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Resorting... to Extremes!



At Maine's hotels and inns, legends are created one guest at a time.

BY SARAH MOORE

FROM THE MOMENT you pass through the gates of **Spruce Point Inn**, you've unknowingly stepped into a precisely choreographed dance. Reservations manager Cindy Poe describes this as the "spun-glass bubble" of smooth and serene service. Spruce Point's 120-strong staff is waiting in the wings to ensure that bubble never bursts.

"One family has returned to Spruce Point Inn year after year since 2008," says

the Inn's Stephanie Seacord. "Cindy Poe always greets them. Several years ago, a few of the grandchildren were here. One of the little girls talked about how much she loves the inn—how she wants to have her wedding here. It was such a sweet and powerful moment," and it highlighted the Inn's appeal across three generations. "They first began gathering with the family patriarch. After he passed away, we weren't sure if they'd return. That winter, his wife called. 'Of course we want to continue the tradition!'"

THE RESORT: Built as a private hunting lodge in the late 1800s, Spruce Point be-



GETAWAYS

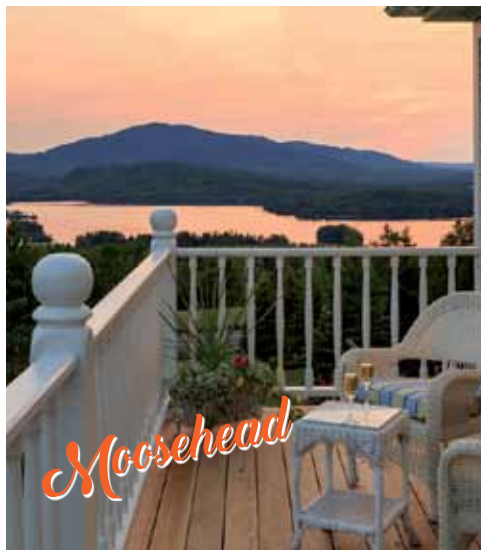
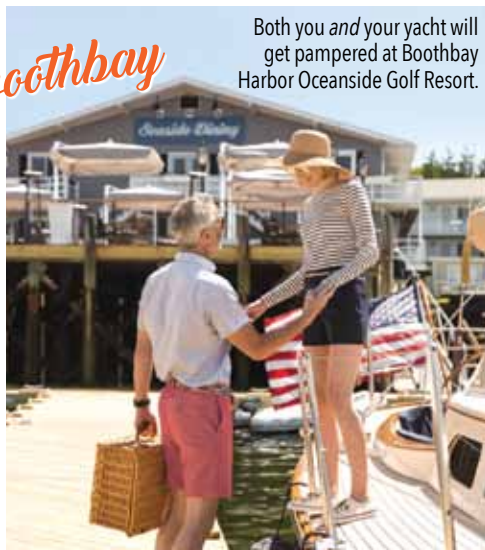
Escape the stress of the outside world at Spruce Point Inn.



Boothbay

Both you and your yacht will get pampered at Boothbay Harbor Oceanside Golf Resort.

Boothbay



Moosehead

gan its long career as an inn in 1902. Guests across the ages include Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, Senator and Mrs. Edmund Muskie, and Vice President and Mrs. Hubert Humphrey. The prevailing breeze is that Spruce Point creates a sense of homecoming. This is amplified by impulsive hospitality gestures on the part of the staff. If the way to the heart is through the stomach, Food and Beverage manager Sonya Dearborn had one couple smitten with a surprise anniversary dinner overlooking the ocean, including a whimsical menu personalized with the name and wedding date of the lovebirds. At another table in time, the banquet manager noticed a group of guests looking flummoxed at the lobster bake set in front of them. Diving to the rescue of the newbies, “She gave an impromptu lesson on how to crack a lobster!” Seacord says.

Top of its Class

Blair Hill Inn, Greenville

THE EXTREME: In the age of internet takedowns, Blair Hill Inn scores 98 percent on Tripadvisor. “I could write a book about how fantastic, hospitable, and warm the staff is at the Blair Hill Inn,” one guest says. “Ruth, Dan, and their family blew us

away with their hospitality. Ruth helped book outdoor adventures for us, while Dan cooked delicious homemade meals in the back. You could eat off the floors.”

THE RESORT: From a hilltop perch in Greenville, Blair Hill Inn commands a stunning view across Maine’s largest glacial lake. The inn’s many windows frame these cinematic views of Moosehead Lake and its islands. Innkeepers and self-confessed corporate escapees Ruth and Dan McLaughlin have presided over the smooth running of Blair Hill since they fled Chicago for the Maine hills with a wild dream 20 years ago. The rural setting does not equate to rustic amenities. “We have a space for helicopters to land and a Tesla and generic electric charging station—both free of ‘charge’ for our guests,” Ruth says. “We’ve also arranged for a seaplane to fly guests to and from Bangor Airport.”

A Port in the Storm

Boothbay Harbor Oceanside Golf Resort, Boothbay

THE EXTREME: Now here’s something you don’t see everyday: Boothbay Harbor Oceanside Golf Resort offers service



with a smile—off dry land. The hotel boasts a “nautical concierge” service for guests and diners who arrive by boat. While you sip margaritas and munch on fresh seafood, your pride and joy will be buffed to a high shine by expert hands. “We once had a couple arrive from Florida for a vacation,” says Landon Flynn. “During the stay, the weather turned bad. They were wary of sailing home. We stored, cleaned, and brought in a specialist mechanic while the storm raged. Afterward, we even helped find an experienced captain to sail the yacht back for them.”

THE RESORT: You can’t get much closer to the water than the Boothbay Harbor Oceanside Golf Resort, just a stone’s skim from the town dock. The 18-hole golf course is a draw for enthusiasts, while patient spouses can keep themselves entertained on the patio of Coastal Prime with a cocktail or 12.

Rare Acts

The Claremont Hotel, Southwest Harbor

THE EXTREME: An emerald-green nine-hoop croquet lawn manicured to international standards has been the jewel in crown of The Claremont Hotel since the Victorian age. World-class mallet stars travel each summer to play for glory in the Claremont Croquet Classic, a fixture since 1977. One summer, staff members dragged their eyes from the competition to notice a guest on the water struggling to start his Hinckley yacht. At that moment, the boat’s

Mount Desert



gas engine caught fire and exploded in a flapping fireball. "Staff members ran to the shoreline and began rowing out to where the yacht was moored," says assistant manager Tim Stanley. "We came to the aid of the gentleman and his daughter, who was badly burned from the explosion." John "Jay" Madeira, general manager for over 35 years, rushed the young woman to the ER in his car. He remained by her side for almost eight hours while she received treatment. Thankfully, she made a full recovery. "She returns now and then to visit Jay," Stanley says.

THE RESORT: At the mouth of the East Coast's only fjord, The Claremont Hotel stands outside of time, a moment caught in amber. The green sweep of lawn rises up from a boathouse on the lip of Somes Sound, sloping up to the main hotel, punctuated by white Adirondack chairs. The main hotel with gabled roof and wrap-around porch was built in 1884 by Captain Jesse Pease, who fell for the stunning views across the fjord to what would later become Acadia National Park. In the dazzle of a summer's day, you may have stepped back in time. If you glance over your shoulder and spot the Obama family sitting down to lunch, you've sped back to 2011.

While the staff members specialize in small acts of kindness, "from filling rooms with fresh flowers" to a can-do attitude, Jay Madeira sets the standard. "It was the height of summer, when late one evening,

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GETAWAYS

a family of four entered the hotel looking tired and despondent,” Stanley says. “They’d been around the island searching for a place to stay— with no luck.” Sure enough, The Claremont was full, too. “Jay got to talking with the father.” The family was exhausted, vexed by Vacationland. “Jay went down into the laundry, collected a pile of fresh linens, and set up a bed in the living room for the family free of charge.” Nice guy, dreamy hotel.

Rested and Recharged

Samoset Inn, Rockport

THE EXTREME: You know that sinking feeling when you realize you forgot to pack your most valued possession? The staff at the Samoset will save the day. “We’d forgotten the cable for a phone charger,” says one guest. “The staff went searching through the lost and found and brought one to our room that evening.” Crisis averted.

THE RESORT: In the heart of midcoast Maine, **The Samoset Resort** is an ocean-front jewel complete with spa, swimming pool, and an 18-hole golf course looking

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out over the Rockland Breakwater Lighthouse. This hotel has a history as striking as her views. The Ricker Hotel Company (of Poland Spring fame) bought and transformed the Bay Point Hotel in 1902 into a dazzling destination with over 1,000 feet of oceanfront. Such was her allure, the Eastern Steamship Company immediately began direct routes from Boston to the Samoset. The resort ran aground in the early 20th century, only to come back swinging in 1972. It's been blue skies ever since.

The Samoset is named for a Pemaquid sachem who welcomed pilgrims from the *Mayflower* in 1620. Weary travelers today can settle into one of the expansive resort's 178 hotel rooms and start booking spa treatments and golf lesson to the heart's content. ■



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