

Texas Monthly

WHERE TO STAY NOW 2016

High Hill Farm

OVERTON



Photograph by Jeff Wilson

The 75-acre spread was overgrown with hardwoods when Jason and Sharon Romano first spotted the plot that would become the Piney Woods retreat of their dreams. Since 2013, they have been steadily transforming their new homestead – nestled off a county road near Overton, about twenty miles southeast of Tyler – into a “greatest hits” compilation of their favorite vacation destinations. The first three pastel bungalows that have gone up, unfussy and outfitted with small private yards, are as sunny as those in Seaside, Florida. The pool, set into an emerald lawn, and the vineyard, with its sloping rows of black Spanish grapes, could be direct imports from Napa’s sophisticated Carneros Inn, while the Napoleon Bar pays homage to the Romanos’ favorite New Orleans watering hole. At their 48-seat restaurant, Côte, chef Erin Willis serves locally sourced, Southern-by-way-of-France feasts. High Hill’s own imitation-worthy delights came into full view when I climbed onto an orange ATV for a ride into the property’s deliberately less-manicured reaches. Beyond a stately tree line of white oaks and redbuds, I followed hiking trails that wend around three natural springs and open onto clearings set aside for skeet shooting, an obstacle course, and champagne-laden sunset picnics. Though the proprietors’ vision is still unfolding (read: construction is ongoing), I’d seen enough to know I’ll be adding High Hill to my own list of “must return to” destinations. Opened September 2015; 3 bungalows (so far); starting at \$245; highhillfarm.com