

Meet Ron and Katy Beck, owners of Magnolia Place Bed & Breakfast...



1. Describe Your Business:

Magnolia Place Bed and Breakfast situated on the East side of Seneca Lake in a restored 1837 farm House. It has eight room and suites available for rent. The house sits on seven acres of land where guests can enjoy a pond, sit and relax on the two story wrap around porch enjoying Lake views or hike the property that leads visitors into the bordering vineyards. A gourmet breakfast is

provided that includes a fresh fruit appetizer, sweets, proteins, juice and coffee. Magnolia Place also has an event room where breakfast is served when there are many guests. The event room overlooks the lake and vineyards. Magnolia Place is open to guests all year.

2. Tell us your story:

"Our story starts over thirty years ago when we met in college," Katy said. "I brought him up to New York after we got married. We decided to raised our family in the Finger Lakes area." Ron and Katy originally moved to Rochester where Ron worked for a local downtown hotel. After a brief stint in Ohio, they decided to move back to the Finger Lakes. Ron worked as the Food and Beverage Director at The Inn on the Lake in Canandaigua in the early 1990's. Ron then shifted gears and joined the team at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center, where he stayed for over twenty-two years. Katy's background is in education, and she continues to work as a Kindergarten teacher.

A little over two years ago, Ron and Katy began talking about the idea of buying a Bed and Breakfast when they retired. "We had been on a trip out West and stayed at a B&B in Jackson Hole, Wyoming that we really loved," Katy said. "We said 'Okay, when it is time to retire, we'll jump in, that will be a good retirement plan.'" "Then things began to change at my job, it wasn't as satisfying and rewarding as it once was" Ron added. "Last winter I brought up the idea to look into doing the B&B thing in our own backyard and not waiting until we are in our sixties. We decided to start looking around." Ron and Katy looked at three different properties in the area, but as soon as they walked into Magnolia Place they knew it was what they wanted. The style of the house suited them, and they loved the land and lake views. "It was what we were looking for as a home, but also from a business perspective it was the right place," Ron said.

3. What has helped you succeed and gain experience?

"For me, through all of our trips and travels I've had the opportunity to decide what I like and don't like," Katy said. "As well as at the service level. We've created our own philosophy as far as where we want to be and what we want to offer because of what we've experienced ourselves."

"With my background, this kind of work is really in my wheelhouse. But really, what helped us to succeed initially were the previous Innkeepers, Ted and Terri," Ron added. "When we were going through the process of buying the place, they were very gracious. They actually allowed us to move in a couple of weeks prior to closing. They continued to run the business as their own, with us helping out with the day-to-day operations. It really gave us a good sense of what needed to be done and how to run the business. The day we closed on the property, we had a full house, but we were prepared and our first guests loved their stay and never knew we had just taken over. We wouldn't have been as prepared if Ted and Terri hadn't taken the time to do allow us to learn from them. We really appreciate the time and sacrifice they gave to give us there knowledge of the business, it gave us valuable insight."

4. What inspires you?

Ron and Katy are very inspired by each other. "Ron's business smarts are amazing to me, because I don't think that way," Katy said. "I'm a teacher and a mom, and I take care of people. To have him understand what we need in place financially to grow old and happy together comforts me, and makes me want to be as knowledgeable as he is."

On the other side, Ron says that Katy helps keep him grounded. "I need that kick back, reality check, and sense of home," Ron explained. "I can be a bit driven and can get hyper focused on work, Katy is the softer side, it's a good balance." Ron's father made a huge impact on his life, "My father taught me to never underestimate what you can do, to learn, persevere and overcome obstacles, not fear the unknown and take the bull by the horns". Another person that had a great influence on him was his former boss, Joe Floreano. "Joe was an incredible guy," Ron said. "He ran the Convention Center for 31 years, he

always thought outside the box and looked at a challenge as an opportunity. Joe took me to a whole other level of service and business knowledge. He helped me be more fearless, to take the risks needed to be taken in business and to know that if you're passionate about what you do, then do it and figure out a way to succeed."

5. What keeps you up at night? What are your challenges?

"In this first year, there are a lot of unknowns. We've never owned a business," Ron said. "I've run a lot of businesses, but I always had people working for me. But now, it's just us doing it all. I'm curious/anxious to see how the 1st year is going end up. That's what keeps me up at night – thinking about this first year, how it's going to go, at the end of the year how will we be performing? Was this the right move at the right time?"

"As for our challenges, I'm still working full time," Katy added. "It's about 70 minutes one way to my job, and it is difficult for me because there is a part of me mentally that is here. I want to be doing breakfast with him, and I want to be greeting people, and yet I work full time. It's a big challenge for me, but our target for my retirement is a year and a half. Then we'll be able to close that chapter and I can be here all day every day."

6. What is your favorite local activity?

Ron and Katy both enjoy the local hiking and being outdoors. They also enjoy the lake and biking. "I also can't wait to get my motorcycle out," Ron said. "There are a lot of nice roads to zip around on." Ron and Katy also enjoy visiting the local wineries. "We're looking forward to exploring the unknown and learning what else there is to do," Katy said. Ron also hopes to enjoy some skiing in the winter months when the Inn is a bit slower.

7. Is there anything else we should know about you?

Ron and Katy have an adult son, Drew, who operates the food and beverage services at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio. Katy is a Finger Lakes native, having grown up in Webster outside of Rochester. Her family still lives in that area. Ron is formally from Kent, Ohio and most of Ron's family still resides there. Ron and Katy both attended school at Edinboro University in Pennsylvania, which is where they met.

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