

# ON THE SCENE

## Salamander Resort & Spa

A wine and horse country sanctuary is making strides

By Jeff Heilman

The allure of the Salamander Resort & Spa begins with the intriguing story behind its name. My first guess was a small amphibian found on the luxurious property, which covers some 340 acres in the rolling horse and wine country surrounding historic Middleburg, Va., about an hour west of D.C.

I was half right. In fact, "Salamander" was the code name of WWII hero Bruce Sundlun, a B-17 pilot who crashed over Nazi-occupied Belgium. Evading capture for months, he met up with a resistance

group who recruited him and named him "Salamander" for the amphibian's double life on land and water.

Later becoming a successful businessman and two-time governor of Rhode Island, he

purchased a 200-acre farm in Middleburg and gave it his former code name.

When he sold the farm to Sheila Johnson, founding partner of Black Entertainment Television, Sundlun permitted her to continue on with the name. She then extended the moniker to Salamander Hotels and Resorts ([www.salamanderhotels.com](http://www.salamanderhotels.com)), the company she founded in 2005.

### A Premier Destination

Situated five miles from the farm,

Salamander Resort & Spa opened in August 2013 and has quickly become a premier destination for distinctive meetings, events and weddings.

Just 20 miles from Dulles International Airport and about 40 miles from D.C., the country estate-style property is ideally equipped for group gatherings with a comprehensive set of work-play entitlements.

With 168 spacious rooms, including 17 suites, Salamander's versatile conference and event spaces range from luxurious ballrooms, meeting rooms and hospitality suites to unique indoor and outdoor function areas, including the Library, Billiards Room, Culinary Gardens and sweeping Grand Lawn.

Drawing business and corporate groups from leading companies across the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast, the resort is also on the national map, attracting groups from L.A. and the Silicon Valley. With the area's winding country roads, Salamander is also popular with automotive groups for test drives and product launches. Designed to make guests "feel right at home," Salamander's romantic appeal even attracted the PR director of wedding planning website The Knot to hold her wedding here.

### The Specs

The award-winning 23,000-square-foot spa features 14 deluxe treatment rooms, plus a salon, fitness center and secluded courtyard with an infinity edge pool, fire pit, whirlpool and private cabanas. Activity-minded attendees have enough options to last a week, including the Tree Top Zip Tour, clay shooting, hiking and a full-service Equestrian Center, offering the signature Equi-Spective teambuilding program. This includes a remarkable program in horse whispering—a spellbinding exer-

cise in leadership training.

An extensive food and beverage program includes the equestrian-inspired Harrimans Grill; a Cooking Studio featuring guest chefs and culinary classes; private dining for 20; and gourmet picnic baskets for on-property or local excursions.

With four Audis (two SUVs and two sedans) available to transport guests in a five-mile radius, area draws include 30 vineyards, 400 annual equestrian events and the National Historic Landmark village of Middleburg, established in 1787.

In mythology, the salamander stood for a creature capable of withstanding fire. For Johnson, the amphibian represents courage and strength. Whatever the group goal, Salamander is a prime choice for inspiring, fortifying meetings. **mf**

## CONNECT

**SALAMANDER RESORT & SPA**  
844.303.2723  
[www.salamanderresort.com](http://www.salamanderresort.com)

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Living Room



Equestrian Center



Spa



Spa