

A Writer's Hotel

Come to Greensboro's best for easy style and deluxe accommodations.

A honey pine registration desk with a large brass bell, green banker's light, and oversize railroad clock may be your first clues that this hotel means to impress. Greensboro, North Carolina's O.Henry Hotel works hard to captivate guests with small details. The elegant lobby, full of overstuffed chairs and graceful linens, welcomes visitors with hot tea and coffee. Crown molding and sumptuous curtains flow on almost every wall. An attentive staff buzzes about the place with a kind of old-school exactness. It's probably unlike any hotel you've visited, unless you were an adult in the 1930s.

Heart of Greensboro

"We wanted to build a hotel that was a part of the community and not just another box out on the highway. We worked hard to make it look as if it had always been here," says Dennis Quaintance, O.Henry's founder. He is a sharply dressed fellow with an eye for details, which abound at the O.Henry. Yes, the hotel sports the soft linens and big bathrooms that you will find at most moderate-to-upscale hotels across the country. Yet the O.Henry gives so much more bang for the buck (rates start at \$239). The 131 rooms boast amenities that many world-class hotels lack. Each has a dressing room, vanity, shower and tub, safe, full-size desk with ergonomic desk chair, microwave, refrigerator, coffeemaker, high-speed Internet, a 9-foot ceiling, soundproof



PHOTOGRAPHS: MARY MARGARET CHAMBERS

top: Stop for a cup of coffee in the lobby of the O.Henry Hotel. **above, left:** Transportation to the airport is free in this authentic London taxi. **above, right:** The hotel's founder, Dennis Quaintance, knows every tile and paint color used on the property.

walls, and windows that open. The hotel offers dry cleaning, complimentary hot breakfast, cocktails in the lobby, an excellent restaurant called Green Valley Grill (which we rate among the top four in the city), and free airport transportation.

Beyond the Expected

Stay at the O.Henry Hotel, and you'll get a feel for the spirit of the city and the individuality of the people there. Not many hotels seem so tied to where they are. Dennis aimed to cement the O.Henry to its hometown. First, he named it after Greensboro's most famous son, the celebrated short story writer. An older hotel by the same name, torn down in the 1970s, served as inspiration for the new building. When you're in the lobby, look up, and you'll see the full text of O.Henry's best-known work, *The Gift of the Magi*, in gold relief. Despite the exercise facilities and other modern conveniences, the almost-9-year-old hotel has a 90-year-old feel. The staff members comport themselves with that same old-world cordiality. "Yes, ma'am!" and "Right away, sir!" ring out in the hallways. Everyone seems in a hurry, but nobody makes you feel rushed.

While you're staying at the hotel, there's plenty of shopping in town. You'll also want to see the zoological park, science center, and two excellent art museums. Greensboro makes the perfect location for a fun, short getaway—especially if you center it around the O.Henry.

—MORGAN MURPHY

O.Henry Hotel: 624 Green Valley Road, Greensboro, NC 27408; www.ohenryhotel.com or 1-800-965-8259. **Rates:** \$239-\$509. ♦