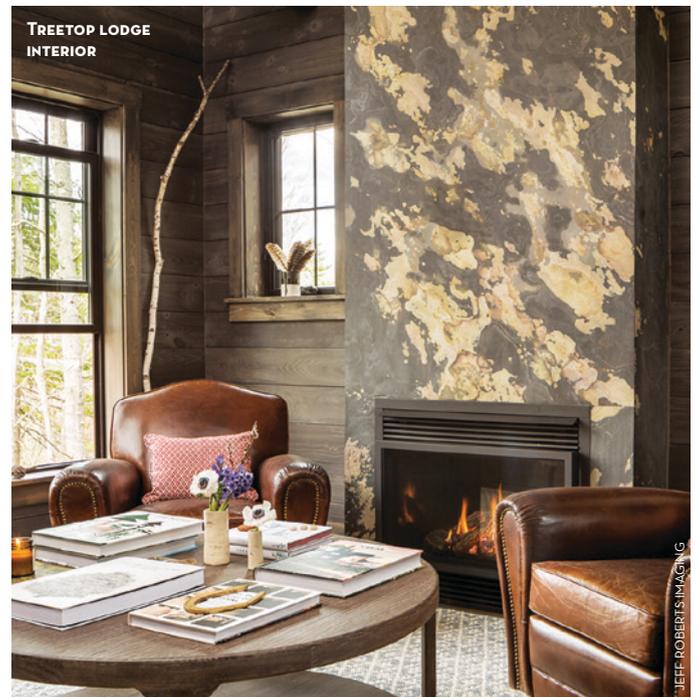


ESCAPE



Maine Attraction

Tucked in the birch forest but close to the sea, Hidden Pond in Kennebunkport is New England's premier summertime escape

By Paul Rubio



Maine is famed for its dramatic, wind-swept coastlines, yet some of its greatest treasures lie inland. Case in point: Hidden Pond, a 60-acre resort etched into the balsam fir- and birch-draped forests beyond downtown Kennebunkport, open seasonally from May through October. A total of 46 cottages, bungalows, and treetop lodges dot the woody environs, complemented by a whimsical tree spa (with treatment rooms 8 feet above the ground), lush gardens, and a farm-to-table restaurant called Earth. Add to this activities rooted in wellness (think: guided forest therapy) and others reminiscent of summer camp (Ping-Pong or s'mores, anyone?), plus proximity to the sea, and prepare to revel in New England's ultimate summer vacation.

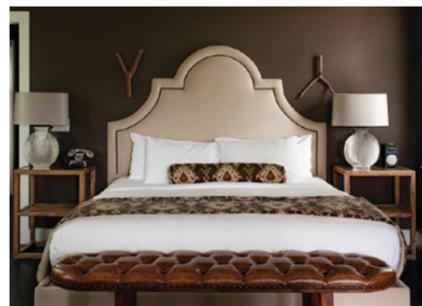
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COTTAGES (LEFT) COVER SOME 1,100 SQUARE FEET AND OFFER AMPLE SPACE FOR FAMILIES. AN ORGANIC FARM (ABOVE) YIELDS FRESH INGREDIENTS FOR HIDDEN POND'S CULINARY PROGRAM.



COTTAGES INCLUDE FULL KITCHENS (ABOVE) AND TWO BEDROOMS (BELOW). ENJOY S'MORES BY THE BONFIRE (RIGHT) AND OTHER CAMP-INSPIRED ACTIVITIES.



Hidden Pond first impresses with its campus-style layout and diversity in accommodations, each cozier than the next. From three collections—separated by architectural style and interior design inspiration—take your pick of 10 treetop lodges, 20 bungalows, and 16 cottages.

Each of the family-forward cottages is a singular display of classic New England charm, bound by the common thread of rental amenities including fully equipped gourmet kitchens, grills, and washer-dryers. The elevated treetop lodges, on the other hand, are studies in cabin-in-the-woods chic, with dark woodwork and light soft goods harmonized by prolific spaces that bring the outdoors in (the screened-in porches with daybeds and outdoor rain showers are everything).

Reinvented for the 2022 season, the romantic couples' bungalows bear the stamp of Todd Snyder. A four-time CFDA Menswear Designer of the Year nominee, Snyder first worked with Hidden Pond in

2020, when he transformed one of the lodges in the vein of his "From Away" fall runway collection with L.L.Bean. Now he has thematically reimaged every bungalow under his discerning visions of seaside, mountainside, or countryside.

Once you've settled into your luxe lair, embrace Hidden Pond's enchanted forest and the amenities that flourish therein. Amble through nature or explore trails via a beach cruiser—every guest has access to one. Enjoy languid days at the



DOUGLAS FRIEDMAN



DOUGLAS FRIEDMAN

adults-only Serenity pool or the family-friendly Lodge pool. Create your own colorful bouquet of wildflowers at the Potting Shed, where you'll pick up vases, gardening shears, and floral guides before heading into the wild. Grab a basket and harvest vegetables from the duo of on-site organic gardens—just ask beforehand what's in season and ripe for the picking. Stock up on s'mores kits for a nightly sugar rush by the bonfire alongside family and new friends.

Alternatively, partake in Hidden Pond's instructor-led programming, starting with wellness pursuits like yoga, meditation sessions, or transformative forest therapy walks, which center on connecting with nature and your own senses. Move on to classes in mixology and painting, one-on-one time with the resident gardener, or off-property adventures such as whale watching, lighthouse tours, and private sails. A complimentary shuttle to Hidden Pond's sister property, Tides Beach Club, means that Kennebunkport's seaside swagger is at most a 10-minute ride away.

The other essential elements to a Hidden Pond stay are eating and drinking—in abundance. A daily breakfast basket features sinfully delicious homemade treats like coffee cake, blueberry muffins, croissants, and more. The first morning you'll think, "I can't possibly eat all this," but by the next you'll be calling reception for seconds.

In a region lauded for its locavore cuisine, Hidden Pond's Earth reigns among the very best. The dinner-only restaurant showcases vegetables and herbs from the resort's organic farm, supplemented by freshly caught seafood and locally sourced meats. With executive chef Joe Schafer at the helm, a recent meal included truffle-laced farro risotto



HEIDI KIRIN PHOTOGRAPHY

CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW: SIGNATURE RESTAURANT EARTH SERVES NEXT-LEVEL FARM-TO-TABLE FARE; THE FROM AWAY LODGE FEATURES INTERIORS BY TODD SNYDER; A WET BAR INSIDE A TREETOP LODGE.



with local mushrooms, king salmon with walnut-pomegranate pesto, and made-to-order doughnuts with a saffras and sarsaparilla glaze and a scoop of house-made vanilla ice cream. For nourishment between the breakfast basket and multicourse dinner, head to chef Schafer's food truck, which serves hot breakfast and lunch.

Luxuriating at once in the serenity and sophisticated summer camp feel of Hidden Pond, it's hard to believe that the popularity of Kennebunkport—even Maine—rests almost exclusively on its coastal delights. Indeed, the seaside allure is warranted, but venturing slightly inland to Hidden Pond presents another dimension of Maine's natural and nostalgic splendor. (hiddenpondmaine.com) <<