

Roger Ringer - Bunkhouse

This is Kansas Profile. I'm Ron Wilson, director of the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development at Kansas State University.

Sunrise. Sunsets. Serenity. That is an appropriate motto for the peaceful, scenic location where the Ringer family has created a bed and breakfast in rural Kansas. It's today's Kansas Profile.

Ron, Charlotte, Roger and Rodney Ringer are the family members who have put together this wonderful bed and breakfast. They have deep roots in rural Kansas, having farmed for four generations in western Sedgwick County. For years, the Ringers raised and milked Guernsey dairy cows. Ron Ringer then delivered bottled milk and subsequently went into sales in the Wichita area.

"My folks retired three times, but it never did take," Roger said with a smile. "They enjoy people a lot." For thirty years, the Ringers lived between Garden Plain and Cheney. They enjoyed wildlife and the great outdoors.

As the city of Wichita moved west, so did the Ringers. Charlotte said, "We should be close to church, close to a grocery store, and close to a doctor." The Ringers eventually found such a place and bought it in Barber County, north of Medicine Lodge.

One day Ron Ringer took his cousin hunting at their Barber County place. It went so well that he came home and said to his sons Roger and Rodney, "Next Saturday you're going to see what I saw."

When Saturday came, they all went to the property very early in the morning. As the sun rose, they saw the deer come to water and watched geese and ducks fly overhead. There were even two raccoons who came out to greet them.

The Ringers loved it. Ron's wife Charlotte had always wanted to have a bed and breakfast, so they decided to build one on their Barber County property. Based on their old house plans, they built what looks like a wooden log lodge, complete with a balcony overlooking the landscape. The Ringers moved here in 2007. Over the years, they added a shop and another cabin for guests next door, plus a pretty gazebo.

Roger is a skilled woodcarver. These buildings are filled with genuine antiques, some of which came from their farm, plus pieces of furniture which include those which Roger built himself. The Ringers are active members of Ducks Unlimited. Lots of wildlife art can be found throughout their buildings.

The place is named the Bunkhouse Bed and Breakfast at Wildfire Ranch. All of the buildings have beautiful wood walls, rustic decorations, modern amenities, and commanding views of the landscape around them.

"We serve a simple country breakfast," Roger said. "One of our recent guests from the Dallas area said it was the best breakfast he had ever had."

When a person drives onto the place, he or she meets a sign which proclaims "Open Range." Cattle guards are used on the road to keep cattle in, but otherwise the cows can roam the place. They are not confined in a pen, which sometimes causes cultural confusion with city visitors. "Our guests sometimes say, "Do you know your cows are out?" and we will say, "No, they are in where they are supposed to be,"" Roger said.

The historic community of Medicine Lodge is located east of the spectacular Gypsum Hills, one of the most remarkable rock formations in Kansas. The Bunkhouse

Bed and Breakfast at Wildfire Ranch is located between Medicine Lodge and the nearby rural community of Isabel, population 99 people. Now, that's rural.

"The community has welcomed us with open arms," Roger said. "We've loved every minute of it." Roger is an active writer, western performer, and vice president of the Kansas Chapter of the Western Music Association. He enjoys interacting with guests.

"We've had guests from 43 states, 146 cities in Kansas, and 22 foreign countries," Roger said. Those countries range the alphabet from Australia to Uganda. Guests seem particularly impressed with the peace and quiet.

For more information, go to www.bunkhouseatwildfireranch.com.

Sunrise. Sunsets. Serenity. Those are all things that can be found in this peaceful, scenic location in Kansas. We salute Ron, Charlotte, Roger and Rodney Ringer for making a difference by sharing this location with others. It's a place where sunrise, sunsets, and serenity are superb.

For the Huck Boyd National Institute for Rural Development, this is Ron Wilson with Kansas Profile.