

A Farm Fantasy

Head to this glamorous Georgia farm for surprising, laid-back pampering.



You and your kids will see this weekend at the farm with two different sets of eyes. At Serenbe Bed and Breakfast near Palmetto, Georgia, the younger set will focus on tall horses, floppy-eared goats, and real hayrides. But your image will be brilliant flower gardens, sophisticated yet relaxed decor, and gourmet breakfasts.

Your children will splash gleefully in what looks like a dark swimming hole. You'll marvel at this pool's design, fountains, rock wall and iron fence, and romantic cabana. While you lazily sip iced mint tea and nibble homemade cheese spread and pickled, green cherry peppers with hosts Marie and Steve Nygren, your little ones will down a quick lemonade and beg the three Nygren daughters for a tour of their ultra-cool tree house.

But if all of you listen to the sounds of Serenbe, you'll hear this magical place the same way. At dawn, a rooster confi-

dently announces sunrise. A little later, Mr. Charlie's mint-green truck creaks down the road, crunching gravel under its tires. Goats bleat a greeting because they know the jovial, overalled fellow brings breakfast. Mr. Charlie hopes that visiting children are as eager for his entertaining routine. He lets them upend the bucket of slop (table scraps) into the pigpen while he changes the water.

"Even a pig likes fresh water," he explains over the soft, muffled grunts and smacks of satisfaction.

An insistent goose honks for attention as kids run toward the fence to pat the noses of majestic horses. (Trail riding is reserved for ages over 10, guided by the oldest Nygren daughter.) The occasional whooshing of planes overhead reminds you that you're not far from Atlanta's airport, though you sure think you are.

As the sun warms and farm dogs tire, you'll hear their loud slurping from the pool: Its glamour is lost on them. Listen closely for bees buzzing and the imagined beat of air as dozens of butterflies hover over blossoms, wings in motion.

Stay on the farm for dinner and wind down to dusk with cooing doves or serenading summer cicadas. Cook a simple supper in the tiny kitchen, and eat out in the cabana or gazebo under the stars. Then it's inside for the night to either the small cottage down the lane or the refurbished barn that you'll never believe once housed animals and tools. Lounge on down-filled sofas to watch movies or listen to CDs before heading upstairs to pretty baths and beds where plates of homemade cookies wait.

As you snuggle into warm, dreamy covers, you'll remember the best sound of your day on this fabulous farm: the constant gurgle of little laughter. Then drift off to a quiet lullaby: the sweet, contented rise and fall of sleepy children's breathing. ☺

(LEFT) Serenbe's extensive, blooming gardens become a bright, mazelike playground for kids to wander—and wonder.

(BELOW) Down on the farm at Serenbe Bed and Breakfast near Palmetto, Georgia, there are plenty of little hands-meet-mouth opportunities.



A Farm With Finesse

Serenbe Bed and Breakfast, 10950 Hutcheson Ferry Road, Palmetto, GA 30268; (770) 463-2610. Nightly double occupancy rates are \$140 for luxurious rooms or a large loft with three double beds, and \$175 for a two-bedroom cottage that sleeps five. Additional guests over 2 years old are \$25 per night. Prices include lovely, filling breakfasts (simpler items offered for finicky children), afternoon tea and nibbles, and bedtime sweets. For a sneak peek, visit their Web site at www.serenbe.com.