

A Night at Bombay Peggy's

Steve Gillick

517 Words

When I relate to friends that my stay at a former brothel began with a 'Bloomer Remover', they usually sit up in anticipation of hearing bawdy details. I then have to explain that my night at Bombay Peggy's in Dawson City, Yukon, was an experience filled with fun, humor, luxury and comfort...and then my friends want to know even more!

The Inn, which offers "Victorian elegance in the heart of Dawson City", has a storied past. It was built in 1900 as a residence on Dawson City's Front Street, not far from the Yukon River, and for the next 30 years, it remained a residence and boarding house. This all changed when Margaret Vera Dorval, Peggy for short purchased the building in 1957. She apparently shied away from using the nickname that she had inadvertently given to herself. At one time she recounted that when she was in Shanghai during World War II, a boyfriend would drop presents for her from the bomb bay of the aircraft. Hence her nickname, Bombay Peggy. And the thrust of her name was intensified when she turned her property into a brothel for several years.

The current owners, Wendy Cairns and Kim Bouzane, bought the building in 1997, moved it across town, and opened it as a luxury Inn. At the opening ceremony, Father Tim Coonan of St. Mary's Catholic Church gave a short talk and blessing that included a joking reference to 'men who are sent to the dog house sometimes find themselves in the cat house'.

The Pub at Bombay Peggy's is probably the closest guests will come to the other "Bombay". Famous for its martinis, The Pub serves up doses of Bombay Sapphire Gin with Dry Vermouth and olives in a delicious 'dirty' Martini known as the Bloomer Remover. You can down it (or a number of drinks with similarly evocative names) while looking at the wall photos of employees from the Inn's notorious past.

Near the Reception area of the Inn, the Parlour sets the tone with its blue wallpaper, oriental carpets, plush furniture and antique tables and lamps. In the evening, bottles of Port and Sherry are set out for guests to help themselves to a 'nightcap'. It's so elegant!

I was asked to remove my shoes before ascending the stairs, in order to protect the carpets, and then it was only fitting that I found myself staying in the Gold Room; this, in a building that began life in hopes that the Gold Rush would never end.

After opening the door I had one of those 'wow' moments: a rich, warm colored room with a plush Queen-size bed and handsome antique furnishings. However, the pièce de résistance lay in the washroom: a gorgeous and inviting slipper-back, clawfoot bathtub.

In the late evening, when the floorshow at Diamond Tooth Gertie's ended, I returned to Bombay Peggy's, poured myself a Sherry, and sat in quiet comfort in the Parlour, reflecting on the stories and legends that surround just about every place in Dawson City. Then it was off to the Gold Room for a wonderful night's sleep.

www.bombaypeggys.com