

SundayTravel

BERKSHIRES

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WITH NEW ENGLAND DESTINATIONS

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Sampling some Berkshires establishments to find the best options for foliage season lodging

WILLIAMSTOWN
If you ever stayed at the old Williams Inn you'd remember it, and not in a pleasant way. Puffy wallpaper linens hid behind every door. There were heavy drapes, chaise bergères, and rickety air conditioners. It was about as modern as the inn that Nellie Olson opened in Williamstown on season six of "Little House on the Prairie."

The now-demolished old Williams Inn will likely be demolished — much the way that Nellie's opulent 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 custom.



This is the state of Berkshires lodging. The new, and newly renovated, hotels that have opened their doors over the past year are less chintzy and more chic, with varying degrees of success. In the name of investigative journalism I packed a small summer trunk and headed west to see what's available in the way of new offerings in advance of leaf-peeping season. As always, these establishments did not know

a Globe reporter was present, and the Globe received no special rates or credits. Please be aware that lead below can spike sharply during peak season.

WILLIAMS INN

intended audience: The critics-seeking leaf peeper.

The lowdown: This hotel was blessed with a fresh life, and did it ever need one. The pleasure expedition 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 Gertrude'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, spacious, 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 usefully placed wood accents. At the desk was a cherry spindle chair. The knickerbocker 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



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Exterior and interior views at the Williams Inn. Top: A room key for Tourists hotel.