in the South. It was Hamilton's firm, Brush Electric that first lit Savannah's streets.

### **HOLIDAY AMBIANCE**

The pride of Savannah's citizenry adds to the ambiance for walking and sitting in Savannah squares. Intimate venues, like Azalea Inn and Gardens itself, are where the cultural, joy-filled season is best celebrated.

Delivering light-hearted, easy-going spirit of the season, Azalea Inn and Gardens begins with personable attention, extraordinary holiday décor, knowledge of tourist information and Savannah's fun places. As the Creative Coast epicenter, Savannah's artists and tourists feel right at home in the downtown art centers -- City Market Art Center, Telfair Museum of Arts, (including the children's ArtZeum at the Jepson Museum of Art), and SCAD galleries.

The not-to-miss visuals are the natural landscapes, best experienced in unhurried strolls down tree-line avenues of moss-canopied sidewalks and River Street. One should anticipate that the pace is slower in the south. Cultural and business visitors meld into leisured paces to explore the local food, to mosey through character-filled shops in the historic district, and absorb the creative energy of a vibrant city, complemented by thousands of Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) students from around the globe.



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City Market houses many artist studios, art galleries, and Savannah Music Festival --- a wonderful Christmas gift ticket idea, and a great reason to return in early spring 2008.

- Beginning November 21 on Thanksgiving weekend, Savannah's "Southern Lights, a Savannah Holiday Celebration" kicks-off with the annual tree lighting celebration in Marrell Park and the Savannah Harbor Boat Parade of Lights on Thanksgiving weekend. **Southern Lights (November 21/2007 to January 1, 2008)** punctuates a variety of Christmas concerts, parades, and twilight tours, and holiday light displays (ranging from whimsical to classic, particularly in the historic district's entertainment hub).
- December heralds in the holiday season with an art gallery hop, a downtown business fair, activities for children, and a Holiday Tour of Homes. The Annual Savannah Harbor Boat Parade of Lights offers a Savannah style Christmas Boat Parade holiday display on the Savannah River.
- Southern Lights will conclude as Savannah rings in the New Year with fireworks, music and wholesome fun.

One Memphis, Tennessee, couple says it best for a family-style, Savannah Christmas. "Hotels are Out. Inns are In!"

### **About Azalea Inn**

Azalea Inn and Gardens is located in the Landmark Savannah Historic District within two walking blocks of Forsyth Park, the city's infamously verdant and captivating central park. Guests are invited to rendezvous where life is a celebration ... of the present and the past. Amid the breezy quietude of the Landmark Savannah Historic District's Huntingdon Street, relaxed southern comforts allure guests seeking casual Savannah charm and social sensibilities. The historic inn's amenities include a New South U.S. cuisine full breakfast, courtyard garden swimming pool, private parking, newly landscaped 19<sup>th</sup> century heritage gardens (complete with low volume irrigation), sociable rattan rockers under tree canopied balconies, and inviting porch verandahs. Each of the inn's 10 guest rooms features themed décor depicting Savannah's gardens, distinguished history, and fashionable turn-of-the-century lifestyle of the mansion's original owner, Captain Walter K. Coney.

The Italianate urban manor (circa 1889), built on garden plots formerly designated for colonial gardening (ca. 1733 Georgia colonization) features original mantles and handsome, artisan craftsmanship from Savannah's Victorian era. Teresa and Micheal Jacobson, who were enticed to Savannah while their son and daughter-in-law attended the Savannah College of Art and Design, purchased the cotton executive's mansion in August 2005. 217 East Huntingdon Street, Savannah, Georgia USA 31401-5714. Toll



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**\*\* NOTE: High-resolution photos and full feature release (Adobe PDF or WORD formats) are available. Micheal Jacobson's name is spelled atypically "e" before "a."**