

BED & BREAKFAST

LINDA FELTMAN (2)



Hospitality at Its Finest

A visit to two Bucks County inns

by Linda C. Feltman

FROG HOLLOW FARM BED AND BREAKFAST, KINTNERSVILLE

OUR BRIEF STAY AT FROG HOLLOW FARM Bed and Breakfast, Bucks County, yielded a number of wonderful memories for my daughter, Carrie, and me: savoring too many glasses of delicious homemade lemonade, watching heron feeding at a pond, using a 1950s phone whose number once began with WI7, sitting quietly on our balcony watching fireflies, and sipping delectable orange lassies made from an Indian recipe shared by British guests.

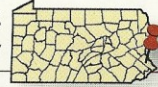
Mitch and Patti Adler describe their property, which “sits along a treasure of a quiet road in upper Bucks County,” as the “five best acres of the original 1780s farm.” Their brochure goes on to say that several cats and two sheep share the farm’s tall grass meadows and woodlands. I could not find a better way to explain this property tucked away in northern Bucks County.

When Mitch and Patti purchased the farm in 2001, they had plans to open a bed and breakfast once Mitch retired as a middle school guidance counselor. After spending a few years adding bathrooms and making alterations to comfortably accommodate guests, they opened their doors in 2005.

(left) While staying at Frog Hollow Farm B&B, guests will share the outdoor part of the property with its two sheep, egg-laying hens, several cats and arrival-announcing dog, Gracie. (right) Visitors to the Wedgwood Collection of Historic Inns will find a vast collection of pottery by the same name, as well as many antiques throughout the three buildings, each of which has its own live-in innkeeper.

The old saying, “If walls could talk,” could certainly apply to this staid old structure. From the foot-thick stone walls dating back to the late 1700s to the two additions, one from the mid-1800s and the other from the 1930s, stories must abound. Certainly, Mitch and Patti have more than a few to tell themselves.

Patti, who works part-time as a pediatric nurse practitioner, told us how Mitch enjoys trying out new recipes for guests. Besides being the inn’s chief cook and bottle washer, Mitch has planted an extensive orchard, excavated a nine-foot-deep pond near an underground spring that boasts a lighted fountain in the center, created a number of flower, herb and vegetable gardens, carved out walking paths through the meadows and



woods, and begun renovation on their late 1700s barn. The couple's two pet sheep, Ben and Jerry, who are sheared once a year, keep the orchard tidied up. Gracie the dog greets guests with a friendly bark and tail wag, and the kitties keep up rodent patrol outside. Even the free-range Rhode Island Reds get into the action, clucking along as we walked around the paths and providing fresh eggs for breakfast.

One of the packages that the Adlers offer is a ride to and from a nearby restaurant (weather permitting) in Mitch's restored 1931 Model A Ford Coupe with a rumble seat. But, if you prefer the experience of simply riding around in an old Ford Coupe, that too can be arranged. In fact, I suspect, as good innkeepers everywhere, Mitch and Patti would attempt to accommodate just about any guest's wishes—even if that means driving into town to purchase some Dunkin' Donuts for a guest who had mentioned the treat in passing. The Adlers always ask guests if they have any dietary restrictions or food preferences, and Mitch does his best to accommodate that need, be it gluten free, sugar free or even apparently store-bought donuts.

WEDGWOOD COLLECTION OF HISTORIC INNS, NEW HOPE

INNKEEPERS OFTEN TELL ME the reason they opened a bed and breakfast was because they decided to change directions after 20 years or so in the same career. For Carl Glassman and Nadine "Dinie" Silnutzer-Glassman, it came much sooner. They were in their late 20s in 1981 when they decided to leave their city-based careers and move to New Hope, Bucks County.

Now nearly 30 years later, the owners of the Wedgwood Collection of Historic Inns credit much of their success as innkeepers to a willingness to change with the market and to become an integral part of the New Hope community. Their first property was an 1870 Victorian on 2.5 acres that they purchased when real estate values had experienced a short-term decline. They welcomed their first guests to the extensively renovated Wedgwood House Inn in April 1982.

I first met the Glassmans a year later during a bed and breakfast conference in Hershey. It was one of the first such conferences anywhere in the country, and Carl was an integral part of the gathering. Over the years we kept in touch, and whenever possible I would stop by their inn to view their vast collection of Wedgwood pottery and personal antiques and admire their decorating flair.

By 1985, demand at their bed and breakfast soon exceeded supply. So, when the home adjacent to theirs came on the market, they decided to buy and renovate the second property, which they named the 1833 Umpleby House. That purchase also gave them access to the creek running between the two homes. In 1990 they bought a third property across the street and dubbed it the 1870 Aaron Burr House. All three homes are located at the edge of New Hope and are easy walking distance to its many activities, quaint shops and vibrant night life. But if you ask Dinie and Carl what is the most important addition to their collection, they will say it is the 1994 birth of their daughter, Jessica, who has grown up in the business.

Upon finding out that my daughter had never visited New Hope, Carl insisted on taking us on a walking tour of this charming Delaware River borough. At Farley's Bookstore, Carrie, who considers science fiction one of her areas of literary expertise, declared that the locally owned shop had the finest collection of science fiction authors she had ever enjoyed browsing.

Farley's is just one of many independently owned shops in town. We ended up eating a leisurely lunch in a restaurant along the canal while catching up with Carl. Reflecting back on almost 30 years of innkeeping, he explained how he and Dinie had been willing to sacrifice to keep improving the business.

"From the first, we took this project on with a professional approach. When the market changed, we changed with it," he says. "During the 1980s, we were one of the first to recognize the special needs of women business travelers, and we went after that market." In the late 1980s, they began to offer a weeklong hands-on class for aspiring innkeepers.

"We are still here because we always try to stay modern and are willing to keep reinventing ourselves," says Carl. As one of Pennsylvania's most renowned innkeepers, he has written books, taught classes and given seminars on innkeeping. Even after several decades of running an inn, he and Dinie continue to bring fresh enthusiasm and energy to their business. ♣

—Linda C. Feltman and her daughter, Carrie A. Peters, have been visiting B&Bs and inns throughout the commonwealth since 1991.

In the next issue, they will travel to Lehigh County.

Details

Frog Hollow Farm Bed and Breakfast, 401 Frogtown Road, Kintnersville 18930; 610-847-FROG (3764); froghollowfarmbnb.com; froghollow@epix.net.

Three guest rooms on the second floor of a mid-1700s stone farmhouse with queen beds, private baths and central air. Petie's Room has a Jacuzzi and balcony, and the Cathedral Room has an enclosed steam shower. Rates range from \$90 to \$155 per night depending upon room and day of week. Wireless Internet available. "You name it, we make it" customized breakfast offered on weekdays, and a full country gourmet breakfast is served on weekends. Afternoon tea, fresh-baked snacks and glass of port nightcap are daily treats.

Wedgwood Collection of Historic Inns, 111 W. Bridge St., New Hope 18930; new-hope-inn.com; stay@new-hope-inn.com.

The Glassmans' three properties, all within a stone's throw of each other, provide a total of 18 guest rooms and suites. Each of the three properties has a live-in innkeeper, special features and its own décor. All guest rooms have queen- or king-size beds, private phone line and voice mail, a private bath and air conditioning. Other features may include a fireplace, Jacuzzi, cable TV or a private porch. Rates range from \$90 to \$195 per room, depending upon property, room and season. Wireless Internet is available at all inns. Continental-plus breakfast served through the week with a full breakfast on weekends. Fresh-baked cookies and coffee always available. Children of most ages welcome, depending upon room availability. Please call for details regarding pet-friendly policy. Facilities available for small business conferences. ■