

BUTLER, TN – Jim Gresch will tell it to you straight.

The Sugar Hollow innkeeper loves the 300-acre retreat, but if you've got a group of eight adults, you probably don't want to stay in the Hemlock House – unless two adults want to sleep in bunk beds.

If not, he'd rather put you in the Cherokee. Both can sleep 10 people in beds, but the Cherokee's room arrangement gives adults more privacy.

“People always tell me how many people are coming and ask what's available,” he said. “But I always ask the makeup of the group.”

The three-bedroom Hemlock House is a favorite among the cabins because of the “tree deck,” which provides a canopy view of the surrounding Cherokee National Forest.

The lanky Gresch has been with Sugar Hollow from almost the beginning. He lived upstairs in the campus' largest building, the Lodge, back when Sugar Hollow was a B&B. He and Marty [name], the other innkeeper, would get up and serve breakfast for those staying in the 10-bedroom, three-story [retreat]. These days Sugar Hollow only serves breakfast to visitors staying during Bristol Motor Speedway's two annual race weekends.

“Most people like coming up here and cooking for their own group,” he said. “We've found that for family reunions and weddings especially, it seems to work.”

But don't worry; if you're planning a team-building retreat for your employees and don't want to cook in the cabins' full-sized and fully stocked kitchens, you can have meals catered in.

On the other hand, if you're a big family, the Farmhouse's authentic 1930s charm and angled ceilings might just provide the mountain getaway you're looking for while you explore eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina. Groups who prefer a cabin-feel or wedding couples might prefer the three-bedroom Sequoia Cottage, which features a hot tub on the rear deck.

Either way, Jim will make sure you end up in the right place.