



Dispatches

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# Hogging the Blankets

*One Spa Wallows in luxury.*

WARMINSTER, PENNSYLVANIA

IF THERE'S ONE THING the guests of the posh Ross Mill Farm resort in Bucks County have in common, it's this: They're all pigs.

Owners Susan Armstrong-Magidson and her husband, Richard, have spent the last two decades rescuing and placing potbellied pigs—more than 1,000 of them in all—at what she claims is the only place in the world that emphasizes the care and well-being of the pet potbelly.

When Armstrong-Magidson bought Ross Mill Farm in the 1980s, it was a bucolic, swine-free escape from her marketing career in New York City.

But in 1992, she and her husband gave up city life to pursue what had become their unusual calling.

Now she has short-term regulars—like, on a recent visit, the unfortunately named Pork Chop—who check in when their owners are on vacation, and long-term residents she hopes to find homes for through her Pig Placement Network.

As many as 150 pigs can stay at one time either indoors or outdoors, depending on how they were raised. (Outdoor pigs are



paired because they “like to have a friend,” she says.)

In between feeding, trawling for belly scratches and napping on heaps of soft blankets, the pigs can avail themselves of the farm's spa for massages, pedicures and facials. “We put on quiet, relaxing music, and we have essential oils,” says Armstrong-Magidson. “We massage the oil in to loosen dirt on their backs. They love it.” The nonprofit farm also offers

behavior modification therapies and a diet program for its more piggish long-term boarders.

Though they can get quite big, Armstrong-Magidson says, potbellies make great pets. They're undemanding, easily trained and often completely devoted. This makes the rules of the relationship simple. “If you respect the pig,” she says, “the pig will respect you.”