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Romeoville's White Fence Farm is a Museum of Curiosities

Everyone knows about White Fence Farm's famous chicken dinners and other delicious options to satisfy your hunger, but does everyone know about the hundreds of items scattered throughout the restaurant to satisfy your curiosity? Come explore the museum that is White Fence Farm.

Take in the gigantic light that hangs from the waiting room rafters, which was purchased from a Joliet church. Other artifacts in the waiting room include massive grandfather clocks (a few of the 68 total clocks in the collection), a scale model train set, and a number of replica paintings.



If you take a left down towards the museum wing, you will pass by a host of train related items including old dining car menus, railroad signals, and a huge photo of a train, which was the largest photograph ever taken (at the time)! Up in the rafters is an old gun collection and built out in its own display area is an old blacksmith tool shop. Once past that, you enter the Midway, full of antique carnival games like a crane game, fortune teller, and football. Some of these games may have been from Riverview Park, the famous Chicago amusement park that closed in 1967. While the lineage of the games is not 100% certain, there is no question the three fun house mirrors mounted on the wall are from there.

Continuing on, you will encounter a shoe collection from 1890 and newspaper front pages from important moments in US history like the US entry into World War I, the end of World War II, and President Nixon's resignation. Teddy bears, ceramic soldiers, and dolls can be found as well as an 850 piece music box/snow globe collection that covers everything from Disney, Elvis, and Coke-a-Cola to animals, the Muppets and Sesame Street. Across from the snow globes is the garage, which houses old cars (1941 Cadillac convertible, 1941 Lincoln Continental, and 1937 La Salle convertible to name a few), five motorcycles, and a huge hood ornament collection. These aren't the only wheels that can be found at White Fence Farm, however. Hanging from the rafters and high on the walls are nine vintage bicycles, including a bunch of penny farthings (large front wheel, tiny back wheel). Rounding out this area of the museum wing are plant fossils, old cameras, a very early TV set and chickens. Lots and lots of chickens.

Returning to the waiting room with the chandelier and clocks, pass through the doors to reach the front desk. You will see donated musical organs, old cash registers, beautiful old stoves, towel steamers, and a giant compass from a ship. Don't forget to look up to see the 16 Currier and Ives prints.

If you know the lyrics to the holiday song Sleigh Ride (“It’ll nearly be like a picture print by Currier and Ives”), these are some of the picture prints they sing about. They can be found hung around the room.

Continuing forward, you will find yourself in the Route 66 Room, named for the restaurant’s proximity to the famous cross-country roadway. This room holds the 350+ piece Department 56 Snow Village collection, which is on display all year around. Walking further along will get you to the main dining room, complete with fireplace and hand hewed beams above you, the same that have supported this building for over 100 years. Look down to see the custom-made chicken head carpet, which was manufactured in England!

“The collections started with my grandfather, Robert Hastert Sr., who liked to display his antique car collection,” said Laura Hastert, owner of White Fence Farm. “He started acquiring other things to give customers something intriguing to look at while they waited for a table or after they finished their meal. We keep these collections displayed because, along with the great food, White Fence Farm is an experience. It’s a walk through time that connects the old to the new and gets generations talking to each other. I can’t tell you how many times I overhear people point things out to their children and grandchildren and start to reminisce.”

After taking in all these collections, you’re likely to work up an appetite. Luckily, you’re already in a fantastic restaurant. All that’s left to do is get a table, put in your order, and enjoy a recipe that’s been around since 1954! White Fence Farm is located at 1376 Joliet Road. Learn more at whitefencefarm-il.com/.