

Rendevous with Rhinebeck -- the first part

I came, I saw, I bought. That's the short version.

But you want more than that, don't you, dear Readers? I will oblige as best that I can.

The premise for this trip was for two reasons - my attendance at Sock Summit was ripped from my pretty little hands just a day before I was to travel there because of pox, and my lucky freelance gig to teach at Princeton Seminary (which pre-dated the University by quite a bit) which ended on the Friday before.

On Friday, I packed up, trained it to the Newark Liberty Int'l Airport, and rented a car. I loved my customer service guy, who kept telling me all the cars there were "economy" - I got a Nissan Altima that was lovely to drive, even though I don't like black cars. It rained off and on all the way across New Jersey and up the Hudson Valley. By the time I reached Hyde Park, where I was staying, the rain had gone to sprinkling, and I made it there by dinnertime.

My host, Patsy Costello, runs a small guest house out of her house, and is very reasonable. You'll share a bath, but I don't spend much time in there, and it worked fine. With the savings of staying there, you can eat really well! Patsy's father worked for the Vanderbilt of the estate that is nearby, and on his death, her father got \$1,000 which helped buy the house that Patsy now owns. So I like to think that my room was built by a Vanderbilt. Patsy is also a huge fan of the Roosevelts (she had a ton of biographies on her front entry table), and Lorena Hickok, a very good friend of ER's was a neighbor down the road. More on this later.

Strategy-wise, I was planning to arrive early at Rhinebeck, and probably stay through some of the afternoon. While I was on the East Coast, my allergies went into overdrive, and I caught a bit of a cold, so I wanted to make the time fun, not an endurance context. After a hearty breakfast at the EverReady Diner, I drove up the 15 miles to the Dutchess Co. Fairgrounds, and, I must confess, squeeled a bit when I saw them.

After parking and all the entry stuff, I got in, and realized one thing: this is a big affair. And not just for the fiber people. Like a county fair, there are games, food vendors (not only for eating there, but wine, chocolate, cheese, olive and other sorts). Kid games are there. And the fiber related stuff is just everywhere, all over, in an overwhelming kind of way. And it's just beautiful!

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Having experienced overload at fiber events before, I did have a couple of things on a list, and a budget (in cash, so that every penny could go to the vendors and not financial intermediaries that don't need it). I headed first to the Bosworth booth, because I wanted a bossie for my own, to pet, don't you know? I got a very ordinary maple one, which I bought from the craftsman himself, who is a lovely New Englander.

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Next, I found the booth for Rhinebeck bingo - a great idea for someone like me who was traveling alone to the event and didn't know many people. The guys at the booth were great, and my bingo adventure began.

From there, I could relax. There were no "have to buys" and my major goal was simply to find out the lovely smaller vendors who don't make it to other coast. Folks who go to Stitches were to be avoided because I can find them later. And boy, did I! Tons of small ranches with their own fiber-much of it natural, others hand-dyed. I did pop by the book-signing to see how long the line was to meet Stephanie Pearl McPhee - and it was way too long - I wanted to see the fair. But I did take a half-Kinneering kind of photo of the Yarn Harlot here:

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By then it was time to see if I could find Heather Ordover of the lovely Craftlit podcast at the Cooperative Press booth. And I did - and how nice it is when someone that you've had correspondence with for a while turns out to be lovely in person too. She signed my book that I had especially brought from CA, and then a bit later, I returned for a meet-up, and I promised to her booth-mates that she would sit down and eat on her break.

We ended up at a place I would have chosen (Heather is gluten intolerant, so we went with what she could eat), but I had the *most* fabulous hamburger that tasted so good, like a really great meatloaf. It was fun to chat with Heather about all kinds of things, and enjoy the brisk weather.

Part Two will be coming very soon!