

The following is an review written by Pamela LeBlanc and printed in the Austin American Statesman on May 21, 2006 in Travel Section D

## **A bed-and-breakfast and bike break**

Start your Hill Country ride at Mount Gainor Inn in Dripping Springs

Dripping Springs — The first time I saw Mount Gainor Inn, I was sweating up a storm, pedaling past it on my bicycle. The antique tandem bicycle propped up in the front yard caught my attention.

A perfect place to stay if you like to bike, I thought, right along some of the best cycling routes in the area. And that was before I tasted the croissant French toast or soaked under the stars in the hot tub.

Laurie and Jerry Pinnix didn't plan to run a bed-and-breakfast that catered to cyclists, but not long after opening Mount Gainor Inn three years ago, they noticed lots of bikers pedaling down the narrow, two-lane road outside Dripping Springs, where their Inn is located. Now they embrace the culture, even hosting events in conjunction with the Austin Cycling Association and handing out maps of popular cycling routes.

My husband and I booked a room in late March, the time of the year when we hanker to get out and rack up miles in the Hill country. Then we loaded up our bikes and headed out, with plans to meet some friends the following morning for a good long ride.

The inn looks boxy and boring from the outside. You'd never guess the Pinnixes saved this vintage 1911 farmhouse from the bulldozers.

Inside the Attic Room where we stayed, through, original wood plank floors and an arched, barnlike ceiling makes you feel like you're borrowing a room from the folks who built the place. We stashed our luggage in the massive living area (complete with two futon beds in case you feel like sharing) ducked into the bedroom to bounce on the sleigh bed (high marks on the princess-o-meter) checked out the bathroom (big, clean) and buzzed through the kitchen (next time we'll bring food and cook!)

But we had important business to attend to — the hot tub. Shucking off our clothes and squirming into our swimsuits, we dashed down the stairs, flipped the lid on the simmering cauldron just steps from our door and eased into the steamy broth with a sigh. No roof overhead, just a clear view of a million glinting stars in the sky above.

Nice.

When we reached al dente, we towed off and ran upstairs. There's a TV and DVD player, but we opted for books. We slipped off to sleep, and woke up 15 minutes before our pre-arranged breakfast hour, Jerry Pinnix showed up on our doorstep right on time, bearing a big woven basket lined with a red-checked cloth and filled to the brim with the

aforementioned croissant French toast (decadent), bacon, fruit and orange juice, all prepared by Laurie Pinnix.

We took a quick look around the premises. A couple of hammocks swayed invitingly, and a tree full of hummingbirds dive-bombed the feeder hanging near the inn. In all the Pinnixes own 23 acres here.

Properly fueled for our bike ride, we changed into our cycling garb and headed off for a 45-mile jaunt to Johnson City via Pedernales Falls State Park. Checkout time at the bed and breakfast is noon, so that gave us all morning to make the ride, which was just how we like it plenty of you rolling hills, but nothing so intimidating we couldn't push our way up it. We rolled back in, patted the resident cat, Nell, on the head, and bid adieu.

**about Mt. Gainor Inn**

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**By Pamela LeBlanc**



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