

A Labor Day "Labor of Love"



Marlies & Crystal



Crystal with Nicole & Tinkerbell



Samantha at the shelter, before Animal Acres



Donna & Thomas with Roxanne Reno

This past Labor Day weekend, I was honored to finally make the trip to Acton, California, to finally meet Marlies Reno (pigharmony.com) and a great farm sanctuary called Animal Acres.

Let me back up a few months. When I first joined SCAMPP, I donated some piggy things to Marlies Reno, who is very active in private pig rescue. She quickly became a trusted friend and advisor when I started volunteering at my local shelter for the potbellied pigs there. Besides monetary support and donations, I have limited on hand experience with rescue pigs, so I decided that it was best to get involved locally in Las Vegas. I visited the Nevada SPCA where I had seen pigs there before and used to donate to them regularly. I signed up and soon I was visiting the pigs on a weekly basis. In fact, the article I wrote on the pig pellets came out of trying to provide proper nutrition on a regular basis for those pigs.

Soon after starting there, I saw that there were 2 Yorkshire pigs, farm pigs! Farm pigs in Vegas? I thought how could this happen?! They were a few months old, so they were getting quite large! No sooner did I inquire about them, I was told, there was a baby piglet named Tinkerbell in the cat area that was just rescued roadside! I went to visit her and she was the most lovable piglet I ever encountered. Just like a pot, she would fall over for a belly rub, but the most endearing thing was that she loved to kiss with her snout! Hard! Some may call that "a pig being pushy" as they are very pushy with their noses in general, but she would put her snout up to your face so you could give her a kiss! That was it, I was hooked. I saw that Samantha, being that she was the biggest, was put into a kennel because of her pushiness and she was not getting along with all the other pigs. Nicole, the second largest one, was getting the same way. I started my quest, with the help of Marlies and a handful of "big pig" people, to get them to a place where they could grow up and be pigs!

Marlies hooked me up and got my three pigs on the "big pigs list" to find them a home or sanctuary where they would not be in danger of being eaten! I got the first offer, but she was all the way in Vermont. I didn't have a way to get them transported there, so I kept them on the list. Soon after, Frank from Animal Acres stepped up and asked me if there was a way I could get them to Animal Acres in Acton, he would get them to a huge sanctuary up north. I was thrilled! I went to the shelter, told them of the offer and got the okay! We finally got all three of them up to Acton and I got e-mail updates that they were fine! Needless to say, they are such sweet animals; Frank said he would definitely keep Tinkerbell there!

I just had to see for myself, so Marlies was nice enough to invite me to stay at her house and visit Animal Acres to see the pigs and the place for myself! She was having a Labor Day barbeque for her family anyway so I accepted. I was also fortunate to meet Donna and Thomas, who also made the trek up to Marlies' house all the way from San Diego! Donna volunteers at the San Diego shelter so it was so awesome to be able to meet and talk to other animal rescue volunteers. Donna also did a rescue of a Hampshire pig that is also at Animal Acres! Marlies, who did the transport, ended up adopting her, so now she has an adopted pig daughter named Roxanne Reno!

We all made the five minute trip from Marlies' to Animal Acres, right down the road! Wow, 26 acres of beautiful land for all their animals to roam! We got the full tour from Frank, visiting my three girls, who are growing by the day! We saw goats, and cows and donkeys and emus! We walked to the top of the property where we could see the whole valley around us! All the animals will have a great life there, not just my pigs! I had to adopt Tinkerbell; she was quite a bit larger, of course, but she still loves to kiss with her snout! Still flopping for a belly rub and yes, she'll always be my baby, even when she's 700 pounds! I have to say, being that I have never visited a farm sanctuary before, if I was a rescued animal, that is definitely where I'd want to live for the rest of my life! Now this may be called rescue, but for them, it's probably heaven! Thank you Frank, Marlies, Laura and Donna! ~ Crystal from Las Vegas