



story and photos by
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NUANCE NATURIST B&B

Michigan may not be the first place one thinks about when considering where to locate a nudist B&B. Locations like Southern California, Florida, and Arizona all come to mind. There are many naturists/nudists in Michigan and the Midwest, however, and my thinking was it would be desirable to have a warm and comfortable nudist retreat/resort that didn't take running the gauntlet of airport security to get to.

Nuance Naturist B&B was developed to be as welcoming, comfortable, and attractive to both first time and experienced naturists as it can be given the climate of a midwestern state. While my work and my love of my property has kept me in Southwest Michigan the past 30 years, I have the working philosophy that if I'm going to be in Michigan...I'm going to do everything I can to be comfortable being a nudist here. For me that means inside temps of 78F year around, lots of glass in the home for maximum sunlight, connecting to nature while still being warm (i.e. outdoors hot tub that allows stargazing while soaking au naturel), and a solarium....taking the sun nude in February in comfort! This working philosophy has driven much of the development of Nuance B&B.

The plan for Nuance actually began 25 years ago when I bought the secluded 40 acre wooded parcel in Southwest Michigan. As a nudist I wanted a property that offered the ability to be nude anywhere with bountiful connections with nature.

One aspect of the property attracting me initially was the thoughtful placement of the house: dead center of the 40 acres. This creative and unusual placement (I've seen way too many 40 acre parcels with the house 50 feet from the county road!) decided by the original owners of the property was so inspirational. When talking with the widow I bought the property from, she emphasized her and her husband's interest in a quiet retirement site with a natural setting. Although she and her husband weren't naturists, the house location on this property couldn't have been more appropriate for a nudist setting.

For the past 25 years the property and house have been extensively renovated. From digging a spring-fed pond to planting trees, removing trees and rebuilding the house, the property is quite different from the way I found it in 1991. I have worked to make it more suited to nudist living but without losing the connection to nature that inspired the Murrays when they built their retirement home. The property boundary is exposed to woods, wetlands, and marshland without neighbors on three sides. The fourth boundary sits on a frontage road and visibility is now controlled with a privacy fence extending from 8-14-feet in height.

My own tradition with naturism began early. Although my parents weren't nudists I took to hiking nude in the woods not far from my house as a young teen. I couldn't believe the sense of liberation, connection with nature and the heightened sensitivity to everything surrounding one's travels through a forest. Nude hiking in the forest for me is a natural high with a remarkably heightened sensitivity and awareness of all elements of the earth, wind, water and wildlife as you pass through. That passion, discovered in my youth, has never left and I wanted my home environment to celebrate that unique gateway into nature.

My bias toward being nude in nature influenced both my work on the property and my appreciation for others who work to further being nude in nature. While I have enjoyed being at different nudist resorts (Turtle Lake Resort is 20 minutes to the south) the magic of naturism for me is being in nature.



I have hiked nude in the Redwoods, in Olympic National Park, in forests large and small, and other natural venues of opportunity, as I know many readers have.

That fundamental connection with nature prompted me to develop my property with an eye on opening a nudist B&B. I have always found The Naturist Society and its demonstrations in *N* magazine of the connectivity between nature and the naturist as an organizational fellow traveler and found the articles and pictures inspirational and encouraging.

The pond at Nuance—something of a risk to dig as one never knows quite what will become of your now huge hole in the ground—turned out to be a joy to swim, as it is spring-fed (never fully freezing in the winter) and serves as a home to great numbers of smallmouth bass and panfish. The pond is made more accessible by the sand beach I've put in along with a swimming raft. The lower deck is home to a large seating area in the center of an immense oak tree and the glassed-in outdoor shower turned out to be a delightful place to refresh. It is the only place to shower early on a crisp morning with the sun rising and steam from the warm pond mingling with the morning mist.

Deciding to open Nuance as a B&B required extensive additional work to the rebuilt house including fully exposing the lower part of the home allowing for a walkout lower level with a large recreation area, two guest rooms, a shared guest bath and bar/entertainment center. An unintended consequence of this rework involved a pair of sandhill cranes who have adopted Nuance as their home. Each day during the season (March through October) the pair makes a tour around the pond exploring the shore with their long beaks for crayfish, small frogs or other delicacies. As part of the tour the pair have taken to stopping at the lower walkout, walking up on the deck and peeking in through the sliding glass doors. One day, in response to a loud banging I raced downstairs to find the cranes eyeballing the glass door and striking the glass with a determined blow of their long beaks. The glass withstood the onslaught but I replace sliding door screens several times each summer!

The main level of the B&B includes a great room with 22-foot ceiling and floor to ceiling glass to emphasize the closeness with nature... earth, water and sky. There are also two guest rooms on the main floor with a shared bathroom, large kitchen and dining room where breakfasts are served in the inclement weather (outdoors on the deck in the summer!) The great room, kitchen and dining room are all open as opposed to some B&Bs where the cooking is done "behind the door" and the food arrives gloriously prepared in a kind of magic, my situation is more transparent. Guests often walk into the kitchen early (coffee is on at 7 a.m.) to observe the preparations, get a cup of coffee and chat. I'm working to balance preparation for the fruit first course with vegetable chopping for the custom omelets to follow while I engage in conversation regarding the world political situation or where to go kayaking that day. As much as I

enjoy guest conversation early in the morning I'm not sure my replies or comments reflect my best thinking or are as coherent as I would like!

Guest rooms are not huge—but the beds are—large queen four posters (mostly) with high mattresses and each features a handmade quilt (my mother's work) to lend a homey and welcoming feel. I'm equipping each room with a small refrigerator and most have a TV and DVD player. The rooms all offer views of the pond and I hope are restful and attractive. My goal though is to have guests so engaged in Nuance's inside and outdoor attractions the rooms will be seen largely as the place to retire to at the end of an active day.

The attractions outdoors include swimming, hiking (numerous trails may be found and one may be nude anywhere on the property), bocce, pickleball (sometime this summer), sunning in the new solarium (when the temps are cool), kayaking (an area nearby is quite primitive—with nude paddling possible with discretion), paddle boarding (try it on the pond), enjoying the hot tub, and, of course relaxing, sunning or reading in the chaise lounges on the upper deck, lower deck or anywhere on the lawns.

Inside, there are more activities. A regulation pool table dominates the large recreation area. There is a big screen TV, game table (lots of board games), in-home theater, reading (popular and classic libraries) and a full sized bar with soft drinks and mixers. (As I don't have a liquor license I can't sell alcohol but guests are free to bring their own, and I do host a wine and cheese get together most evenings at 5 p.m.)

While there are more activities (outdoors) in the summer Nuance B&B is open year around. I have been pleasantly surprised at the number of couples who visit during the winter to rest, recharge and be nude for a weekend in a nude friendly environment. Since I live here I sometimes forget how therapeutic living nude can be. I'm reminded by visiting couples who are so pleased to arrive and take their clothes off (big sigh of relief), and then when its time to go, the dread of putting clothes back on (and with them the weighty reality of life as we know it in a textile society).

With Turtle Lake Nudist Resort a mere 20 minutes away, the appeal for Nuance needs to be very different. Nuance B&B is designed as a naturist retreat and getaway. Perfect for first time naturists Nuance allows first time couples to ease into naturism at their own pace or they may find one or two other (at most) nudist couples to explore and develop their interest in naturism. For the experienced naturist couple Nuance offers a quiet and romantic getaway allowing for rest, refreshment, activities and more—all while spending time primarily with each other—or connecting with the one or two other guest couples which may be present. Nuance is, in effect, a naturist retreat offering lots of space and amenities to a select few couples each weekend throughout the year. I invite you to visit Nuance and spend a weekend nude in the Midwest anytime of the year.

For more information visit www.nuancebb.us or call Bill Schroer at 269-986-2322 or naturist18a@gmail.com **N**