

# The Boston Globe

## Where should you stay in the Berkshires this fall? Here are the latest and greatest options

If you ever stayed at the old Williams Inn you'd remember it, and not in a pleasant way.

Fussy wallpaper lurked behind every door. There were heavy drapes, chenille bedspreads, and rattling air conditioners. It was about as modern as the inn that Nellie Olsen opened in Walnut Grove on season six of "Little House on the Prairie."

The now-deserted old Williams Inn will likely be demolished — much the way that Nellie's eponymous inn was destroyed in the final episode of "Little House." The new Williams Inn, a freshly-built large stone structure with an attached barn-like building, bears little resemblance to its predecessor, and for that we should all be grateful. It's now best described as Berkshires deluxe.

This is the state of Berkshires lodging. The new, and newly renovated, hotels that have opened their doors over the past year are less chintz and more chic, with varying degrees of success. In the name of investigative journalism I packed a small steamer trunk and headed west to see what's available in the way of new offerings in advance of leaf peeping season.

### **WILLIAMS INN**

**Intended audience:** The comfort-seeking leaf peeper.

**The lowdown:** This hotel was blessed with a fresh life, and did it ever need one. The pleasant euphemism for its previous look was "New England charm." If anyone ever uses that phrase to describe a hotel, it means it looks like your great aunt Gertie's living room. The new, 64-room Williams Inn is marketed as "reminiscent of a classic American farmhouse." Let me tell you friends, this is better than any farmhouse. The rooms are spacious, spotless, and still have that delicious new hotel smell.

**The experience:** It entirely exceeded expectations. My room was filled with muted yellows and blues, along with tastefully placed wood accents. At the desk was a cherry spindle chair. The ice bucket was also wood, a unique and warm touch. There was local art placed throughout the hotel, and there was a handmade, glazed ceramic bowl in my room made by a local artist. The bed was comfortable, and the bathroom completely modern with an au courant sliding barn door. That was the only farmhouse reference to be found. To borrow an overused real estate term, it's steps from shops and restaurants.

**Coffee maker in room:** No, but there is a coffee/beverage station on every floor.

**Breakfast included:** No.

**On-site dining options:** Yes. The restaurant is called the Barn, and I had a fantastic lunch on the patio.

**Gym:** Yes, a rare treat for a Berkshires property.

**Parking:** Free.

**Published nightly rate:** Rooms start at \$169 a night.

**What I paid:** \$256.

**Worth the stay?:** Absolutely. If you're looking for a solid, comfortable option, I would place Williams Inn as one of your top choices.

*101 Spring St., Williamstown, 413-458-9371. [www.williamsinn.com](http://www.williamsinn.com)*

As always, these establishments did not know a Globe reporter was present, and the Globe received no special rates or freebies. Please be aware rates listed below can spike sharply during peak season.