

## High Pocket B&B & Barn

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A friend of mine and I had the wonderful opportunity to take our horses to High Pocket Bed & Breakfast and Barn for a weekend this June.

High Pocket is perched on a gorgeous hillside in Colrain, Massachusetts, offering a marvelous view of the Vermont mountains. It is owned and operated by Mark and Sarah McKusick. They opened High Pocket in June of 2000 with the hope to create an inviting and relaxing atmosphere for those of us in need of a temporary escape. They have succeeded

in creating a great place to get away and relax - it is a place that I and (I believe) others would want to come back to.

My friend Tracy Fluett and I arrived with our horses on Friday before noon and found our accommodations to be a 160 year-old farmhouse, decorated with a quaint, antique flair that immediately gives you a comfortable, homey feeling. The house includes, a kitchen, dining room, and living room, all of which are large and accommodating, and three good-sized bedrooms, each with a private bath. There is also a separate game room near the house and a hot tub in back, where you can rest your weary riding legs. You not only soak in the hot water; you can soak in the terrific view as well.

After we settled into our room, we settled our horses in a large barn equipped with 4 spacious box stalls. There is also a huge field where you can turn your horses out and if, as in my case, you need to keep your horse off pasture, there is also a round pen available.

With the horses secured, we drove down to Shelburne for lunch. Shelburne is only about 10 minutes from High Pocket and offers a street of touristy shops, including one with handmade glass items and a specialty candle shop. If you need to "go to town", Greenfield is within 15 minutes and for more shopping, Wilmington, Vermont is about 25 minutes north of High Pocket.



For those who would like to stay and aren't horseback riders, there are golf courses nearby, as well as lots of great spots for fishing and hiking. The peace and tranquility of High Pocket's surroundings is enough to sooth anyone who may just want some time to kick back and relax.

Breakfast is served at 8 a.m. every day. On Saturday, we were treated to a wonderful pastry made on the spot, along with pears sautéed in just the right amount of butter and sugar, a plate of fleshly sliced melon and

mango, and poached eggs with sausage and English muffins. On Sunday, we were offered all the blue berry and banana pancakes, bacon and fresh fruit we could eat.

Each breakfast also included coffee and juice. Guests are given full use of the kitchen for preparing lunch and dinner or you can find a great selection of restaurants in the towns nearby.

Before our rides, we were asked what types of trails we wanted to ride on, as there are both easy



and more challenging choices. Friday afternoon, Sarah and Mark's sister, Lynne, took us on an hour and a half ride through fields offering splendid views and wooded trails with footing manageable by any horse and rider. On Saturday we rode for about two hours with Mark as our guide. We were again inspired by beautiful wooded trails perfect for trotting and cantering, as well as a few challenges - including a rock bed complete with water trickling down through it. We also enjoyed crossing a refreshing, picturesque river.

During our rides we were advised if there was a tricky spot up ahead and asked if we wanted to try it or not before moving on. At one point on the trail, Mark even offered a couple training suggestions for a particular problem I was having with my horse. I thought this was above and beyond the call of duty and did not want to take advantage of his kindness, but he was very patient and his help was both greatly appreciated and useful.

There was also a nice cross-country trail, which began right next to the facility. It includes several easy, fun jumps and takes about 15 minutes to complete when traveling at a moderate pace. My horse and I had some fun with that on Sunday morning before having to get ready to leave.

And I wasn't quite ready to leave. I certainly would have been happy to stay a few more days. We had a wonderful weekend surrounded by nice people and the rich summer shades of green and bright sun. I can easily imagine that the colorful foliage in the fall must also make for a breathtaking scene.

Mark, Sarah, and Lynne were great hosts, riding partners, and guides. I can't say enough about how much we enjoyed their company, our accommodations, and the whole High Pocket experience. Thanks to the whole McKusick family for sharing their time, property, and friendship.

For more information on High Pocket Bed & Breakfast and Barn, call 413-624-8988 or visit their Web site at [www.highpocket.com](http://www.highpocket.com).