

# Maple Lane Farm: The 'Inn' Place To Sleep

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**Lancaster Farming Staff**

**PARADISE (Lancaster Co.)** — Ed and Marion Rohrer offered guests a room in Paradise even before bed and breakfast establishments became the "inn" thing to do.

Thirty years later the Rohrers have built up a repeat business that keeps their four bedrooms occupied throughout the year.

The scenic view from Maple Lane Farm stretches across 40 miles of Lancaster County countryside. Guests may relax on the porch that overlooks a pond, the 1785 farm house, and an adjacent Amish farmstead. Bountiful flower beds add color and aroma in warmer weather, but the colder season brings its own stark beauty as centuries' old trees are silhouetted against the winter sky.

The Rohrers started their bed and breakfast in the 1785 farmhouse that is one of the oldest homes in the county.

Despite the appeal of the stone

farmstead, the Rohrers decided to build a house designed for a bed and breakfast and allow their son and his family to move into the original farmstead.

The two-story home, built in 1980, has four upstairs bedrooms and two baths for guests. Throughout the home, bits and pieces of family heirlooms and those purchased add an historical charm to the place.

"Little by little we collected some pieces," Marion said. She confessed that in the early days of establishing a home, many timely pieces had been relegated to the attic in favor of more modern furniture. After the bed and breakfast was established, Marion soon realized that the old pieces in the attic were more appealing than contemporary styles. The couple reversed their decorating trend and Marion soon became an expert on home furnishing by studying decorating magazines and going on house tours.

She refinished many of the fur-



**Marion Rohrer greets guests at Maple Lane Farm. This house was designed for use as a bed and breakfast.**



**Quilts are stitched by Marlon and quilted with the help of Farm Women Society 14, of which Marlon is a member.**

niture pieces formerly stored in the attic. Old jugs, vintage tinware, and other antique accessories add to the country atmosphere. The quilts on the beds are made by Marion, but the quilts draped on the wooden banister upstairs are made by daughter-in-law Candy Rohrer, who sells them. Tourists who stay in the area often purchase the quilts.

August is one of the busiest months of the year for the bed and breakfast industry in the area. According to Marion, there is a shortage of hotels and people are needed to house the overflow.

That was the original drawing card for the Rohrers involvement in the bed and breakfast business. They had agreed to help out during a weekend overflow. Then they agreed to do it for a summer, which soon evolved into a year-round business. As many as 1,000 guests visit the farm during a busy summer.

The Rohrers enjoy the contact they have in meeting people from every state of the union and from other countries. Sometimes they learn that they are entertaining famous guests and politicians, but those who aren't recognizable are often reluctant to reveal their identities. One time, a preschooler divulged her father's identity when she told the Rohrers, "My daddy works for the president."



**These pieces were once stored in the attic of the old homestead before being refinished for use in the guest bedrooms.**

Although the Rohrers are members of the Pennsylvania Dutch Visitors Association and a few bed and breakfast associations, most of their clientel are repeat business or arrive through word-of-mouth advertising. Guests often choose the Rohrers' place because they want to stay on a working farm. They enjoy watching while the Rohrers milk the cows and work in the fields.

The Rohrers have two sons. Ed Jr. farms in partnership with his father and Roger is an ag lender with Hamilton Bank. A daughter died of cancer when she was 31.

Edwin and his son farm about 200 acres with corn and alfalfa and operate a 100-head dairy.

As in any working farm, the smell is not always appealing to city guests.

"Some kids hold their noses shut, but others say they love the clean, country smell," Marion said.

Depending on the wind, the aroma of freshly baked bread from a nearby bakery sometimes wafts across the valley.

The Rohrers serve what Marion calls "a continental plus breakfast." It includes mixed fresh fruit, two or three varieties of bread and rolls, cheese, and meat.

"That type of breakfast is popular in Europe," Marion said, "and that's where we got the idea."



**Marion refinishes many of the pieces found throughout their home.**



**Guests who sit on the front porch can see the original homestead where the Rohrers first started their bed and breakfast before building a new home on the farm.**

In her spare time, Marion enjoys traveling with her husband and participation in Society 14 of Lancaster Farm Women, where she has been a member for 25 years.

For more information, write to Maple Lane Farm at 505 Paradise Lane, Paradise, PA 17562 or call (717) 687-7479.