



This beautiful, secluded bed & breakfast near New Braunfels had its beginnings as the humble home of German immigrants 160 years ago. The old home of Andreas and Catherine Pape has been meticulously restored and enhanced by the Waldrip family.

# Houseful of history

by JOHN HALLOWELL

"It would have been easier to build a brand-new house," says innkeeper Margy Waldrip, "but we have so much history here." Mrs. Waldrip and her son, Darrell, are the hosts at the historic Kuebler Waldrip Haus Bed-and-Breakfast, just outside of New Braunfels. And she is not exaggerating; the work of restoring the 160-year-old home of pioneers Andreas and Catherine Pape (pronounced almost like "poppy") has been a monumental task, but even a brief visit is an impressive lesson in the history of German immigration to the Hill Country.



One of the historic photos on the wall at the Kuebler Waldrip Haus shows baker Buddy Naegelin with a tray of fresh bread. Naegelin's grandfather founded the famous New Braunfels bakery; his wife was Darrell Waldrip's second-grade teacher.


The old home has been owned by just three families. Andreas and Catherine built it around 1850 and passed it along to their son, Ludwig, who sold it to Albert Kraft in 1897. Albert sold it to his brother, Willie, in 1910. Willie's heirs sold it to Larry and Margy Waldrip in 1974.

New Braunfels veterinarian Larry Waldrip just wanted some acreage not too far from town, where he could indulge his dream of raising cattle. The old house on the property was not really fit for human habitation, but it had "a roof, walls and doors," Mrs. Waldrip recalls, so Larry, Margy and their three young sons (Dibrell, Darrell and David) moved in. A wood cookstove provided heat, but there was no air conditioning, and the plumbing did not work. Only the kind hospitality of their neighbors, Bob and Jean Pfeuffer, "saved our sanity" for the two weeks before the plumbing was functioning.

The original stone house was a 15-by-30-foot living and dining room by the time the Waldrips arrived. There was a porch along one side, and an outside stairway led to a primitive attic room. The Krafts had built a

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Margy and Darrell Waldrip pose for a picture in the B&B's dining room, once the main room of the Pape home. The Waldrips removed decades of "modernization" to display the original rock walls and ceiling beams. Below, the old Danville School provides five more B&B rooms.



wood-framed addition with two bedrooms and a kitchen in the early 1900s.

Among the Waldrips' first projects were: extending and enclosing the old porch to make a third bedroom, installing new plumbing, wiring and cabinets in the kitchen, and removing sheetrock, wallpaper, boards and adobe plaster to expose and remortar the rock walls in the dining room.

By 1978, structural problems in the wood-framed addition persuaded the family to undertake another dramatic round of renovations. They "took a deep breath," brought in a tiny travel trailer to serve as a temporary kitchen, and removed the old kitchen and two bedrooms from the house. They added a new kitchen with a bedroom above it, made the old attic into another bedroom, and built a barn with yet another bedroom above that. Three years later, they stripped the old front porch bedroom down to bare rock walls and exposed-beam ceiling. The bedroom features the original porch posts, held in place with wooden pegs, but still "very, very tight" today.

The 1978 renovation added a new dimension to the historical appeal of the Waldrips' home. A family friend had acquired rock from two historic buildings, intending to build a new home with them. His plans changed when he was hired by Texas A&I in

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**A sequence of photos shows the reconstruction of one end of the old Pape home, now the luxurious Kuebler Waldrip Haus B&B. The beautiful stone walls had been covered inside and out with "modern" materials through the years; they are now restored, and "better than new."**

Kingsville, and the rock was still unused in 1978. Most of it came from the 1878 Comal County Jail, which had been razed in 1968 to make room for a parking lot and drive-in window at the First National Bank of New Braunfels. The rest of it came from the renovation of the Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church, which had a wall removed for expansion in 1963.

The rocks were large and unwieldy, so the Waldrips purchased a rock saw, and set out to cut them into six-inch-thick pieces. (One of the largest rocks had been the step going into the jail. It now serves as the hearth to the Waldrips' fireplace.) All three boys were on the high school football team that year, and coaches observed that they were the only players eager to show up for the afternoon practices; it seemed like a break for them after hours of cutting rock in the August heat!

Despite the hard work of fixing the old house, the Waldrips have thoroughly enjoyed the secluded location. Wildlife abounds on their wooded acreage, and during their years on the property, they have raised several injured or orphaned deer, usually releasing them into the wild at about a year. One of their formerly tame does had a baby whose hip was broken. The Waldrips kept the fawn in their powder room, and the mother would come three or four times a day to nurse it. During that time, they found another fawn with a serious cut and a bunch of prickly pear thorns embedded in its hide. They removed the thorns, and a surgeon who happened to be at the B&B that evening stitched up the wound. The mother of the other injured fawn adopted this one, too!

When the boys went off to college, Margy opened her home to guests as a bed-and-breakfast. "The boys couldn't come home for the weekend," she recalls. "I had their rooms rented out to guests." It wasn't long before she realized that she needed more rooms. One day in 1990, she saw a picture of the old Danville School on the front page of the newspaper. It had been serving as a music room for several years since it had become obsolete for classes, but now it needed to be moved, and the Comal ISD was going to sell it to the highest bidder. Margy got it for \$1,600, but it cost her \$6,800 to move it to her property, and thousands more to turn it into a welcoming lodging-place. The school had porches on all four sides of a 24' x 36' classroom; two of those porches are now bedrooms, and two more bedrooms are upstairs. A full kitchen has been added to the main classroom. Left-over rocks from the jail and the church now enhance the landscape around the historic school.

The barn is not historic, but it has been converted into a comfortable, three-bedroom cottage which is popular with families. In



**Margy Waldrip bought the old Danville School at an auction in 1990. It has now been beautifully restored and landscaped to provide five more luxurious rooms.**

1996, a living room, bedroom and two bathrooms were added to the back of the main house, so there are now 11 rooms available for rent. The Waldrips enjoy welcoming repeat guests again and again. One Abilene family has come every Thanksgiving since 1992; their children are now grown, and bring their own children. "We didn't have a B&B in mind when we started this," Margy says, "But this way, we get to share our 'history' with so many more people." It's a wonderful place to visit, for individuals, families or larger groups. "It's quiet here," Margy adds. "And we're flexible." Groups can rent the whole complex for weddings, reunions or business meetings, but you'd better make reservations in advance if you want it on a weekend.

The historic Kuebler Waldrip Haus Bed and Breakfast (the delicious breakfasts are another of the B&B's attractions) is located just a few minutes drive from the Guadalupe and Comal Rivers, great shopping, restaurants, Schlitterbahn Water Park, Landa Park, and downtown New Braunfels and Historic Gruene District. For more information, call (830) 625-8300 or visit [www.kueblerwaldrip.com](http://www.kueblerwaldrip.com).

