



## 2024 AT A GLANCE

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### QUICK FACTS

5,000 ft elevation

boutique property with  
18 unique suites

50-mile views

mile-long border with  
The Great Smoky  
Mountains National Park

2-mile nature trail and  
world-class hiking trails

250-acre property

owned and operated  
by David and Annie Colquitt

celebrating  
43 years in operation

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 2024 Season runs March-December
- All-inclusive resort includes daily meals and expert-led activities
- Member of Relais & Chateaux association
- Highest elevation of any Relais & Chateaux property on the East Coast; within the top 5 highest elevations of all U.S. Relais & Chateaux properties
- Award-winning restaurant
- New bar and expanded wine cellar
- Newly opened spa, The Still, with three treatment rooms, a relaxation room and a new outdoor tented massage platform
- Fully operational culinary and cut-flower garden that continues to expand each season
- Home to the Smokies' famed synchronous fireflies, songbirds and blooming rhododendron
- New hot tub and fitness center, The Lookout, with valley views and full beverage service

### TIMELINE

- Mountaintop site originally operated as a potato farm
- Deener and Dan Matthews built The Swag in 1971 as a second home for their family
- Deener Matthews opened the property as a resort in 1982
- David and Annie Colquitt purchased The Swag in 2018 after honeymooning there in 2011

*The Swag features breathtaking views of four of North Carolina's six highest mountain ranges:*

- The GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS to the northwest
- The PLOTT BALSAM MOUNTAINS to the southwest
- RICHLAND BALSAM MOUNTAIN to the southwest
- The BLACK MOUNTAINS to the east



## ABOUT THE SWAG

Perched almost a mile above sea level on a breathtaking summit, The Swag is an acclaimed mountaintop luxury hotel just west of Asheville, North Carolina – and just steps from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. One of the highest boutique hotel destinations in the country, the one-of-a-kind getaway is known for exceptional weather, stunning views, romantic sensibilities, and impeccable food and service. Hosting only a few dozen guests at any one time, the all-inclusive escape is a favorite of travelers who treasure the property's rare, restorative combination of natural beauty, ultimate privacy, and authentic hospitality.

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## HISTORY

The Swag was originally built as a family home in 1971 by Deener Matthews and her husband, Dan, an Episcopal clergyman, who is Rector Emeritus of Trinity Church, Wall Street, in New York City. The property had previously operated as a potato farm that was cleared for farming at the turn of the 20th century. In 1982, Deener opened their family retreat to the public as a resort and managed day-to-day operations until 2018, when David and Annie Colquitt, who honeymooned at The Swag in 2011, purchased the inn.

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## LOCATION

The Swag rests along the Cataloochee Divide, an immense ridge that forms one of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park's boundaries. Four of North Carolina's six highest mountain ranges are visible from the inn: The Great Smokies to the northwest, the Plott Balsams and Richland Balsams to the southwest, and the Black Mountains to the east. The Divide Trail, traveled by settlers for 200 years and by the Cherokee for many hundred more, passes just behind the inn.

## Annie & David Colquitt

### Owners

Annie and David Colquitt purchased The Swag in 2018 from lifelong family friends, Dan and Deener Matthews. The Colquitts live in Knoxville, Tennessee with their three young children: Will, Ruby, and Davy. Originally from Tennessee (Annie) and Texas (David), they met at Princeton University, where Annie studied Anthropology and David studied Politics. Annie went on to obtain a Master of Social Work from Virginia Commonwealth University while David earned a JD from the University of Virginia School of Law. They married in 2011 and honeymooned at The Swag.

Prior to the acquisition of The Swag, David worked at Pilot Flying J, the largest operator of travel centers in North America, in various capacities. The Colquitts are also involved in several other hospitality projects, including Provision in Fairhope, Alabama; RT Lodge in Maryville, Tennessee; and The Swag's neighboring property, Cataloochee Ranch in Maggie Valley, North Carolina.

Annie and David are active in several philanthropic efforts, including serving on the board of trustees for Friends of the Smokies, the Cleveland Browns Foundation, the Webb School of Knoxville, the Safe Families for Children of East Tennessee board, and the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra. They are also active members at Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church.



*“In a busy world of more stress and more screens, we love that The Swag continues to be a refuge for guests looking to connect with each other and with nature.”*



## Will Jones

Managing Director

Will Jones joined The Swag family as general manager in August 2020. Will's nearly 20 years in hospitality management include time at Montage Palmetto Bluff, Keswick Hall and Golf Club, The Sanctuary at Kiawah Island Golf Resort, and Beaver Run Resort. Originally from Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Will and The Swag owners, David and Annie Colquitt, were aligned at their very first meeting on their vision of authentic hospitality and supporting a great working environment for employees.

Will is married to Honor Jones and has two young sons, Finnian and Lochlann. When he's not creating curated guest experiences at The Swag, Will enjoys spending time with his family at Lake Santeetlah.



*“Swag hospitality is all about authentic, personal service in a totally breathtaking setting.”*



## Jake Schmidt

### Executive Chef

Jake Schmidt joined The Swag as executive chef in April of 2017. The son of a former professional football player, Jake moved with his family from California to Chicago when he was three years old for his dad to join the NFL's Chicago Bears. It wasn't until his freshman year studying criminal justice at Western Illinois University, that Jake picked up cooking as a hobby. He quickly shifted course.

Three years at culinary school later and an extensive internship at Flagstaff House in Boulder, Colorado, Jake found himself on a path that would lead him to becoming the executive sous chef at notable Chicago restaurant The Signature Room at the 95th and later, executive chef at the Omni Grove Park Inn in Asheville, North Carolina. In 2017, he discovered The Swag through a job listing and fell in love with the location and its fresh culinary approach that includes an ever-expanding on-site garden.

Jake is married to Allison Schmidt, and when he's not transforming garden-fresh herbs and produce into culinary art, he can be found using the home improvement skills, like woodworking, he learned during The Swag's off-season construction projects.



*“A meal at The Swag should be as fresh and inspiring and soul-satisfying as our views.”*



## Brooke Cannon

### Executive Pastry Chef

Executive Pastry Chef Brooke Cannon was raised in the Piedmont of North Carolina. She has loved being in a kitchen since she was a little girl baking with her grandmothers. In 2008, she completed a bachelor's degree at UNCW for Psychology, with a minor in Fine Art. During the final years of her undergraduate degree Brooke worked for a Tea Room, which paired her love for baking and making beautiful things.

Brooke's zest for knowledge led her to Johnson & Wales in Charlotte where she graduated Summa Cum Laude with a degree in Baking & Pastry. She then moved to Asheville for an internship at The Biltmore Estate. After completing the internship, Brooke worked as the Head Pastry Chef for City Bakery's Waynesville location where she embraced her love for pastry, leading her to several culinary excellence awards.

After a break in the commercial kitchen to focus on raising her two children, Brooke was thrilled to join the team at The Swag in the fall of 2023 and is most excited to be a part of creating lifelong memories for their guests.

When Brooke is not at work, she is in a house full of love and laughter with her husband, two kids, and two Boston Terrier pups. She is an avid lover of plants and gardening and spends as much time as possible with her hands in the soil.



*“I hope every pastry at The Swag leaves a lasting impression of flavor, art and hospitality.”*

