

## Testimonial for Alice Skinner from Waltraud Löschner

A very special gift have been the ever so many summers we have known [Alice](#) and the intensely magic moments which we have been sharing over the years, also in Austria.



We were newly-weds in 1969, newcomers to this country and Harvard, when Wick and [Alice](#) invited us to join them for Thanksgiving at Sprucehead. [Alice](#) greeted us with her natural, warm-hearted and cheerful way, radiating the mature female beauty of her 44 years, very charming, mainly because she didn't seem conscious of it. [Alice](#) fascinated me right from the beginning, her openness to us new guests, her quiet inquisitiveness, her including me in preparing the dinner and involving me in highly interesting conversations while cooking...

We hiked at Arcadia National Park and in the Camden Hills during these crisp November days, [Alice](#) always looking closely at plants and birds. A new, very intense friendship had begun right then, with [Alice](#), Wick and Maine.

Both at Sprucehead and St. George I admired [Alice's](#) vegetable garden... and her compost system. I remember the moment when I first tasted [Alice's](#) garden peas: this was like a sudden revelation; as a student I had been eating lousy meals, and now I was eating the *real thing!* From now on I would cook and eat only wholesome food, I vowed, and have a vegetable garden and compost like [Alice!](#) – On our regular 3 day sails into Penobscot Bay, with the marvels of the Barred Islands, I watched and helped with [Alice's](#) conscientious packing of fresh veggies and fruit for the boat. When we hiked through the islands, Ernst was looking and finding loads of mushrooms and Alice was enthusiastically absorbing all the knowledge of edible - and not so edible – mushrooms, and Ernst was equally keen on passing it on to her. Incidentally, especially in the beginning, Wick would always insist that **we** first taste the mushrooms before he did and he would invariably say, "Farewell, my dears, it has been nice knowing you!"

During the peaceful hours on the sailboat [Alice](#) and I would have long conversations e.g. about her longitudinal studies on women's lives or about the migration of the puffins or about literature we both liked. What has always impressed me with [Alice](#) was her modesty, never any boasting about her academic pursuits or other accomplishments, in fact, she was very natural in bringing about a real dialogue. She has always been a good listener, genuinely interested in hearing the answers, and showing respect for other people's opinions. The best example for this is actually Wick with his Republican ideas which she, as a life-long Democrat, tolerated.....without grinding her teeth...

We have mostly been in Maine during the high summers of August, enjoying the family time, the coca-cola pond, the sea, the boats, the island picnics, mussel gathering, the tennis... And [Alice](#)? During the mornings she would be working at her desk writing papers, researching or thinking out important strategies for community work, etc. After lunch she would be active with her garden projects, the dogs, the birds, and with general house management work. This

finely tuned routine, for me, has been an important factor for the equilibrium, the grace, and the glow that has been surrounding [Alice](#) all the time I have known her.

When I think of you, [Alice](#), I see you before me so vividly as if you were [immortal](#). You lived what Aristotle already knew when he said, “*Let us live life as if we were immortal*” .

Emily Dickinson whom you liked so much, is saying the same thing poetically. They are both informing us that everything and everyone has a circuit to fulfil, and that when it is complete, it ceases in its current form and shifts to another. The material of our bodies is recycled, while our true [essence](#) remains. Let me end with Emily Dickinson`s consoling poem:

Because I could not stop for death,  
He kindly stopped for me,  
The carriage held but just ourselves,  
And [immortality](#).



Alice and me preparing dinner at the Skinner home in St. George, Maine, Aug. 1990

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When the Skinners were at the Krimml Lodge 10 years ago, Alice was very much taken by the aura of the Krimml Valley which is today the home of the Grove of Flight. So, it has been an honor for us to sponsor a tree in this valley [for Alice](#) and Wick. Furthermore, [Alice](#) has always been a bird lover, so it is my personal wish that there may be a bird`s nest one day in her tree.

Vienna, April 2019