

The following is an review written by Sharry Buckner and printed in Hill Country Magazine, March 25, 2006

Mt. Gainor Inn

by Sharry Buckner

It was fate. It was an accident. It was a plan gone awry. It is now the warm, comfortable Mt. Gainor Inn, in the beautiful Texas Hill Country between Dripping Springs and Wimberley.

When Laurie and Jerry Pinnix found themselves the recipients of an old farmhouse scheduled for demolition, they thought they would use the fine old lumber to add on to their home. But, when they found the house in better condition than it appeared, they decided to restore it. After nearly four years of painstaking work, with Laurie and Jerry doing of the restoration themselves, Mt. Gainor Inn was born.

What to do with a lovely, restored house? Open a B&B of course! So they began their homework, studying and learning about the inn keeping business, and attending conferences and workshops presented by Historic Accommodations of Texas (HAT). Mt. Gainor Inn is now one of "The Great Stays of Texas" inspected and approved by HAT.

The Inn sits amid 23 acres of lush, rolling hills with panoramic 360 degree views of the Hill Country from each guest room. Originally built circa 1911, the home showcases the fine craftsmanship of the early 1900's, with lovely hardwoods throughout. The name comes from the highest point in the area, near an early "school and church" community on the land of pioneer rancher, Joseph P. Gainer.

The Mt. Gainor Suite and the Garden Room occupy the downstairs; the upstairs Attic Suite has its own private entrance. The inn offers upscale amenities, fine furnishing, kitchens, and modern conveniences including TV/DVD players, in-house movies, comfortable beds with luxurious linens, and a variety of artwork. The outdoor spa goes "topless" to allow an unobstructed view of the heavens. Then there are the spectacular sunsets viewed from the porch ... and the hammock ... and the peace and quiet ...

When the Pinnixes, who live on the hillside above the Inn, noticed dozens of bicycle riders going by on weekends, they began talking to folks. It seems the area, already noted for its beauty, had become even more popular after Lance Armstrong purchased land in the area. (No, they haven't met him.) But they got in touch with the Austin Cycling Association and have created a delightful partnership.

Mt Gainor Inn is the starting and ending point for three scenic loops, varying from 12 to over 41 miles in length. The longest takes riders to Wimberley, and another follows picturesque Onion Creek. Excellent maps are available at the inn, as well as on their web site. Laurie and Jerry sponsor two annual events in conjunction with the Austin Cycling Association, cater events, and give presentations around the state at bicycle club

meetings. The events have garnered wide media attention, resulting in visits from cyclists from as far as England and Italy.

The Armadillo Bike Ride, an additional cycling event is huge - with live musical entertainment, food, and special events. Jerry and Laurie are in charge of the "rest stop" committee. They are not only one to the sponsors, but also donate a free weekend at the Inn to raffle for the club's big fundraiser. Laurie explains, "It's just a great organization. They raise money to buy helmets for kids who can't afford them and hold free safety classes and clinics for kids all year long."

Do Laurie and Jerry ride bikes? No, they ride horses. But that's another story. "Cyclists are some of the nicest people ... we've made so many great friends!" says Laurie. We have couples come and the guys ride and the wives go shopping in Wimberley. And we're close to Blanco and Johnson City, Too."

The Inn appeals to men as well as women. It's comfortable and upscale, not at all "frou frou Victorian," as some think of B&Bs. Laurie calls it "country elegant." She says it doesn't have much curb appeal, but she hears lots of "WOW's" when folks enter. In addition to cyclists, all groups are welcome. The Inn has hosted scrapbook gatherings, quilters, shoppers who come for Wimberley Market Days, women's retreats and family reunions. It's also a great place for a romantic getaway for couples escaping the hectic city life.

The secluded Mt. Gainor Inn is a perfect fit for the increasing trend of Nature Tourism. Guest frequently see abundant wildlife, birders are amazed by the huge variety of birds. Numerous bird feeders and birdhouses are scattered around the property and the thoughtful hosts have provided mowed walking trails, chairs, and resting spots in the wooded areas.

In fact, their expansion plans include a detached room, with glass all the way across one side that will back up to a grove of trees where guest may bird-watch from the privacy of their own room/suite. Next will come a cottage in the orchard of fruit and pecan trees, taking advantage of Laurie's favorite view of heaven! Wonderful hospitality and breakfasts to die for! Thank you for everything." Awesome! Yummy food, great hot tub, comfy beds, incredible decor. This was the perfect place to make and share memories with dear friends." Things we enjoyed about our stay: God's massive expansive sky, cloudless cool days, clear star filled nights, warm dear souls. Laurie and Jerry, purring Kitty on our laps, hawks, roadside flowers, excellent bike ride along Onion Creek, wonderful food and sharing out love for each after 30 years."

Hundreds of guests are glad the Pinnixes didn't tear it down for the lumber!

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Some excerpts from the guest books express the ambiance of Mt. Gainor Inn - "We loved this little bit of heaven! Wonderful hospitality and breakfasts to die for! Thank you for everything." "Awesome! Yummy food, great hot tub, comfy beds, incredible decor. This was the perfect place to make and share memories with dear friends." "Things we enjoyed about our stay: God's massive expansive sky, cloudless cool days, clear star filled nights, warm dear souls, Laurie and Jerry, purring Kitty on our laps, hawks, roadside flowers, excellent bike ride along onion creek, wonderful food and sharing our love for each other after 30 years."

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