

Destination: Maine



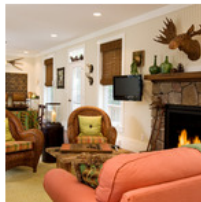
Courtesy Hidden Pond

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Luxury

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Hidden Pond

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Hidden Pond opened in 2008 as an update on the classic summer cottage resort. The sixteen two-bedroom homes, set in the woods outside Kennebunkport, are almost like a *Winivan* for the kiddie set, with each cottage featuring the work of a local designer. Although the décor varies from the bright canary yellow clapboard walls and hip farmhouse décor of Periwinkle to the more neutral palette of Stargazer, all have spacious porches, stone fireplaces, full kitchens plus washer and dryer and the expected luxury amenities (flatscreen televisions, Bose iPod docks, Frette linens and reliable WiFi). New this year are the twenty one-bedroom bungalows, set in a separate section from the family-friendly larger units.

These have an open plan with a king bed, outdoor shower and forest views. They are well suited for couples who like the proximity to the spa and more private setting for romantic getaways.

In addition to the cottages, Hidden Pond has traditional resort amenities as well. There is a small main lodge with a family-friendly swimming pool, the Sandbar Grill for lunch, a porch bar for pre-dinner cocktails and a daily evening bonfire, complete with s'more roasting. (Families with small children should book cottages close to the Lodge for ease of walking back and forth.) In the Bungalows section, travelers can find the Tree Spa and Hidden Pond's fine dining restaurant *Earth*, a joint venture with Boston-based chef Ken Oringer. As a fan of Oringer's restaurants, I was thrilled to see that the food served at *Earth* lives up to the quality of his hometown establishments such as *Clio* and *Toro*. The staff grows many of their ingredients on-property, and they source most others from local purveyors in true food-to-fork fashion. The winelist is eclectic, well-priced and interesting, with Spanish *txakoli* and Lebanese Cabs mixed in with more classic bottles from California, Italy and France. Couples visiting should not miss a chance to eat at what is now my new favorite table for two: the Potting Shed, where an antique table sits in a rustic shed with a window overlooking the natural spring pond next door.

Next door to *Earth* sits the *Tree Spa*, a small but excellent spa with three treatment rooms, each in its own tree house. Not much beats a treatment with views over the treetops while the smell of the wood mixes with that of the massage oils. Keeping in line with the hotel's general eco-luxe vibe, the spa also uses all organic products from the *Farmaesthetic* line. The *Tree Spa* building also houses a small fitness room, although it's more fun to get your daily exercise in by riding the resort's fleet of bikes down to Goose Rocks Beach or spending a day with a guide kayaking through the Cape Porpoise islands.

For a generation raised on *Dirty Dancing*, Hidden Pond seems like cooler, updated version of the kind of place where Jennifer Gray and Patrick Swayze could fall in love. There are community-style activities where guests come together and bond over morning yoga or evening cocktails. Children will play together in the pool and parents will show the kids the best way to melt a marshmallow over the s'more fire. But there's also plenty of privacy for biking to a quiet beach, walking through the woods or just kicking back with a good book on your porch swing. In other words, it's vacation.

Henley Vazquez