



by Bette Cooper

B&B Road Trip

Missouri & Arkansas Something for Everybody!

Captain Wohlt Inn
Hermann, Missouri

Hermann Hill Vineyard & Inn
Hermann, Missouri

Historic Iron Horse Inn B&B
Hermann, Missouri

Cabin at Woodmere
New Florence, Missouri

Second Creek Farm B&B
Owensville, Missouri

Bradford House B&B
Branson, Missouri

Palace Hotel & Bath House
Eureka Springs, Arkansas

I have often wondered about the history of lodging in the U.S. When did people start staying in places other than their homes for pleasure instead of as a stopover during their travels? Whatever the reason, B&B lovers have certainly reaped the benefit of the trend that started so long ago. There are literally thousands of B&Bs, inns, lodges and cabins across the U.S., and those of us on this particular road trip were lucky enough to enjoy just a few of those types of establishments in the beautiful, historic Midwest town of Hermann, Missouri.

The lucky travelers consisted of me, my husband Gary, and founders and owners of BBA, Clark and Pegi Brown (Clark and Gary are brothers, so this was really a family affair). We started off from our home in Medicine Park, OK and drove northeast through Tulsa. We crossed into Arkansas after about 4 hours of driving, and stopped in Bentonville for lunch. After some searching we discovered one of the few places open that day (it was a Sunday) called Oscars. A great steak place, they served up some excellent fare that fortified us for the rest of our drive. After lunch we drove a couple hours more to reach our first night's destination, Branson, Missouri.

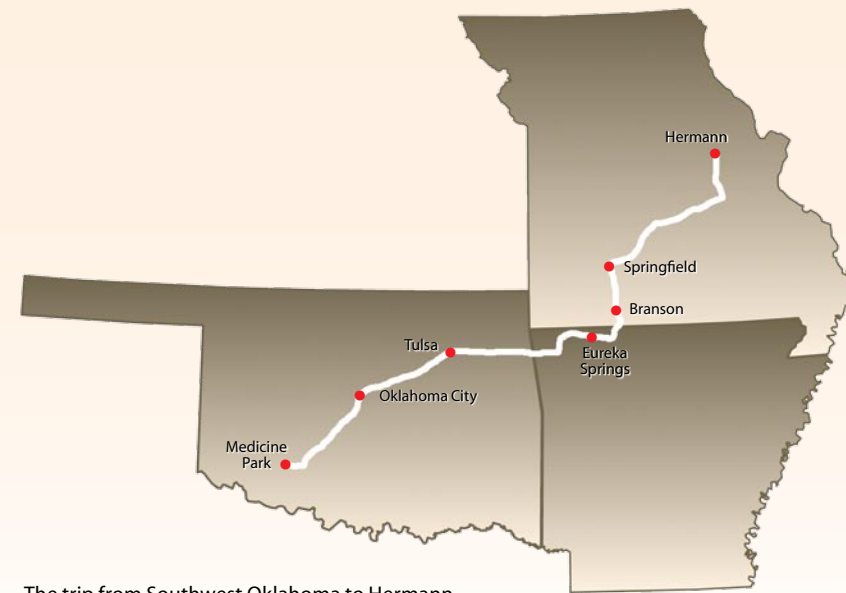
Branson is a great family-oriented

town and has evolved over the years into a sort of mini Las Vegas, but with without the gambling! It has a "strip" with neon lights, show houses, and cabarets. It is the home of Silver Dollar City, a theme park that attracts thousands of people, including adults as well as kids. Nestled in a forest, it is an unlikely venue for such a place. Other attractions include top-notch performers—Paul Revere, Bill Medley and Petula Clark were all in town the night we were there. Beautiful Table Rock Lake is just a few miles away for the outdoor

enthusiast. We had dinner at the Outback Restaurant (not the chain, but the place that inspired the founders of the chain to emulate their Australian style and menu by a special licensing arrangement). Our friendly waitress and excellent food made it a good choice for that evening's dinner.

The B&B where we stayed was off the beaten path, in a beautiful wooded setting. The Bradford House is a beautiful inn, decorated very much in keeping with the Victorian era, complete with attractive antique furnishings. It is quiet, very clean

▼ The Bradford House in Branson, Missouri



The trip from Southwest Oklahoma to Hermann, Missouri was a little over 550 miles. The first leg to Branson was about 6 hours, and the last leg to Hermann was close to 4 hours.

and comfortable. The Bradford House is also very family friendly; children are not only allowed but welcome. The owners, Bob and Cristy Westfall are wonderful people, and very "hands-on" proprietors. Breakfast was a wonderfully casual affair with Bob cooking up eggs to order in the kitchen, delicious breakfast meats and assorted other goodies. Guests helped themselves right in the kitchen, family style. Cristy was in the dining room serving and chatting with the guests. Overall it was a great experience, very warm and

inviting. Branson really is a town that offers "something for everybody"!

We headed out of Branson to our ultimate destination, Hermann, MO. Driving through bucolic countryside and magnificent woods, we all agreed that southwest Missouri is one of the U.S.'s most beautiful landscapes we've ever seen. Driving into Hermann is a "time tripping" experience: you feel that you might be entering a European town at the turn of the 20th century. Hermann's forefathers indeed had foresight. Like so



▲ Hermann Hill Vineyard & Inn

many U.S. towns, they didn't tear down their old buildings; rather, they lovingly and carefully restored their "elders". It's a testimony to their diligence in preserving the town.

Our three night visit in Hermann really did drive home the theme of "something for everybody". Our stay included six different establishments (the two couples split up each night, staying in different places). Mat Wilkins, unofficial "ambassador" of Hermann, and co-owner of Captain Wohlt's B&B with his wife Kent,

▼ The Hermann Hill Village cottages



▼ Hermann Hill Villages private decks overlook the Missouri River



B&B Road Trip

Continued

planned our entire stay, including setting up all of our accommodations, suggesting places to see, shop and dine. (See BBA Summer 2006 issue for a feature on Captain Wohlt's). To give us a real taste of what Hermann has to offer, Mat thought we should experience the many different types of B&B accommodations in the area: upscale and sophisticated, country, and historic.

The first night Clark and Pegi stayed at the fabulous Hermann Hill Vineyard and Inn. This is truly an upscale establishment, with eight exquisitely appointed "state rooms", each with a luxurious private bath, fireplace, king size oak sleigh bed, and many other amenities. Each room offers spectacular views of the vineyard and countryside. Upon arriving at Hermann Hill we were greeted by a delightful young lady named Liz, who checked Pegi and Clark in, explained the breakfast options, and gave us the grand tour. Clark and Pegi stayed in the Seyval room; each room is named after different types of grapes/wines.

The Hermann Hill Vineyard and Inn is owned by a marvelous couple, Terry and Peggy Hammer. Having worked at the Hermann schools for many years as administrator and teacher, respectively, Terry and Peggy fulfilled their dream of becoming B&B owners by building Her-



▲ Stone Hill Winery Tasting Room & gift shop

mann Hill and planting a vineyard, growing grapes that are used in many local wines. In their "spare time" they are also co-owners of the local Ford dealership, and surprisingly both still put in considerable time at the business each day.

Clark & Pegi's breakfast at Hermann Hill included a hearty country-style breakfast that was out of this world. The spectacular view from their table overlooked the entire city.

Terry and Peggy expanded their dream and vision even further to include still-under-construction Hermann Hill Village Hotel, Spa and Conference Center. In Terry and Peggy's own words, Village functions as a "hotel with individual cottages". Several of the cottages are complete and in use. I use the term "cottages" somewhat loosely because when Gary

and I learned that we would be staying at the HHVH location instead of the inn, we thought we were in for a quaint experience. Quite the contrary, but in a fabulous way! Each cottage is packed with luxurious amenities such as a huge deck with spectacular, up close views of the beautiful Missouri river, an elegant and comfortable king size bed, two (yes, two!) plasma screen TVs, a whirlpool inside and a Jacuzzi hot tub on the deck outside overlooking the river, and a full kitchen. The Village is ideal for visitors who wish a bit more privacy and isolation than a traditional B&B offers. It is an excellent choice for friends or families traveling together but want completely separate accommodations. Breakfast in the cottage was provided in the refrigerator (quiche, croissants, fruit and juice), along with Terry's



▲ The quaint & rustic Cabin at Woodmere

fabulous cookies. As the full name of the Village suggests, future plans include a conference center, hotel and chapel.

Dinner that night was at Europa, a fantastic European cuisine establishment in the heart of town, owned by the Ratpold's. It was a very leisurely, delicious dinner in true European fashion, and the wine and laughter flowed.

Checking out in the morning, we said our goodbyes to everyone at Hermann Hill and headed out for our second day's adventure as planned by Mat. We knew we would be visiting a local winery, but we didn't know how fun, entertaining and informative it would prove to be.

The Stone Hill Winery has quite a history. It is the oldest and most awarded winery in Hermann, and is listed on the National Historic Registry. The main building was built in 1869 and remains the hub of the business today. Stone Hill is truly a family operation. Jim and Betty Held reopened the winery in 1965 (it went on an unwelcome hiatus due to Prohibition for many years). Since then they have been joined by three of their children all of whom hold degrees in enology and viticulture. One of those children, Patty Held-Uthlaut, Director of Public Relations and Special Events, greeted us upon our arrival and gave us a rare private tour and tasting that lasted a couple of hours. Her warm personality and tremendous knowledge made the experience truly wonderful; she did a great job of explaining to

us novices! Stone Hill wins many awards annually and Patty herself is an esteemed wine judge. After the tour we had lunch at the winery's fabulous restaurant, where they serve fresh delectable meals and, of course, serve all of their wines by the glass or bottle. There is so much to share about this winery that cannot be done justice here. So go to Stone Hill, it's an experience you won't soon forget.

Our Stone Hill visit was followed by a trip back to Mat's for our second evening's destination. Since we were splitting up that night, Clark and Pegi accompanied Gary and I to our place for the night, the incredibly quaint and rustic Cabin at Woodmere. Owned by Joan and Peter Treis, this property is truly beautiful and peaceful. Driving literally through "hills and dales", we arrived at a hidden gem of a place, a private secluded cabin with a view of the woods and an eight acre lake. More on this cabin to follow...

After checking in at Woodmere we headed off to Clark and Pegi's destination, the Second Creek Farm Bed and Breakfast, where we were all able to stay for dinner and enjoy an incredible gourmet meal. The owners, Jack and Pat Wilson, started Second Creek (named for the creek that runs through the property) as their second career and labor of love in the early 1990's. Coming from the St. Louis area, they scoured the state for the perfect location before settling on the incredibly beautiful 125 acre property. You wouldn't



▲ Second Creek Farm's timber frame, hand-hewn log home.

believe it by looking at it, but the building itself was built new in 1990 as a timber frame, hand-hewn log home. There are two wings in the structure—one to hold the gorgeous and expansive great room and four guest suites on the second level, and the other to hold the Wilson's private quarters. Pat's antiques from 30 years of collecting fills the entire place. Each guest room has a farm animal theme and each room features a private bath. The open main floor has an old time walk in fireplace, a game room and library.

Dinner and breakfast at Second Creek was fabulous, with Pat cooking up gourmet meals and Jack the serving. Since we were the only ones for dinner that night we had the opportunity to talk to Pat and Jack at length and hear their stories about their lives, their children and grandchildren, their experience building and running the B&B, and the guests and events they have enjoyed since opening their business. Truly an enjoyable time!

Now back to the Woodmere. In addition to the cabin, Owners Joan and Pete live on the premises in a delightful house, and a barn is nearing completion as extra accommodations. All buildings are in fairly close proximity to each other, but are still very private. The cabin is chock full of wonderful antiques and memorabilia; it truly felt like it might have been your grandparents' vacation or fishing cabin on the lake when you were a kid. The big screened in porch completely transfixed

▼ The cellars at Stone Hill Winery



B&B Road Trip

Continued

me in the evening with its accessibility to all the wild life and symphony of summer sounds including cicadas, crickets, night birds and bullfrogs. It evoked such strong memories of my uncle's farm in Illinois where my siblings and I used to sleep on the screened in porch. In fact when it was time to turn in for the night I announced that I was going to sleep on the porch, and I was glad I did—falling asleep to the sounds of summer, and as an added bonus, was awakened early in the morning by a warm summer storm. Having spent all of my adult years in California, it was a Midwest summer night's dream come true for this Iowa girl!

In the morning Joan arrived with a picnic basket in tow containing a delicious meal consisting of a scrumptious breakfast casserole, fruit and juice. I actually succeeded in making coffee in an "old fashioned" percolator, completing the experience. After touring the stunning property surrounding the lake (first by golf cart, then by foot!), we said our goodbyes to Joan and headed off to meet Clark and Pegi.

Our third and final day in Hermann was a whirlwind time. We visited another

local winery, Adam Puchta, know as "Hermann's newest old winery", referring to the fact that it opened in 1839, closed during prohibition, then reopened in 1889. Located in the beautiful Frene Valley, it is just 8 miles from downtown Hermann. The young woman who helped us at the tasting did a great job of explaining how to pair their many varietals with different foods. It's definitely worth a stop.

After that was a quick stop at the Rivertown restaurant for a bite, then for some shopping at the Tin Rabbit, a great little store filled with country folk art, traditional American crafts, and primitive accents for the home and garden. We then popped across the street to the newly opened Kaffee Haus at the Junction and adorable kids store Muzzies (owned by the same people who run the Tin Rabbit). Since we'd walked off our lunch somewhat, we headed over to the Chocolate Box (a store with a self-explanatory name!), where their motto is "Buy all you want...we'll make more!" It was a good thing because we stocked up on candies, clusters, covered pretzels and "turtles".

The last stop for the day before returning to Captain Wohlt's to check in Clark and Pegi was Indian Ridge Gardens. This beautiful property is owned by Joan and David Menke. According to Joan and Dave, their goal is to help people de-

velop a love for the natural environment through horticulture and nature. They also offer personalized service to assist in the selection of plans for your garden or landscaping needs. Their organically grown plants are available for purchase. Indian Ridge also offers two acres of display gardens (most plants growing wild are available in the plant store) and hiking trails and guided tours. The day we were there was a bit rainy and we were a little short on time, so we couldn't experience it fully. This lovely place is definitely worth setting aside a few hours for an extended visit.

Upon returning to Captain Wohlt's, Mat gave us the full tour of all of his guest rooms, and checked Clark and Pegi into the English suite. Before proceeding to Gary's and my stay for the night, we spent some time on Hollyhock Alley just behind Captain Wohlt's. One interesting place there is a small studio called "My Father's Signs". Owned by artist David Ludig, it contains one of a kind "shutzen targets"—beautiful works of art that are derived from the lost art of shutzens.

Gary and I then checked in at the beautiful Iron Horse Inn, which was just a block from Captain Wohlt's. Owned by Janis Johan, the historic home is located in the heart of Hermann's downtown historic district. Built in 1902, it was

purchased and completely renovated in 1999, and eventually purchased by Janis in 2001. Janis has carefully furnished the inn with period antiques, in keeping with each unique theme of the 3 guest rooms. Breakfast included delicious muffins, pastries and fresh fruit, provided in a basket to be enjoyed in the room or on the beautiful front porch.

Our last day in Hermann was topped off by a great dining experience at the Cottage Restaurant and Gallery. Although they are normally closed for dinner during the week (open only for dinner Friday and Saturday, open for lunch Wednesday through Saturday, and Sunday brunch), Mat arranged for a private dinner for the four of us and the innkeepers who hosted us in Hermann. We had a chance to browse in the gallery first, and meet the Cottage's owner, 89 year old artist Al Miller. The gallery included Al's work as well as other local artists. Al's wife Sydney is the Cottage's chef, and she and her staff made an excellent dinner for all of us. It was a great opportunity for us all to get to know each other better, talk a bit of shop, drink a bit of wine, and enjoy some great food. The event really highlighted the camaraderie that the B&B community share in Hermann, and really brought home the need for a publication like BBA to help promote and bring together the



▲ Our last evening in Hermann at the Cottage Restaurant with our hosts and Innkeepers

B&B industry all over the country. After dinner, we headed back to the Iron Horse, and got to spend a couple of delightful hours in the rocking chairs on the front porch, chatting with Janis before turning in.

Breakfast at Captain Wohlt's was a fun affair. Mat and Kent were in the kitchen serving up delicious food as well as copious wit and charm! Crustless quiche topped with dill, fresh fruit and breads, and whipped orange juice was on the menu that day. The dining room was full with all the guests, and the conversation was flowing. It was a great ending to the trip.

After breakfast we said our goodbyes, and as we left Hermann we decided that next time we need to spend at least a week! In fact, see the end of this article for other "must sees" that we couldn't cover here—we'd have to publish an entire supplement in order to do everything justice. With the many different types of places we stayed, and the variety of activities we enjoyed, Hermann definitely has something for everybody.

We had one more stop on this road trip—about four hours south of Hermann and across the Arkansas border we stopped for the night in the beautiful historic little town in the middle of the Ozark

▼ The Historic Iron Horse Inn B&B



▼ The Captain Wohlt Inn



▼ The Cottage Restaurant & Gallery



▼ The Palace Hotel & Bath House in Eureka Springs



B&B Road Trip

Continued

Mountains called Eureka Springs. Eureka Springs is known as “America’s Victorian Mountain Village”, and offers world-class shopping and dining, renowned art galleries, museums and outdoor activities. Dinner that evening was at a wonderful little place called Davitos, an Italian restaurant that has been in Eureka Springs almost 20 years.

We stayed at the Palace Hotel and Bath House located in the downtown historic district, and within walking distance of fine restaurants, galleries and shops. We relaxed on the upper deck of the Basin Park Hotel before dinner, and then topped off the evening with a nightcap of delicious chocolate martinis at the bar in Rogue’s Manor at Sweet Spring. The wall of this bar is the actual side of a stone mountain, complete with waterfall. Cozy and beautiful, it was a great way to end our trip.

On our way out of town, on the outskirts of Eureka Springs, we made one last stop to see the incredible Thorncrown Chapel. Nestled in a woodland setting, Thorncrown rises forty-eight feet into the Ozark sky. This magnificent wood and glass structure is not to be missed and

▼ Thorncrown Chapel



▲ Rogue's Manor at Sweet Spring

should be on everyone's list when coming to the area.

Winding down the mountain road, we headed home looking forward to our next B&B Road Trip! ●

We'd like to thank Jeff Bryce at Reservation Nexus for all his help in setting up this memorable road trip.

Eureka Springs:

- Historic Palace Hotel
www.palacehotelbathhouse.com
- Basin Street Hotel
www.basinpark.com
- Rogue's Manor at Sweet Spring
www.roguesmanor.com
- Thorncrown Chapel
www.thorncrown.com

Visit www.hermannmissouri.com for your guide to the Hermann area including:

- Stone Hill Winery
- Adam Puchta Winery
- The Cottage Restaurant & Gallery
- Europa Restaurant
- Tin Rabbit
- Chocolate Box
- Indian Ridge Gardens
- The Deutschheim State Historic Site
- Historic Hermann German School Museum

Captain Wohlt Inn

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Hermann Hill Vineyard and Inn

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Historic Iron Horse Inn B&B

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www.theironhorseinn.net

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woodmerecabin.members.ktis.net

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