



CONTACT

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**B**ig pig news. Wilbur has left the building. Not as in he's dead, but he has left the Cotswolds and moved up North to a wonderful pig sanctuary called (rather unnervingly) Pigs Inn Heaven.

This was a big decision for us to make but he had become more and more aggressive and was clearly unhappy with our bringing in a friend to keep him company. The friend, Sir Francis Bacon, is the best natured pig I've ever met (although very chatty) and we thought that Wilbur and he would get on brilliantly. I'd forgotten just what a grumpy pig Wilbur was and he expresses zero interest in having a new friend except for killing our cockerel and crunching on the poor thing's skull while staring at a terrified Sir Francis.

Then I did a TV show which was highlighting the problem of people buying micro (or tea-cup) pigs as pets and then not being able to deal with them. This is because micro pigs don't exist. Anybody selling you one is a con artist. Pigs are not household pets and anybody who tries this out will live to regret it. I was supposed to be the example of someone who could handle being a pig owner as I lived on a farm and had room for them.

I did an interview sitting in the garden. The director's idea was that Wilbur would lie contentedly by my feet – a picture of bucolic bliss. Wilbur had other ideas. He is not and never will be a fan of being told what to do. Halfway through the interview he suddenly bared his impressive tusks and went for me. Luckily he bit my wellies and not my leg. He proceeded to scream and tear viciously at the boots while the director, who was curiously nervous of animals, jumped back in alarm. Obviously the footage was TV gold and was duly aired but I was concerned. Wilbur is a massively big unit and if he attacked one of the kids or the dogs it would not end well. Then the show aired and I got an email from a lady who was in a



## Trotters' independence

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similar situation- she had taken on little pig who had grown huge. This pig however had attacked her and she sent me some quite extraordinarily graphic photos of where his tusks had ripped her leg open. That was that. I got in touch with Pigs Inn Heaven, checked they weren't a front for an abattoir and then organised for Wilbur to head north.

The Sanctuary asked whether I would take one of their pigs in return for housing Wilbur. I hesitated, but then realised that Sir Francis might need a companion. So that's how we got Stanley. Politely put, he is a bit of a Heinz 57 – a mixed grill. He was named after being found wandering down the high street of Accrington Stanley one morning. Poor Stanley and been abandoned and needed a home. Pigs Inn Heaven came to the rescue and now he was moving to The Cotswolds.

When the day came Wilbur was charm itself and seemed

**Above:** Porcine pals, Sir Francis and Stanley

Pigs Inn Heaven is a sanctuary for unwanted pet pigs and terrapins/turtles. They currently have 60 pigs on site. You can help support the sanctuary via PayPal or by sponsoring an animal.

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content to leave his home as long as food was provided for the journey. Stanley was introduced to Sir Francis and they appeared to get on OK. Stanley is slightly nervous pig and I feel that Sir Francis' constant chatter might get a touch annoying but they have proved me wrong. On their first night together I snuck in to have a peek and they were both snuggled up with each other. All was well with us.

But what of Wilbur? How was he taking to the North? Would he struggle with the accent? Would he be bullied by the other pigs for being a Southern softie?

I needn't have worried. I get regular videos of his progress. He has had his nails clipped, and appears to be being treated like a king. I've even seen footage of him communicating with other pigs in an almost civil manner.

I miss him, but I think it was for the best. Now we must concentrate on our new family – Stanley and Sir Francis. ♦