

## **Martin and Cheryl Rude – Barns at Timber Creek**

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

The head of security for the National Football League is staying overnight in Kansas. Is he lodging at some four-star urban hotel? No, he's staying in a barn – specifically, a barn which has been remodeled into an elegant bed and breakfast in rural Kansas. Today we'll continue our intermittent series on historic barns, but these barns have taken on an entirely different life. It's today's Kansas Profile.

Martin and Cheryl Rude are owners of the Barns @ Timber Creek, a bed and breakfast located near Winfield, Kansas. They met while Cheryl was a youth minister in Wichita and Martin was in a Christian band. They married and moved to Dallas.

After children, they opted to move back to Kansas and took positions at Southwestern College in Winfield. Cheryl is the faculty director for an undergraduate and graduate leadership development program and Martin works with students preparing to lead worship in the church.

In 1997, Martin and Cheryl purchased a rural property along Timber Creek north of Winfield. This place included an 1881 stone barn and an old stone quarry. They considered remodeling the stone barn into a home, but decided to leave it in its historic state.

Then they found another barn west of Winfield, near the rural town of Oxford, population 1,162 people. Now, that's rural. A hailstorm had recently taken the roof off this old barn and a flood had taken the foundation. Martin and Cheryl decided to save the old barn and moved it to their place north of Winfield where they remodeled it into a residential bed and breakfast.

“There's no limit to what you can accomplish with tenacity and complete ignorance,” Martin said with a smile. “Being Kansans, we'd seen too many old barns get torn down. We connected with the Barn Again movement and found people who could help us rebuild this structure.”

When the paint was still drying on just two of the five guest rooms, the first lodging request came. During the annual bluegrass festival in Winfield, the local chamber of commerce called and asked if some of the overflow out-of-town visitors could stay overnight. They did, and enjoyed it so much that they told other people. Interest grew and the rest of the rooms were quickly finished. The Barns @ Timber Creek opened.

In the bluff east of the house was the old stone quarry which had become overgrown with trees. Martin cleaned out the trees and placed a gazebo at the top. When some Southwestern College students asked to have a wedding there, they rearranged some of the old quarry stones to make a natural, secluded outdoor chapel.

Meanwhile, the original stone barn on the place was in need of repair as well. Martin took a year cleaning vegetation from the old barn site. He burned the brush, but eight days after his brush burn, a spark from an old stump caught the barn on fire. Community members helped clean it up. Martin used cables to straighten the old stone sides. Then a funnel cloud came through and took down one wall. The Rudes finally decided to fully restore the barn, with modern doors, floors, and structural trusses. Not all the lofts were put back in, so it is very spacious.

“It’s not historic in that sense, but it is alive,” Martin said. Now this building is used for parties, weddings, and receptions.

The bed and breakfast has been busy. Rooms are decorated in various themes reflecting local history and culture: Railroad, Barnyard, Southwestern College, Granary, and the Birdhouse. The Birdhouse, for example, is located in the loft of the barn and accesses a balcony from which visitors can view the surroundings from a 40 foot tall perch. Guests have come from coast to coast and as far away as Scotland, Germany, Greece, and Malaysia. Wow.

For more information, go to [timbercreekbarns.com](http://timbercreekbarns.com).

The head of security for the National Football League is overnighing in Kansas. The place where he chooses to stay is the Barns @ Timber Creek. We commend Martin and Cheryl Rude for making a difference by preserving this history and sharing this hospitality.

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