

Review in the Fort Worth Star Telegraph, 4/25/2004

NOTE: This article was written in 2004 and some of the information in regards to Mt. Gainor Inn may have changed, for example rates - please review website for correct information.

BIKERS' PARADISE

Cyclists put the pedal to the metal to get to Dripping Springs

Dripping Springs — The winding, hilly roads south of U.S. 290 are swarming with bicyclists in helmets and Span-dex, looking for all the world as if they're training for the Tour de France.

Maybe some of them are.

Five-time Tour champ Lance Armstrong lives not too far away, and these hills between Austin and Fredericksburg are among those he rides.

So when longtime locals Laurie and Jerry Pinnix decided to turn a 100-year-old farmhouse into an inn, they chose the road best traveled: "We're on three great bike loops," Laurie Pinnix said on a recent morning as six bikers pedaled by.

A little more than a year ago, the Pinnixes opened Mt. Gainor Inn, a B&B&B - bed, breakfast and bike. You don't need to be a cyclist to stay there, but, Pinnix says, "that's mainly our clientele." Members of the Austin Cycling Association stay there frequently and give it a thumbs-up.

The place caters to bikers by providing maps of good bike routes, offering bike rentals and hosting organized bike rides.

Mt. Gainor Inn is a two-level house, rented by the level. The first floor, decorated in a 1930's bike theme (lots of maps) is a two-bedroom country retreat with wood walls and floors, but it's filled with up-to-date comforts such as a TV, washer-dryer and a full kitchen with cookware. The upstairs is a one-bedroom romantic retreat with a smaller kitchen.

The Pinnixes, who live up the hill, bring over breakfast in the morning. For \$6 extra you can get instead of the basic continental, a full breakfast featuring gingerbread pancakes. The couple will, if asked, stock the fridge with your favorite food and bev. (The nearest store is about 20 minutes away.)

After a day of biking - or not - guest can watch the sun set in the hills, make dinner on the grill, soak in the hot tub under the stars or build a campfire and sit around it on stumps.

Rates are \$90 for two people, \$120 for three, \$145 for four - or rent the whole house for \$350 a night. The place is in the middle of nowhere, but if you follow the directions on the web site, you'll find it easily. www.mtgainorinn.com or (512) 894-0982.

Bicyclists find everything they need at the Mt. Gainor Inn - bed, breakfast, bike rentals, maps, organized rides and more.

by Helen Bryant/Special to the Star-Telegram



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