

# HISTORY OF RIVERBEND



R I V E R B E N D  
K O H L E R

Riverbend is an exclusive, private membership retreat offering its members the highest level of personal service and amenities--whether for quiet getaways, entertaining, small business meetings, or leisure pursuits--all amidst extraordinary surroundings

The house was built by Walter J. Kohler, Sr., son of Kohler Company's founder, John Michael Kohler, II and his first wife, Lillie Vollrath Kohler. Walter Kohler was a unique, visionary man who transformed the Kohler Company from a local manufacturer into an international firm while serving as its Chairman from 1905 until his death in 1940. He also was the driving force behind the development of the Kohler Village as a model community. Walter, who was the uncle of Kohler Company's current Chairman, Herbert V. Kohler, Jr., was elected Governor of Wisconsin, serving from 1929 to 1931.

One of his sayings was, "Employees should have not only wages, but roses as well." And his favorite quotation from the writings of John Ruskin was, "Life without labor is guilt. Labor without art is brutality."

Walter Kohler commissioned Richard Philipp, AIA, of the Milwaukee firm of Brust & Philipp, to be the architect for Riverbend. Philipp also designed The American Club and the Kohler Company's main office building, in addition to the Kohler Public School.

The Olmsted Brothers firm, of Boston, was engaged to design Riverbend's landscaping. The Olmsted organization was nationally known, having done design work on projects which included New York's Central Park, the Harvard University campus, and the Biltmore House in Asheville, North Carolina.

Construction of the house--which is located on approximately 40 acres of land and is surrounded by the Sheboygan River--began in 1921 and was completed in 1923. The gracefully rambling Tudor estate was considered one of America's thirty most beautiful residences, and was included in the book *Great Houses of America*, published in 1969.

Following Walter Kohler's death in 1940, his widow--Charlotte Schroeder Kohler--lived in Riverbend until her death in 1947. The estate was then purchased by John M. Kohler, III, the eldest son of Walter and Charlotte Kohler. He and his wife, Julilly House Kohler, moved into the home with their three children, and a fourth child was born to the family in 1951.

Riverbend had always been a special place for entertaining, and this tradition continued. Julilly Kohler was a gracious hostess, and the numerous gatherings held in the house included reunions of her family and annual Christmas carol parties.

John M. Kohler, III died in 1968, and Julilly Kohler died in 1976. In 1980, Riverbend was added to the National Register of Historic Places. In ensuing years, their four children realized

that the house needed a means which would ensure its preservation. They decided to donate Riverbend to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, hoping that Kohler Company would purchase the estate from the National Trust.

The donation was made in December of 1984, and Kohler Company bought Riverbend from the Trust in 1985. An interval then ensued while the Company studied all options and evaluated the best use which Riverbend could have. The conclusion was reached that the estate would operate best as a private club--with beautiful guestrooms, the opportunity for golf at Kohler Company's courses, and amenities which included hiking, and watching the many deer on the property.

As planning for Riverbend's renovation was underway, Herbert V. Kohler, Jr.--Kohler Company's Chairman of the Board and President--discovered original architectural plans for the addition of a Natatorium wing which had been drawn by Riverbend's architect, Richard Philipp. The existence of these plans met the National Trust's deed restrictions for an addition to the house, and Mr. Kohler's fortuitous discovery allowed the construction of fifteen additional guest rooms and a spa--amenities which would assure the feasibility of Riverbend as a private club.

Riverbend's restoration and renovation began in March, 2000, and was completed in July of 2001. The estate's rebirth was a significant milestone in the history of Kohler Village.

According to Alice Edland, who headed Kohler Company's Hospitality and Real Estate Group at the time Riverbend was launched as a private club, "Our concept in restoring this facility was to create one of the finest golf and lodging membership experiences in the United States. Building on the strengths of The American Club and our golf courses, Riverbend further broadens the appeal of Destination Kohler. Members will enjoy a very exclusive place to stay, with uncompromising levels of service and the special feeling of the residence."

Today, a growing membership enjoys the use of this magnificent residence. Riverbend members also enjoy the entire scope of Destination Kohler amenities--including preferential golf tee-times at Whistling Straits and Blackwolf Run, and the use of River Wildlife, Sports Core, and Kohler Waters Spa.

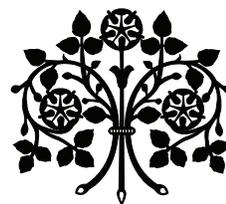
Indeed, Riverbend has a unique history. We invite you to join us in adding to its traditions!

*Welcome* TO RIVERBEND



*At* RIVERBEND,

EVERY MOMENT IS MADE TO BE UNFORGETTABLE.



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