

New event venue: North Corner Haven

Sprawling farm hosts open house Saturday

By Stephanie Jadmicek

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For more than 40 years, the Dooley family kept North Corner Haven a family secret. When they grew weary of their bustling lives in Charlotte, they would drive just over the state line to their 600-acre farm of forest, pasture and ponds to relax, reflect and recharge. "We would retreat to the farm to fish, hunt, garden and enjoy nature," North Corner Haven founder David Dooley said. "It was an opportunity for us to be together and celebrate key milestone events."

Recently, the Dooley family decided to start sharing their Lancaster refuge. After two years of renovations and implementing new farming practices, North Corner Haven will host an open house Saturday, Feb. 9, from noon to 4 p.m. Vendors will sell food and beverages, and bluegrass artist Josh Daniels will perform. Admission is free.

One of the most significant transformations at the farm is the renovation of its 3,700-square-foot event barn. Fully equipped with heating and air, handicapped-accessible restrooms, lighting and a sound system, the event barn is the centerpiece of the 5-acre wedding and event venue at North Corner Haven.

"The barn has been on the farm since the early '70s, and we stayed true to its style by keeping the exterior tin the same and reusing the old roof tin inside the restrooms and on the outside of other buildings around the venue," said Catherine Dooley, director of marketing and events.

As a young girl, Catherine looked forward to jumping into the car with her father or grandfather to ride out to the farm. She and her twin sister took turns learning how to drive on those old dirt roads. So after working in New York City planning private events, she returned to her Southern roots at the family farm.

"On and off the farm, we hope to create experiences where guests are reconnected with the beauty of the South, the farmers who tend the land and the food that's grown here," Catherine said. "We're continuing the rich tradition of Southern hospitality while offering something altogether unique as well. Our goal is to offer an environment for relaxation, celebration and discovery."

The venue is designed for groups of all sizes. Some of the farm's most frequent events consist of team-building sessions, private clay shooting and large-scale social and wedding events. Guests can also test their fishing skills on one of the stocked ponds or take a farm tour to meet the people who grow the food on the farm.

Tiffany Lackey, director of food experience and farm provisions, helped create the farm system at North Corner Haven, so she has a deep understanding of what it takes to get the final product onto the plate. As the onsite chef, her main job is to feed the guests. She said creating meals on site with products grown on the farm is her greatest source of pride and accomplishment.

"We have reached a point where most of the time our pork, beef, chicken, eggs, honey, salad greens and other seasonal produce were grown directly on site by our team," Lackey said. "In the end, I want the food experience of our guests to be intentional and inspiring and an avenue to reconnect them to our local food system and to the earth."

Currently, the farm's goods are sourced for its events. However, Catherine said she is looking forward to refining the online ordering process in the near future to make the farm's products available to the public.

David said the family's vision is to share their working farm with the community through events.

"Our sustainable farming and lifestyle practices impact everything we do as we hope to preserve the land and shape our guests' experiences while they're here," he said. "This allows each guest to learn about the land and themselves as they experience the farm."

North Corner Haven is located at 3420 Charlotte Highway in Lancaster. To attend the free open house, RSVP at northcornerhaven.com/rsvp/. For more information, call (980) 293-5229 or email info@northcorner-haven.com.



JAMEY PRICE/NORTH CORNER HAVEN
after gaining invaluable
experience as a private event
planner in New York City,
Catherine Dooley returned to

her Southern roots as director of marketing and events for her family's farm, North Corner Haven in Lancaster.