

AMISH ACRES
Historic Farm & Heritage Resort
Nappanee, Indiana
Arts & Crafts Festival
Where Arts meet Folk & Folks meet Art



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Arts & Crafts Festival moves up to 12th in the nation

NAPPANEE, Indiana, - July 12, 2010 – One of the barometers of better economic times ahead can be found in Amish Acres Arts and Crafts Festival’s ranking in the Sunshine Artist magazine. The 2009 festival jumped eight places from 20th in 2008 to 12th in the nation among the over 11,000 arts and crafts events in America. The event, which has been ranked as high as third, is based upon the sales of the artists who make up the event’s marketplace. “Even among the nationally reported economic slowdown in Elkhart County last year, the festival not only showed its resilience, but regained momentum from 2008,” said Richard Pletcher, the festival’s founder. The number of exhibitors has returned to the show’s capacity after the hesitation experienced last year among many out of state exhibitors.

For the first time Amish Acres is partnering with Martin’s Super Markets to offer special pricing on admission to the festival in all twenty of its stores throughout northern Indiana. Discount vouchers are available at the service desk in each of the stores.

Visitors will again be eligible to register to win a red bicycle built for two from the Nappanee Bicycle Shop. The tandem has prompted the festival’s 2010 slogan—“I’m half Crazy, over the love of art”. Visitors will also be invited to register for Amish Acres 40th anniversary Ruby Diamond in the Square Quilt being quilted throughout the summer in by Joy Johnson in the gross daddi house in the historic restoration. The winner of the \$2,000 king size quilt will be drawn at Amish Acres year ending New Year’s Eve cabaret and celebration. The anniversary is further celebrated in Amish Acres quilt garden in the same distinctive pattern.

What began as a downtown clothes line show has become one of the premier arts and crafts festivals in the nation. It has been presented annually for over four decades by the same Nappanee family for three generations and has evolved into a marketplace with a unique mix of arts and crafts and folk festival attractions that surround the farm's pond at Amish Acres Historic Farm & Heritage Resort. The event moved to Amish Acres in its eighth year.

Its national scope is confirmed by a roster of nearly 300 artists and artisans who will once again converge on the farm's grounds from over 28 states and 216 cities. It was 40 years ago that the Stahly-Nissley-Kuhns farm came up for auction. The farmstead's heritage is traced back to the first Amish pioneers in Indiana in 1839. Through preservation and continued restoration, it is now listed in The National Register of Historic Places. Today the restored farm has become a heritage cultural center featuring historic interpretation, culinary and performing arts, lodging, and domestic demonstrations, which it celebrates each year with the festival as its crowning event. The four day weekend is a hectic shopper's affair tempered by the peaceful pace of the 80 acre farm with its barnyard of animals, haystacks, horse drawn implements and gravel lanes.

The show opens August 5 and continues through August 8, Thursday thru Saturday, 9 a.m. – 7 p.m., and Sunday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Its fame comes from the harmonious combination of the cultural and historical experience of Amish Acres and the folk life atmosphere of the four day festival. In addition to the Marketplace, two \$1,000 Best of Show purchase Prizes will be awarded.

Festive food concoctions including kettle corn, dill pickles, bean soup, pulled pork sandwiches, and breaded Hoosier tenderloins bring a distinctive flavor to the annual event. Supplies of last year's hit of steak tips and mushrooms are being doubled. The Soda Fountain offers phosphates, maple syrup and apple butter sundaes, plus old-fashioned ice cream sodas. Shoofly pie, grilled sausage sandwiches, sweet corn, and

sassafras tea return as festival goers' favorites. Donkey ears as well as sweet 'tater fries satisfy additional taste buds. An enlarged festive beer and new wine tasting loft add a new flavor to the refreshment roster.

Farm wagon rides, marionettes and magic shows, famous family style Threshers Dinner in the century old barn restaurant, and guided house and farm tours intertwine the festival's and the farm's attractions. The Round Barn Theatre will feature the Broadway musicals *42nd Street* and the 24th season of *Plain and Fancy* on the Joseph Stein Stage add unique variety to the event. Show schedules can be found at AmishAcres.com or by calling 800-800-4942.

"Although our dreams for this event were amazing in their time, we never considered the position of national prominence the Arts and Crafts Festival has attained," says Richard Pletcher, founder of the festival, originally located in front of the former Pletcher Furniture Village, and third generation owner of the former retail store in downtown Nappanee. The event continues to garner praise and special recognition from sources throughout the country including *NEWSWEEK* magazine. It is rated as the number 12 festival in the nation by *Sunshine Artist* magazine, the highest ranking show in the Midwest.

The slate of continuous musical entertainment scheduled for the four stages include long time country and contemporary favorites Knock, Knock Hoosier String Band, LaMonte's Gray Horse Band and Due Process. The Woolevers will stroll the grounds as well as perform under the tent. Their folk music features the fiddle and guitar along with ten old-time musical instruments. And the Little River Chorus quartet brings the tight harmonies of barbershop singing to the festival.

The Dancin' Tent will be filled with square dancers, tap dancers plus Heartland Country Cloggers, Incognito Cloggers and the Tri-County Kickers. Strolling the grounds will be accordionist Jim Muciarelli, bringing a taste of Italy to the aisles. The Children's Entertainment Tent is home to Steven's Puppets and marionettes who were recently inducted into the Arts & Crafts Festival's Hall of Fame.

Chris Camp will return for his encore appearance at the festival. He is a three-time world champion whip cracker and two-time Guinness Book World Record Holder. He has been seen on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno and Ripley's Believe It or Not. The scheduled shows are filled with stunts, history, physics and lots of great whip crackin' almost fifty feet in length.

Vickie Hutchins & Jo Ann Martin, founders of the popular Gooseberry Patch, publishers of cookbooks compiled from their friends recipes, will be signing cookbooks on Thursday, from 2-4 p.m. and on Friday, from 10 a.m.-noon, in the Cow Shed Pasture. Featured will be their two newest cookbooks, "Homemade Harvest" and "Homemade Christmas," just released in July.

Gooseberry Patch encourages customers to submit recipes, some of which are selected for inclusion in Gooseberry Patch recipe books. Since 1992, over 150 cookbooks have been published with over 8.0 million sold. Gooseberry Patch has over 33,000 actively engaged Facebook fans, ranking in the top 4% of corporate Facebook pages and over 385,000 current email subscribers.

Admission charge is \$7 per adult, \$6 for seniors, and free for those 12 years and under. Pre-event tickets and four day passes may be purchased online at AmishAcres.com. Free parking is available. Pets are not allowed on festival grounds. Corporate program discounts with advance purchased admission tickets as well as charter bus group rates are available upon request by calling 800-800-4942 ext 240.

Amish Acres is located on Highway U.S. 6, one mile west of downtown Nappanee, Indiana.

NOTE TO EDITORS: Richard Pletcher, founder and CEO, is available for interview. Coverage invited.

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