

82nd Tour *of* Tours

Chester County Day 2023

Story by Carol Metzker
Photos by Wil Moore Photography

REES DRESSED IN THEIR FALL FINERY, MEADOWS AND ROLLING HILLS STRETCH as far as the eye can see. Birds dart across small lanes, and an occasional groundhog watches passing cars. Tucked into the idyllic landscape, beautiful homes await your arrival for the 2023 Chester County Day on Saturday, October 7. (See details at the end of this article.)

Beyond visiting or revisiting exquisite dwellings and friendly neighbors, the premiere Saturday in October is the annual day to support the superlative work of Chester County Hospital. Now an 82-year-old tradition, the tour takes guests to the northeast quadrant of our beautiful county.

Beaver Hill Road

BY THE OLD-FASHIONED LAMPOST, KNOCK AT THE RED door where family and guests — including Revolutionary War soldiers, according to stories passed down for generations — have entered the lovely stone farmhouse since the early 1700s.

Inviting tables are set indoors and out by the warm, hospitable homeowner-hosts Jim and Libby Seybert. In the dining room, the table is laid with candles and an antique family heirloom set of Wedgwood embossed Queensware cream on celadone china. The china collection includes pieces from the 1700s.

Behind the house, another table is set in a gracious outdoor living space with fireplace and stone walls created by well-known Chester Springs mason P.S. Davis. Dinners are accompanied by the sound of birds chirping in the surrounding conserved meadow that can be seen from the gorgeous patio, pool and pergola.

The Seyberts' love of the home, history and people who came before them is evident in each room and antique. In the original living room with floors of old barn wood, a 1796 Westtown School embroidery sampler by Hannah Jones hangs above the fireplace. A Martha Washington flag greets visitors at the home's side door. In the family room, find an American citizenship flag that commemorated Libby's father, Edward Lis's naturalization ceremony after surviving World War II prisoner-of-war camps as a Polish soldier.

Art throughout the home includes works by Lis, who became famous for his portraits, and other artists' paintings that capture Libby's love of horses and former work in the saddlery business.





Three Kings Farm

HISTORY ABOUNDS AT THREE KINGS FARM. FROM A HILL'S CREST, VIEW GROUNDS that were part of William Penn's 1861 land grant, a pre-Civil War house, Lincoln lilacs and the red roof of a fieldstone German bank barn. In the distance, a springhouse rests in shade. An orchard resides across a road that cuts through Three Kings' 18 acres.

The farm has a long line of owners and exceptional stewards. Just a few: Michael King, soldier in the War of 1812; his sons Philip and Henry; and the Cooke and Helms families, who undertook its modernization and renovations in the 2000s — repointing stone and adding garage, kitchen, porch and Christmas tree farm. The property made its way into the good hands and heart of Stefanie Lindquist in 2021.

The 1833 stone farmhouse's living room holds the working original fireplace and hardwood floors. Alongside pieces that came with the farm — 1863 deed and 1822 German prayer book — Stefanie honors the home's heritage with her own special touches. An 1838 baby grand piano plays 1800s composer Robert Schumann's music. Carvings on her antique German hunt cabinet depict scenes from *Romeo and Juliet*.

Visit the past in the property's additional structures. Next to the more recent bank barn, note the original barn with ladders used when fetching hay 200 years ago. Examine "marriage markings" — numbers, chiseled into the wooden columns and hand-hewn beams, used for assembling the barn. Behind the house, a summer kitchen sits in the shadows of three majestic pines Stefanie calls "the three queens."





Willowstone

WELCOME TO WILLOWSTONE — JOAN AND TIM RIDDLE'S country refuge with a two-centuries-old farmhouse, renovated barn and charming cottage where the details are delightful. Throughout the property, buildings with exposed stone and beams and collections of historic deeds, white ironstone, antique clothespins and rustic watering cans link past and present.

Walk the stone path to the house. From the sunroom — overlooking a willow that gave the farm its name — peek through the window in the original exterior wall. Then step into the stone home that grew as families who owned it did.

The kitchen, an addition in 2006, reflects Joan's love of nooks and crannies. Something fascinating can be discovered around every corner: a new butler's pantry, laundry room whose curtains deserve close inspection, and an eating area with blue armoire and cabinetry with hardware (including butterfly hinges) forged by six blacksmiths. Highlighted in *This Old House* magazine, soapstone counters hold honey from the property's bees and vintage leather postcards sent from Joan's grandfather to her grandmother decades ago.

Wend your way to the intimate gathering room to spy a cage bar and fireplace with indigo mantle. Wind your way downstairs to arrive at an enchanted London pub — the Leaky Cauldron, with a nod to Harry Potter and lighthearted reference to the name of Riddle.

Outdoors, pass gardens and sprawling lawns to arrive at a cottage. A cozy sitting area, kitchen with skylight and bedrooms with white trim, linens and quilts create a simple, elegant haven for family and guests today and for years to come.





Three Thrones Manor



SOUNDS OF LAUGHTER AND LIFE NOW AND LONG AGO ECHO throughout the walls of Three Thrones Manor. Chickens clucking in the coop — 21 that supply eggs today and who knows how many before — and children running on the surrounding land in years past or recently roller skating on the white oak floors of the gracious kitchen have made the farm a lively home since Quakers built it and placed a capstone in 1798. If 1800s lace-up leather shoes and pottery shards found during excavation could speak, they'd have plenty to say to the new sneakers and dishes of owner Sarah Smith's household.

The house continues its legacy of entrepreneurial creativity. It was once an inn, and the dining room was formerly a general store. Today the small side porch holds Sarah's children's business of selling eggs.

The heart of the home is its kitchen, expanded in 2015 by Period Architecture with reclaimed barn wood floors, exposed beams and soapstone counters. The stunning 13-foot quartzite island stands ready for entertaining.

In every direction, feel the charm — a carriage house bordered by flowers, a stone outhouse believed to be the oldest in Chester County, a swing on the huge front porch. Explore the home's original section, now a cozy family room with low doors, wide windowsills and a tiny spiral staircase. In the hallway, find Sarah's grandmother's chandelier acquired in Belgium before World War II.

Before ending Chester County Day, see if you can unravel the mystery of the property's name.



IF YOU GO

The 2023 tour features Chester County's most beautiful homes and restored barns in the northeast quadrant, including a walking tour in the Borough of Phoenixville. A project of the Women's Auxiliary to Chester County Hospital, this is the longest-running historic home tour in the country, raising more than \$5 million for the Hospital. This year's tour benefits a state-of-the-art Women's Breast Center.

Event Details

- **When:** Saturday, October 7, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Foxhunt at 8:30 a.m.
- **Where:** Northeast quadrant of Chester County and a walking tour of Phoenixville
- **Tickets:** \$55. On sale online and at designated satellite locations. Check website for lunch info.
- **Info:** ChesterCountyDay.com or call 610-431-5328