

BRENHAM, TX

Something For Everyone

By: Harry and Linda Kaye Perez



Southern Rose Ranch in Chappell Hill, near Brenham

It is a beautiful drive from anywhere in central Texas to the quaint town of Brenham in Washington County, halfway between Houston and Austin on U.S. Highway 290. This relatively small town, population just under 16,000, has a lot going for it.

Number one is **Blue Bell Creameries**, founded in 1907 as the Brenham Creamery to make butter from excess cream purchased from local farmers. The first batch of ice cream was made in 1911 in a wooden tub filled with ice, and produced only two gallons per day. In 1930, the company's name was changed to Blue Bell Creameries, to honor a native Texas wildflower, and the rest is history. Tours are offered weekdays only between 8:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. and includes a scoop of your favorite ice cream at the end of your tour.

But Brenham has so much more to offer. It is also known for its antique fairs, drawing people here from all across Texas. There are three great wineries located in Washington County: Pleasant Hill, Windy, and Saddlehorn, where you can enjoy wonderful Texas wines in some of the most beautiful and peaceful countryside around.

Where To Stay:

If you have the time to spend a couple of days in Brenham, there are many fantastic places to stay. The **Ant Street Inn Bed and Breakfast** is in the heart of the old town and is filled with elegant antiques, while still offering all the modern conveniences such as free wireless Internet and a specialty coffee machine just outside your door. Oh, yes, next to the coffee machine is a refrigerator with sodas and other drinks and the freezer compartment is filled with - you guessed it - Blue Bell Ice Cream for the guests to enjoy. Owners, Suzy and Keith Hankins, welcome each guest and make

sure everything is perfect during their stay.

The **Southern Rose Ranch** in Chappell Hill near Brenham is a country-chic getaway - not just a place to sleep, but also a chance to bask in this incredible storybook ranch. This upscale bed and breakfast offers two suites in a guesthouse separate from the Innkeepers' home, providing exceptional luxury and privacy. Gourmet breakfast can be served in your suite or at the unique, one-of-a-kind stone outdoor kitchen, overlooking the ranch's rolling hills.

For Nature Lovers:

Mid-March to mid-April is the best time to drive the Bluebonnet Trail through Washington County, passing through Brenham, Chappell Hill, Burton and Independence. August is cutting season for lavender, and for a small fee, you can cut your own bouquet at either **Chappell Hill Lavender Farm** or **Lavande Lavender and Olives** in Brenham. The **Antique Rose Emporium** is an eight-acre paradise designed to showcase roses and plants native to Texas. It is like no other plant nursery you have ever visited; you can get lost meandering



Ant Street Bed and Breakfast - in heart of old town Brenham.

along the pathways, with something new and exciting around each turn.

For The History Buff:

There are valuable lessons to be learned at the **Barrington Living History Museum** by stepping into the lives of the residents of this area and participating in daily activities to better understand what life was like over 150 years ago. Learn why **Washington-on-the-Brazos State Historical Site** is called the “Birthplace of Texas Independence” and how a small group of dedicated citizens forged a formal Declaration of Independence from Mexico in 1836.

Check out the **Brenham Heritage Museum** and the Silsby steam fire engine. The **Brenham Hook & Ladder Company No.1 Museum** houses Samanthe, a 1923 fire engine, one of only three of its kind left. And, at Fireman’s Park you can view the **Antique Carousel** that dates back to the late 1800s. It can be rented for private tours, reunions and parties, “ensuring another generation of children make memories on the flying horses.”

The **Burton Cotton Gin and Museum** is the oldest working gin in America. You can learn not only how the gin works but also how the cotton farmers survived in this industry - from wagon to cotton bale. The museum, open Tuesday through Sunday, is free; a small fee is charged for the tour of the gin itself, and is well worth it.

Round Top:

Just 21 miles from Brenham is Round Top, population 90 (permanent residents). What attracts thousands of visitors to this tiny town are two things - antique shows and pie. Folks drive for miles just to

get a piece of pie from Bud Royer, “the Pie Man” at **Royer’s Round Top Café**, where you can also get a really delicious meal. If you are not in the mood for a large meal, stop in at **Royer’s Pie Haven**, just around the corner, for dessert and coffee.

Antiques:

There are so many antique shops, shows and fairs in this area, it was be impossible to list them all. Some have been around for over 46 years. One encompasses 43 acres with over 350 vendors from all across the U.S. There are winter, spring, summer and fall shows; it seems that no matter what time of the year you visit, you can go antique hunting. *A visit to Brenham and Washington County is well worth your time and one you will always remember.*

For more info visit:

www.visitbrenhamtexas.com
www.bluebell.com
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The Town of Round Top



Barrington Living History Museum