

Down on the Farm

Agritourism grows as travelers seek to escape urban life. BY HOLLY RIDDLE



Farm-Fresh: Spier food garden self-harvest (above left), and Beltana Farm restaurant meal (above right)

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Harvest Hosts, a platform allowing RVers to book overnight stays in unusual spots, from farms to breweries to golf courses, reports 65 percent of RVers currently show an interest in agritourism, with a good portion saying they want to actively work on a farm during their travels. Meanwhile, Pitchup.com, offering camping and glamping site bookings, reports three out of five of its top-performing campgrounds so far in 2025 are located on farms.

This increased interest in agritourism and, more specifically, farm stays, is no surprise, according to Dr. Marta Soligo, assistant professor, William F. Harrah College of Hospitality, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. During the COVID-19 pandemic, outdoor recreation and tourism garnered increased attention, a trend still growing today.

“Agritourism,” she said, “gives tourists a unique opportunity to get close contact with nature and its products in a world increasingly characterized by rationalization and industrialized processes. People are often tired of city traffic and their offices and, therefore, seek experiences that connect them with other environments. Thus, farms offering their guests hands-on experience, such as winemaking and picking fruit and vegetables, are becoming progressively successful.”

Harvest Hosts CEO Joel Holland similarly said, “Agritourism is resonating because it offers people a break from their day-to-day lives, corporate desk jobs and urban life. Seeing that younger generations are increasingly experiencing burnout, agritourism will continue to offer that escape where they can get back to their roots and connect with nature — even if only for a few days at a time.”

Travelers hardly need an RV or tent to immerse in an agrarian

getaway. Around the world, luxurious hotels and resorts blend creature comforts with the finer aspects of farming.

In Stellenbosch, South Africa, Spier Wine Farm recently opened Spier Hotel. “While we’ve long championed farm-to-table dining and regenerative farming, the new Spier Hotel was designed to immerse guests even further,” described Austen Johnston, director of operations. “With gardens just outside guest rooms, menus rooted in seasonal produce from our farm, and opportunities to engage with our winemakers and farmers, the hotel offers a deeply connected experience of Spier.”

In Loudon, Tennessee, Monty Howards, director of lodging, said Windy Hill Farm and Preserve developed through recognition of the demand for rural experiences in the early days of the pandemic and a belief that trend would continue. The property offers all-inclusive stays in a boutique resort on 650 acres, where guests enjoy gardening, beekeeping, hiking and forest bathing.

Certain spots tap into their agritourism experiences as a whole, too. For example, since September 2020 Australia has seen nearly 50 percent growth in the number of tourism operators offering experiences connected to farming, food and agriculture. Canberra, one agritourism hot spot, boasts standout properties such as Beltana Farm, offering luxury yurt accommodations on an 800-tree truffle farm. This property opened two years ago to meet the rising demand for authentic, high-end agricultural experiences.

As agritourism continues to evolve, Soligo anticipates it will creep its way into business travel as well, with agritourism venues joining the MICE space.