

Wild Orchard Guest Farm

Deerfield, NH

(603) 261-7742

www.wildorchardguestfarm.com

Paul Mathews and Molly Grant run the Cordwainer Guesthouse, and it's a wonderful place of respite and beauty. It's a return to the way life was lived long ago, with the processes of nature all about.

This restored farm house, originally built in 1740, is a visual feast filled with antiques and contemporary fine crafts. There are lots of books on the shelves, and lots of nooks and crannies in charming natural light to go and read them. There is plenty of history here, and lots to reflect on as you look at the marvelous night sky from the front yard.

If you listen, at various times of the day or night you might hear the hoot of an owl echoing through the forest; the whinny of the ponies enjoying their grain; the sound of several roosters crowing; the pea-hen honking to her chick, or the swish of their feathers as they walk through the plants seeking bugs to eat; the peacock sounding as he walks across the lawn or roosts on the rooftop and displays his feathers; the leaves of the birch tree gently clapping their hands as a breeze passes through them; the chirp of a cricket in the yard calling to his friends; the crooning of distant coyotes in the still night; the chirping of birds in the tree-tops, or the rat-a-tat-tat of a woodpecker somewhere in the forest. Life is plentiful here, and lovely to be a part of.

The animals on the farm are so enjoyable-each is full of personality. Each morning the ponies, Storm and Silver, come to the back door for a carrot or a piece of celery, and to say hi. They are such charming companions to each other, together all day in the field below the house, happily eating flowers and grasses together.

Then later every morning the peacock family comes by, grazing the grounds. The young male, New, often joins them, but just as often we see New peering through the upstairs bathroom window. The Admiral is the mature male peacock, in his full splendor. Often he calls out in the afternoons, standing tall and proud in the field as he shows his tail plumage.

Another cute visitor is a little frog. We saw him fixed to the outside of the bathroom window, sitting patiently one evening, while moths, drawn by the light, flitted nearby. When one landed close to him, he stepped over and rolled out his long, sticky tongue for a nice meal.

Every few days a group of about two dozen wild turkeys makes their way across the property, feeding on the insects in the field. It's a marvelous sight, and completely unique and beautiful. To me it's a reminder of the early history of America, when the wild turkey was commonplace, and Ben Franklin thought so highly of it he recommended it as the national bird.

The dogs are the friendliest, and of them, Henry is the funniest. One day I heard this wailing, and thought a dog had been hit by a car. I looked out the front door, and it was Henry. He just wanted to come in and say hi, and once inside, tail wagging, he made himself at home. That's just him, being neighborly. The other dogs, Gilbert and Elfine are sweet and friendly. These are small, friendly dogs, with lots of charm.

The yard has such a variety of trees and bushes, and the flower garden is filled with butterflies in the afternoon. Maple trees form the perimeter, and show their splendor in the autumn. Everywhere is life, and the processes of nature. It's a splendid place, and we greatly enjoyed our 2 months stay here in the summer of 2007.

Molly is a warm and attentive hostess and makes every one feel like it is his or her own home. If you need anything, she brings it promptly. Paul is a man of quiet character, thoughtful and literate, and a world-class craftsman. He learned hand shoemaking from his father, and has taught his wife and daughter. The spirit of fine craftsmanship permeates the house. We loved it here and look forward to visiting again soon.

Brent and Vickie Poirier, Las Cruces, New Mexico