

To 'VisitScotland' and the Director of the Angus & Dundee Tourist Board,

Dear Sir or Madam,

We recently visited Scotland and chose bed & breakfasts as our accommodation format. We travelled the west coast (e.g., Oban, Glencoe, Mull/Iona, Loch Lomond), then through Glasgow and Edinburgh, to the east coast (e.g., Amstruther, Crail, Carnoustie, (going inland to the Cairngorms, Glamis, Balmoral, and Scone Palace) all the way up to Peterhead), and north to Buckie, coming down through the central mountains (e.g., the whisky trail, Blair Atholl, Pitlochry and Stirling), before returning home to Canada.

We decided to use only those B&B establishments with a four star rating. While we were very satisfied with all of the homes that we stayed in, there is one that stands head and shoulders above the rest and it is The Old Manor in Panbride, Carnoustie.

We drove up to the Manor and were immediately struck by its charming appearance and tranquil setting, with its beautiful gardens, and a large expanse of green pasture overlooking the North Sea. It is idyllic. We were instantly greeted by the two most charming hosts in Scotland, Margaret and Milroy Coates. They warmly welcomed us and showed us our room for the night, the Balmoral, which we found absolutely delightful. It is well appointed, tastefully decorated, and the comfortable bed was a dream to sleep in. It also had the best shower of all the B&Bs we stayed in. In addition, bottled still and sparkling waters were both available in the room, along with choice chocolates and cookies.

The breakfasts served were plentiful and delicious. The side table offerings were the most generous we saw, with quality products available every morning, e.g., an assortment of whole, fresh berries and smoked salmon. Side tables at the other B&Bs offered dry cereals, one or two juices and a stewed fruit or mixed fruit bowl. While this is quite acceptable, the Old Manor certainly stands out from the crowd on this front.

The common room for guests is Margaret and Roy's living room, and it is furnished in upscale, comfortable leather, with ample seating available. Our hosts were there to greet us each evening after we came back from dinner out, and kindly offer us a drink before retiring to bed.

What impressed us the most about this B&B was the warmth and generosity of the hosts. They make you feel like family or long-standing friends and not as though you are simply in some mutually beneficial "business" relationship. There are no house rules to make you feel constricted, and we must add that the humorous house rules playfully posted in the dining room provide amusement for any new arrivals in the morning. Margaret and Roy were willing to do everything to make our stay with them the most relaxed and enjoyable possible. Consequently, we did not want to leave, and ended up staying at The Old Manor for four nights!

We do not know if you have any awards for best B&B or best hosts in the business, but if you do, we want to nominate The Old Manor, and Margaret and Milroy Coates for such an honour, which we believe they very much deserve. They are your best ambassadors, and would make anyone want to come back to your beautiful country, if only to once again enjoy their special brand of warm Scottish hospitality.

Yours sincerely,

Annette and Vital Ducharme  
Gatineau, Quebec, Canada