



Floating Sheaf of Barley

Barley Sheaf Farm got its name from a sheaf of barley that was thrown down a well to trace the path of an underground spring

by Joanna Wilson

Surely you've passed Barley Sheaf Farm on Route 202 in Holicong on the way to or from Peddler's Village. It's where horses of bronze look ready to be saddled at the entrance to the long driveway. Where open air invites deep breaths. Where a quiet pond awaits moments of reflection. Where free-range geese and sheep and horses wander by. It's also where Pulitzer Prize winning playwright and journalist George S. Kaufman lived and entertained actors and actresses when there were actors and actresses and not just celebrities.

Barley Sheaf Farm began life around 1740 as a manor house and residence owned by a wealthy businessman. Buildings, like the stone bank barn and the guest cottage, came later. "It's my guess that a room in the basement of the guest cottage was used for cold storage," says owner Christine Soderman. "Now, that room is part of one of our suites called the Wine Cellar Room."

Christine operates Barley Sheaf with her mother Lola Liebert, who is also the co-owner. "Innkeeping is easier with someone who has the same vision," says Christine.

Barley Sheaf is Bucks County's original B&B. Dr. and Ann Mills bought it as a residence, and after a few years they converted it to a bed and breakfast. This was after Kaufman left. "Kaufman was here in the thirties," says Christine. "There were owners in between. Then the Mills bought it in the seventies. The original Junior Olympic-size swimming pool Kaufman and his friends swam in is still here. And we have photos showing Kaufman playing croquet."

Christine and her mother, along with a staff of eight, have been overseeing this huge venture for one and a half years. "We sit on thirty acres but we're in the middle of several hundred acres of preserved land."



Above, Christine Soderman stands in front of the entrance to the Barley Sheaf, which is decorated for Christmas. Opposite top, homebaked cookies and hot cinnamon cider are served fire-side in the Gathering Room in the original stone manor house, c. 1740. Opposite bottom left, breakfast being served in the Small Hours Suite. Opposite bottom right, a stained glass sitting room in the Front Row Center Suite.