

Hospitality



Stepping Back in Time

An Interview with
Cliff Forrest, The Lodge at Glendorn



Glendorn main house (above and lower left); Glendorn lake (left and below)

EDITORS' NOTE Nestled in Northwestern Pennsylvania and adjacent to the Allegheny National Forest, The Lodge at Glendorn (glendorn.com) offers world-class activities, beautifully appointed accommodations, and fine-dining in a casual atmosphere, and brings families, couples, and corporate retreats together to rejuvenate in a truly unique environment. C.G. Dorn, fondly known as Bondieu, purchased the land and began building the Lodge at Glendorn in



Cliff Forrest

1927 as a retreat for his growing family. After decades of unforgettable vacations, the Dorns opened their beloved estate in 1995. As new families fell in love with Glendorn, one family became instrumental to its future. When the estate came up for auction in 2009, Cliff Forrest, a frequent guest who loved the property, purchased Glendorn. This saved the 1,500-acre estate from being sub-divided by timber companies. Forrest set out to preserve the property's wonderful history and natural surroundings as well as its excellent activities, cuisine, and service. As the new owner, he's generously invested in ongoing restorations and improvements to significantly enhance the Glendorn experience for every guest.

What is the heritage of this unusual property?

Clayton Glenville Dorn and his son Forest, who had a very successful oil business in Bradford, Forest Oil, built their first cabin in 1927 on their favorite trout stream, Fullerbrook. Shortly after, they built what is known today as the "Big House,"

which is a beautiful 25,000-square-foot California redwood lodge. Forest Dorn had six children who each eventually built their own cabin on the property. His children moved from Bradford to expand their oil business in Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Colorado, and despite their far distance from Glendorn, they each happily returned over the summer with their children.

In 1995, the Dorn family opened Glendorn to the public and were fortunate enough to secure a relationship with Relais & Châteaux, an achievement

that only comes from an invitation from another Relais & Châteaux property. They operated Glendorn from 1995 to 2009, at which point they decided to sell the estate due to the fact that the property now had over 160 heirs and was difficult to manage.

After I purchased the property, we invested \$2 million in infrastructure that had been neglected over the years. Each year, we have continued to invest in improvements, such as a new spa that we recently completed in the old butler's house.

Who do you define as your target market?

We appeal to a diverse clientele. We have guests that love the seemingly endless outdoor activities, as well as those that love the pure rustic elegant ambiance that Glendorn has to offer. Of course, everyone enjoys being pampered by our great staff, as well as enjoying our exceptional cuisine.

Has it been difficult to find trained people willing to work in a remote setting?

No, fortunately the core staff that was in place when I purchased the property is still with us. Our Executive Chef, Joe Schafer, is one of our best assets. Recently I promoted Joe and his wife, Stephanie, (who manages the lodge operations) as Co-General Managers at Glendorn. Our Housekeeping Director,

Judy Crooks, has been at the Lodge for 36 years. On Sundays, Judy gives historical tours for guests around the property. Our Activities Directors, Shane Appleby and Damon Newpher, have also been extremely instrumental to Glendorn's success and have been on the property for more than 10 years.

Do you look at this strictly as a business?

No. It is a hobby as well as a passion of mine. I thoroughly enjoy all aspects of Glendorn. I love the people that work there and I am happy that my family is also involved with them as they are all great people.

Does the property offer potential for corporate meetings and outings?



Absolutely. Corporate outings are a sweet spot for Glendorn – it is how I was first introduced to the lodge. A company can take over the property, exclusively, and have their customers, clients, and key employees as a captive audience. There is also a great conference center, if needed. Holding an exclusive event at Glendorn for families makes for an exceptional experience considering all of the great activities that can be done during the day, as well as the fine dining at night.

You still run a mining business. How do you balance the two?

I don't find it hard to balance at all. My primary business is mining, which is of course completely different than hospitality. I am lucky enough to have great managers that I am able to delegate to in both businesses.

Do you ever stop to appreciate all you have achieved?

Yes, and where I stop to appreciate it is at Glendorn. ●

