



Meet Debbie Meritsky and Marc Rotman, owners of Black Sheep Inn

Describe Your Business:

The Black Sheep Inn and Spa is a 5 room Farm to Table Bed and Breakfast located just outside the village of Hammondsport, NY. We're proud to source 85% of our ingredients from within 50 miles of the Inn and that we support over a dozen small farms in the Finger Lakes region. Deb's background in French cooking have

made the Inn a destination for foodies from all over the world. We are also a Hands on Art destination, which is located just behind the historic Octagon Inn, in our 100+ year old barn. We've called it F.L.A.V.O.R. Studio and Gallery, and it's where you can come and enjoy the creations of Innkeepers and Resident Artists Debbie Meritsky and Marc Rotman. The goal of the Studio and the work we create, teach or sell, is geared toward the reuse of materials that may otherwise be destined for the landfill. Classes are offered in the evenings, for guests staying anywhere in the region, in Stained Glass, Mixed Media, Jewelry, Lino Cut and Build a Bench options. We also offer our on-site Spa, helping guests truly relax for over 10 years. As an added benefit to our guests, they can schedule a private luxury excursion for Inn guests only with either Marc or Deb and get a great story about our Inn's partner wineries, and the region, as we traverse Keuka Lake.

Tell us your story:

Marc and Deb came to the Finger Lakes over 20 years ago on a short getaway and fell in love with the region. They decided to make a change from the lives they were living and move to the Finger Lakes to open the Black Sheep Inn and Spa, a lifelong dream of Deb's from her days at New England Culinary Institute (NECI, a cooking school in Vermont). Fast forward to today, we've been open for 13 years after an extensive restoration of the T.M. Younglove house, an historic 1859 Octagon house. The Inn offers 5 lovely guest rooms, all with private baths, lush towels and monogrammed robes, and Deb's famous Farm to Table Breakfast. We're lucky to have the opportunity to work so closely with the many farms here in the region which allows us to source 85% of our ingredients from less than 50 miles from the Inn. The Inn also boasts an on-site Spa, loads of common space, both inside and out for guests to enjoy, an outdoor fire pit, our hands-on Art Studio, private luxury excursions for Inn guests, and the many pre-planned and arranged experiential packages that helps guests experience the best of the Finger Lakes.

What has helped you succeed and gain experience?

Only being tourists prior to opening our Inn, we've learned so much about our region and the industry. We're proud to have created amazing opportunities for our guests to meet some of the passionate producers of wine, beer, cider, ice cream, and art.

What inspires you?

We are regularly inspired by the natural beauty that surrounds us here in the Finger Lakes, and, more importantly, we are inspired by many of the extraordinary guests that we meet on a regular basis. We also find inspiration and are enriched by the many museums in our region.

What keeps you up at night?

We get excited about creating new packaging or services that we can offer to our guests to enhance their Finger Lakes experience. Sometimes these same creative "juices" keep us up longer than we should be.

What are your challenges?

We feel our biggest challenge is locating reliable partners that understand and share our motivation to provide a stellar experience to our guests.

What is your favorite local activity?

Sharing the region with friends and guests and helping them see more than just the top tourist destinations. We also enjoy hiking the many parks in the region and kayaking the inlet of Keuka Lake.

Is there anything else we should know about you?

We are both artists as well as innkeepers, and enjoy the creative outlet that our studio, F.L.A.V.O.R., allows us. We utilize recycled and repurposed elements in our stained glass, mixed media, and jewelry work. F.L.A.V.O.R. Studio is located right behind the Inn in a converted barn. The studio is open to the public, and we teach classes regularly in the studio. We've also begun a consulting service for anyone who is in or thinks they might be in tourism and how to gain a new line item sure to help with profits... ask us about weteachtourism and find out what we can help you create today!

Black Sheep Inn

Debbie Meritsky and Marc Rotman, Innkeepers, hosts, concierge

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