

The Airbnb Listing Next Door

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Below is Danny, who stayed with his parents, Jon and Judy from Falmouth, Maine. An amazing musician, he gathered the McQuain kids around their piano and sang songs for hours.

However the majority of listings are in the \$70 to \$200 range for a wide variety of options, anything from a darling poolside cabana off of Lombardy Lane in Orinda for \$117 to a quiet in-law suite in Moraga for \$97 to a stylish stand-alone guest cottage for \$157 in Lafayette.

Karla and Barry McQuain are an outgoing couple who have a lovely private bedroom and bathroom listing in Happy Valley with full use of their expansive backyard, which includes a pool, ping pong table and trampoline, available for \$117 per night.

The couple truly enjoys meeting new people and couldn't be happier with their Airbnb experience. With a spacious, mostly empty home and Karla McQuain's past experience in the hospitality industry — she used to work for the Four Seasons — it seems like a natural fit.

All four of their kids are going to be in college next year, so they are considering expanding their operation. "We haven't had one problem" she says,

and the kids have learned that "it feels good to share, and that it's okay to trust people."

"Our kids are still friends with a number of kids who stayed here and they keep in touch on Facebook," says McQuain. "We exchanged Christmas cards with over a dozen people who have stayed here. This summer we plan to stay with a family on the east coast who stayed with us last year." A couple from Scotland were able to experience their very first American Halloween party and even dressed up in costume.

There's transparency on both sides of the exchange. McQuain has an extensive dialogue with would-be guests, and thoroughly checks them out before approving their request. The same is true for guests, as they can read customer reviews and investigate their potential hosts.

The McQuains started in February of 2015 and have now hosted guests from seven countries, including a number of groups from the U.K. who stayed for weeks at a time, visiting grandchildren who live in Lafayette. They have a young couple coming in the near future for seven weeks all the way from Walnut Creek while their home is being remodeled. McQuain has been amazed at a number of guests coming from Oregon who are very interested in hiking at Briones. A fellow from San Diego will be coming for his third visit while the hosts happen to be out of town, so he's happy to take care of their Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and water the plants.

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From left, Fiona and Bill from Scotland stayed with the McQuain family in Lafayette, and even participated in Halloween festivities.
Photos provided