



Salamander Resort & Spa earns Five-Star Rating from Forbes Travel Guide

Owned by Sheila Johnson, the luxury Middleburg, VA, property achieves industry's highest honor, making it the first Forbes Five-Star destination resort in the Washington, D.C. region



MIDDLEBURG, VA (February 20, 2019) – [Salamander Resort & Spa](#), the luxury Virginia property owned by Sheila Johnson, was today awarded the prestigious Five-Star Rating by the *Forbes Travel Guide* for the first time, placing it among the most iconic and revered hotels and resorts worldwide.

The gold standard in the hospitality industry since 1958, the [Forbes Five-Star ratings](#) are based on professional, anonymous inspections. Only 210 properties worldwide achieved the Five-Star rating, with just 79 recognized in the United States. Only two new properties in the U.S. received the award this year, and with this new honor, Salamander becomes the first destination resort in the Washington, D.C. region to achieve the Five-Star designation.

“I am so incredibly proud and humbled that our resort has achieved this rating,” said Johnson, Founder & CEO of [Salamander Hotels & Resorts](#). “Obtaining Five Stars has been a goal since we started drawing plans for the resort, and I am so grateful to our entire team of service professionals who strive to exceed our guests’ expectations on a daily basis. They truly make the difference.”

A pioneer for gender and racial equality, Johnson is the only African-American woman to wholly own a Five-Star resort. Renowned as the co-founder of Black Entertainment Television, she is also a partner in Monumental Sports & Entertainment, which owns the Washington Wizards, Mystics and current Stanley Cup Champion Capitals. But it is hospitality which she considers her passion. The opportunity to develop the 168-room resort was the main reason she entered the industry and the project took a decade to design and build.

Since opening its highly anticipated doors in August 2013, Salamander Resort & Spa has received worldwide plaudits, and also become a community gathering point and executive retreat for Washington, D.C. residents. The resort’s success over the past five years has drawn travelers from all over the world to the region, and last year it was one of only three properties in the U.S. to be recognized by *Forbes Travel Guide* for both its accommodations and spa in a separate ranking of “World’s Most Luxurious Hotels and Spas.”

“When designing Salamander Resort & Spa, we were driven by local culture and history to create a property that embraced the Middleburg lifestyle,” said Prem Devadas, president of Salamander Hotels & Resorts. “Creating a welcoming and connective environment for guests, one where the design tells a story, is incredibly important. And, of course, the exceptional service our team provides is the defining level of detail that helped *Forbes Travel Guide* and its inspection team recognize the resort as one of the finest in the world. We could not be more excited.”

Located on 340 picturesque acres in the storied village of Middleburg – the heart of Virginia’s famed horse and wine country – the resort is only 35 minutes from Washington Dulles International Airport. Designed to blend into the surrounding rolling countryside, the 168-room Salamander Resort & Spa draws its architectural inspiration from Johnson’s nearby farm. It offers a series of immersive experiences unique to the area, including Harrimans Virginia Piedmont Grill, a Cooking Studio and Culinary Garden, a tranquil outdoor spa courtyard with an infinity pool, a tree-top zip line tour, and a 22-stall equestrian center with riding arena.

“This award is truly a testament to the extraordinary dedication our service professionals provide each and every day,” said Reggie Cooper, the resort’s general manager. “We all take immense pride in reflecting Ms. Johnson’s belief that everyone should be welcomed as if they were entering into her own home.”

Considered one of the finest luxury hotel companies in the country, Salamander Hotels & Resorts has just opened the magnificent new Hotel Bennett in Charleston, SC. It also operates three resorts in Florida: The Henderson in Destin; Hammock Beach Resort near St. Augustine; and Innisbrook Resort in Tampa, which will host the PGA TOUR’s Valspar Championship in March.

To celebrate its Five-Star rating, Salamander Resort & Spa has developed a variety of packages and culinary offerings for guests to enjoy. Visit www.SalamanderResort.com to learn more and to make a reservation.

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About Salamander Resort & Spa

Salamander Resort & Spa is a LEED Green Building Certified resort situated in the historic village of Middleburg, Va. on 340 picturesque acres. Located only one hour from Washington, D.C. and just 35 minutes from Washington Dulles International Airport, the resort is designed to respect the architectural traditions of Virginia’s countryside with 168 spacious rooms and suites that blend into their natural environment. Resort Owner Sheila C. Johnson has created a luxurious destination featuring an award-winning 23,000-square-foot spa, Harrimans Virginia Piedmont Grill, the Gold Cup Wine Bar, a dedicated Cooking Studio, a chef-inspired Culinary Garden as well as the adventurous Tree Top Zip Tour. The resort includes a full-service Equestrian Center with unique programming, a 22-stall stable and riding arena. All spa, culinary and equestrian facilities and programs are open to the community. For more information, visit www.SalamanderResort.com

About Salamander Hotels & Resorts

Salamander Hotels & Resorts delivers comfortable luxury through the celebration of holistic diversity, a truly authentic sense of place, and signature, immersive experiences that personally enrich the lives of its guests. The company is privately owned and operated, and based in Middleburg, VA, just outside Washington, D.C. Founded by entrepreneur Sheila Johnson in 2005, it has a luxury portfolio featuring the stunning Salamander Resort & Spa in Middleburg, a 340-acre equestrian-inspired property near Washington, D.C.; The Henderson, a 170-room grand beach resort in Destin, FL; Hotel Bennett, a new 179-room luxury hotel in Charleston, SC, overlooking the city's historic Marion Square; Innisbrook Resort in Tampa Bay, which hosts an annual PGA TOUR on its Copperhead Course; and the recently renovated oceanfront Hammock Beach Resort near St. Augustine, FL, home to layouts by Nicklaus and Watson. All Salamander properties are members of Preferred Hotels & Resorts. For additional information visit www.SalamanderHotels.com or call 540-687-3710.

IMAGES & B-ROLL AVAILABLE [HERE](#)

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