

At the head of its class

By Syd Kearney
Houston Chronicle Travel

NEW BRAUNFELS, TEXAS

Drive up the gravel road and step back in time to a ranch style bed and breakfast from 1847 and 1863.

Inside the house is the rest of the welcoming committee: a couple of cats, a long-legged deer fawn and innkeeper Margaret K. Waldrip and her son, Darrell.

Built in 1847 by German Andreas Pape, the Kuebler Waldrip Haus, with its limestone and exposed timber, sits on 43 acres in the Texas Hill Country. The Waldrip's became the third family to occupy the house when they moved in 1974.

Margaret and her husband began restoration of the structure in 1980. They were lucky to have three sons – Dibrell, Darrell and David – to help with the work, which included stripping away wallpaper, horizontal boards, sheetrock and then the original adobe plaster that had been added over the years, as well as the addition of several rooms.

One unique bedroom of the first floor features the original front porch (including the posts) in its design. Another architectural anecdote features a stone fireplace that incorporates rock from the city's old jail as well as that of a Catholic church.

After their success with the pioneer house, the Waldrips decided to tackle another building. The Danville School Bed and Breakfast is housed in a one-room schoolhouse, constructed in 1863. This schoolhouse was spared a splintery fate when Margaret bought it for \$1600 in August 1990 and moved it here from Solms, Texas to a spot about a stone's throw from the main house.

Margaret enjoys showing photographs of the schoolhouse before it became a showplace with four rooms and five bathrooms.

The schoolhouse is elementary in décor with shiny wooden floors and a giant chalkboard decorating one long wall. There are country knick-knacks, inviting wooden rockers and comfy quilts throughout the building. With a kitchen downstairs, the schoolhouse is popular with big families. Back at the main house, the Waldrips are maneuvering around homey obstacles like overstuffed chairs and overstuffed cats. The fawn, like a Mother Goose lamb, follows Darrell from the kitchen to the dining room and back again. Darrell offers up a photograph; it shows a 10-year-old Darrell working on the house. There's a whole album dedicated to the house's restoration, including documentation of the many months when Margaret's kitchen was located under the stars.

Family photos, pioneer artifacts and pieces collected during Margaret's frequent trips to Mexico decorate the Kuebler Waldrip Haus. A former schoolteacher, Margaret loves to share stories of her travels and students. When a schoolteacher friend drops by for a visit, guests are invited to join them in a glass of wine and some lovely conversation.

The bedrooms are as friendly as the B&B's hosts. All are huge and feature ceiling fans and an eclectic selection of reading material, ranging from best sellers to bedtime stories.

An upstairs room is really a two-room suite. One room for the suite has a king-size bed and a wicker rocker. The second room has two more beds (a double and a twin). A small deck off this suite offers

guests a relaxing place for stargazing.

While the rooms are comfortable and quaint, it may be the breakfast that brings guests back. Margaret is quite a baker. Her breakfast rolls are super fluffy, and her cinnamon rolls, hot from the oven are marvelous.

Darrell gets credit for the homegrown cherry tomatoes at the breakfast table. Also on the Lazy Susan are blueberries with cream, scrambled eggs and link sausage. A hit with guests this morning was a terrific egg-and-cheese pie. (They don't use the Q word around here, Margaret quips).

After breakfast, Darrell put on an impromptu floor show when he fed the fawn a bottle. Guests were mesmerized by the speed with which the spindly fawn finished its meal. It was fitting to a yummy breakfast and stay.

Guest Comments:

"Best Breakfast in Texas!"

"Relax & great atmosphere."

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Historic Kuebler Waldrip Haus
B&B, 1620 Hueco Springs Loop
Rd., New Braunfels, Texas 78132
Phone: (830)-625-8300 OR
Toll Free: (800)-299-8372

WEB: www.kueblerwaldrip.com

RATES: Nightly room rates for 2 range from \$135.00-\$350.00 plus tax. Added guests are \$30 per added adult (age 21 and older) and \$20 per added child (ages 3-20). Our hot candlelight breakfast brunch is included and served in our dining room 9am-11am.

RESERVATIONS can be made by phone or by email. Please call us with your name, address, cell phone, number of guests, arrival time and CC. Reserved guests receive a paper confirmation & a map and directions.