

# Kennebunk's Grand is sophisticated and sumptuous

BY ROCHELLE LASH, SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE JUNE 29, 2012



The newly built Grand Hotel opened this month Kennebunk, Maine. Rooms are equipped with the latest amenities.

**Photograph by:** Kennebunkport Resort Collection

“Our concept is to offer the best-of-the-best of the Kennebunks, so we team up with people who are at the top of their game.”

So said developer-designer Tim Harrington of his soigné new establishment, the Grand Hotel, a boutique beauty that opened this month in Kennebunk, Maine.

The new centrepiece of the happening Lower Village, the Grand Hotel embraces a tiny, European-style lobby with four welcoming chairs, a fulsome basket of orchids atop a fine table and an elevator to 17 luxurious rooms. That’s it. The Grand represents a new concept: sophisticated, sumptuous five-star accommodations with premium in-room amenities. Class and comfort. Period.

Still, Harrington wanted superlative food and spa services, so he planned for two ground-floor shops and recruited top caterer Peggy Liversidge to open the gourmet Kitchen Chicks Café, and Sheryl Miller, whose salon, Fringe Hair Art & Spa Rituals, has been recognized by Elle Magazine as one of the top in the United States.

Harrington's hotel fortes are architecture and interiors. He partnered with Kennebunk design doyenne Louise Hurlbutt to achieve the Grand’s archetypal New England look.

“We wanted the building to look like it has been here forever,” said Harrington. “We went for pure lines and simplicity and just had a little fun with the name.”

The Grand emerged impressive and stately with a big-time look on a relatively small scale. The exterior is oyster-grey with fresh white latticework and window trim. Sundecks, some private and some common, reach out from two facades, yielding views of a leafy residential neighbourhood or the bustle of the main street and a peek at the Kennebunk River in between.

Indoors, the hotel is all about serenity, subtlety and classic style. The lobby and guest rooms are decorated in the subdued silvers and whites of the clouds and sea, with soft gold tones recalling the sand and sun. The textures and colours add richness galore. You can revel in caramel kid-leather seating, heavy cream linen curtains, patterned sisal rugs and big beds covered in delicate white sheeting by Frette of Italy. Then, there is contrast and shimmer in metallic touches like brass drawer handles, bronze table bases and silvery lamps.

The Grand is newly built and a deluxe destination, so the rooms are equipped with the latest must-haves: Pod coffee machines, large flat-screen televisions, iPod docks, individual thermostats and marble and glass bathrooms with heated floors. On the non-tech side, the hotel supplies toiletries from the exclusive Archive line, made with shea butter and green tea.

If you need more pampering after a day at the beach, Fringe can fix you up. The salon does hair, esthetics, spa treatments and even anti-wrinkle procedures including Botox and dermal fillers. Therapists customize delicate, herbal-based Primavera products from Europe for facials, massages and bodywork such as hot-stone therapy and reflexology.

At the Kitchen Chicks Café, the Grand's guests can indulge in luscious breakfasts, lunches, beach picnics or takeout suppers. House specialties include three-berry French toast with pecan praline and maple syrup, the signature turkey sandwich with cranberry mayo and herb stuffing and such main courses as crab cakes, meat loaf and vegetable lasagna.

There is no shortage of more elaborate dining: The Grand belongs to the Kennebunkport Resort Collection, six unique hotels with three outstanding restaurants. The Food Lovers Getaway is a three-night culinary trip to: Earth at Hidden Pond, where organic gastronomy flourishes in a spectacular, rustic wooded setting; The Tides Beach Club, a seaside-chic bistro and trendy cocktail bar; and One Dock at the Kennebunkport Inn, a stylish lounge and dining room with small plates, large plates and entertainment. The Grand's foodie package also includes a picnic and sailing cruise.

Part of Harrington's Grand plan is a car-free vacation. It's a two-minute stroll to Dock Square, Kennebunkport's tiny, touristy “downtown” and perhaps 10 to the new Galleries at Morning Walk, a darling complex of artists' ateliers. The ultimate Maine detail: Kennebunk Beach is one-and-a-half kilometres away, or a short cycle ride.

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### **If you go**

Kennebunk is a five-and-a-half drive from Montreal via U.S. Highways 89 and 93 and Route 101 east to

U.S. 95 north.

The Grand Hotel: 877-455-1501, 207-967-0355, [thegrandhotelmaine.com](http://thegrandhotelmaine.com); 1 Chase Hill Rd., Kennebunk, Maine. Open year-round.

Price: Grand Debut Experience, a special through July 14, is two nights for two people, \$399 U.S., with a welcome beach bag of gourmet goodies and sparkling wine, and cocktails at One Dock at the Kennebunkport Inn. As of July 15, Grand Hotel rooms will cost approximately \$240-\$345 (Sun.-Wed.) U.S., per night, or \$265-\$375 (Thurs.-Sat.) U.S., per night. Rates will dip Sept. 2 and again in October. Rates include parking, beach parking pass, and affiliated facilities such as the heated pool at the Old Fort Inn and kayaks and rowboats at Cottages at Cabot Cove on Kennebunk River. Packages are available with cruises on the Schooner Eleanor, meals, massages and such extras as Champagne, chocolates and beach accessories.

Fringe Hair Art & Spa Rituals: 207-967-8551, [fringehairart.com](http://fringehairart.com); 60-minute massage, \$85 U.S.

Kitchen Chicks Café: 207-967-1133, [kitchenchicks.com](http://kitchenchicks.com)

Destination Kennebunkport/Kennebunkport Resort Collection: 877-455-1501, [destinationkennebunkport.com](http://destinationkennebunkport.com), links services of Hidden Pond and The Tides Beach Club in Goose Rocks Beach, and in Kennebunkport: the Kennebunkport Inn, the Old Fort Inn and the Cottages of Cabot Cove.

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