

Lake Placid revisits its stunning past

The Lake House looks as it would have in the 1960s



ROCHELLE LASH
CHECKING IN

I have seen the past, and it is adorable.

The new Lake House at High Peaks Resort is a whimsical, 1960s-inspired country lodge facing Mirror Lake in the heart of Lake Placid, N.Y.

Lake House is the result of a total overhaul of a vintage motor lodge, courtesy of the architectural firm Mapos in New York City, and the blend of old and new is cleverly executed.

Rustic natural wood and sturdy hand-hewn furniture reflect the bold, outdoorsy Adirondack region, modernized with colourful accessories. The basic mid-20th-century motor lodge structure hasn't changed. Guests still have the convenience of free parking almost at their room door. The rooms are on three storeys, without an elevator; but the informal Lake House probably will appeal to the adventurers who visit here for hiking, sailing, rafting and snow sports.

The newly redone property is affiliated with a major hotel, High Peaks Resort, across the street, but it has a spirit all its own. High Peaks is a conventional hotel with 133 rooms along long corridors, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, a spa and a bistro-style restaurant. In contrast, Lake House is a simple, fun motor lodge.

The terrific perk at the smaller Lake House is that guests also can use the facilities — indoor and outdoor pools, watercraft, fitness centre, business centre — at High Peaks.

Adirondack style, updated

Lake House is young in style and lighthearted in design. The entrance floor is a loft-ish distressed concrete, the reception desk is a slab of natural oak. When you arrive, you'll check in on an iPad, assisted by a host in jeans and plaid shirt. The rooms all face the lake and all but two have balconies, so there always is an inspirational view of water and trees.

The rooms are decked out in sturdy furniture and

country-looking beds with red wool blankets and knotty cedar headboards, plus modernisms such as flat-screen TVs and updated white-tiled bathrooms.

The defining characteristic of an Adirondack chalet is its "great room," a large, central living room bathed in warmth radiating from a commanding fireplace. Lake House fills the bill. There is a central fireplace, but the pièce de résistance is the sweeping panoramic window that overlooks Mirror Lake, which is the heart of the town of Lake Placid.

The great room is meant for sharing, lounging, dining; its role is to bring everyone together. The sofas are covered in cheery red wool or bright blue, tossed with patterned Native American blankets, and the tables are sawhorse-style wooden planks over metal legs. It's all a little retro and deliberately dressed down, but thoroughly enjoyable.

When I visited, I saw the great room in action, the way it was meant to be. Families were gathered around Snakes & Ladders, Scrabble and jigsaw puzzles and other travellers were Facebooking on the guest computers.

It was late afternoon, and the après-sports crowd was starting to filter into the bar to review the day and refuel.

Food & drink

The bar, part of the great room, comes alive for après-sports. Thursdays are hot, with free wine or liquor tastings from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. and two-for-one drinks from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. On tap are regional craft beers from locals such as Lake Placid Pub & Brewery and Paradox Brewery, and the vintage cocktails include whisky sour, sloe gin fizz, tequila sunrise and the Manhattan.

Food-wise, the bar dispenses microwaved Hungry-Man frozen dinners — Salisbury steak, fried chicken or meat loaf — a quick bite at \$11, meant to be a throwback to childhood. The place for real meals is Dancing Bears, the



PHOTOS: WESTPHALEN PHOTOGRAPHY

Lake House, at High Peaks Resort in Lake Placid, has been updated with the nostalgic style of the 1960s.



Lake House has an appealing retro Adirondack design.

main restaurant of High Peaks resort across the street.

A town built on sports

The theme of Lake House is the 46 High Peaks of the Adirondacks, those great rugged mountains that surround Lake Placid and the nearby hiking-centric towns of Wilmington, Keene and Keene Valley. Each High Peak is more than 1,200 metres above sea level and the 44 guest rooms are named after the mountains — in order of their size. So, room No. 1 is

Marcy, named for the huge, rather forbidding Mt. Marcy which is the highest point in New York State (1,629 metres above sea level).

Depending on the season, Lake House's hosts can set up golf, yoga on the waterfront, paddle-boarding, sailing, mountain-biking, rock climbing, fishing, rafting, kayaking and canoeing. New this season, the Olympic Ski Jump has been transformed for extreme tubing at speeds up to 80 kph. In winter, guests can go skiing and snowboarding at Whiteface, cross-coun-

IF YOU GO

Lake Placid

Lake Placid is a two-hour drive from Montreal via Highway 15 south to the U.S. border and Route 87 south.

Lake House at High Peaks Resort; 800-755-5598, 518-523-4422;

lakehouselakeplacid.com; 1 Mirror Lake Drive, Lake Placid, N.Y. Pet-friendly, \$50 per visit.

Price: Watch for Sunday night discounts. Rates, \$169-\$209 U.S., per night on weekends, for two; weekdays are \$109-\$149, including Wi-Fi, indoor

swimming pool, hot tub, as well as High Peaks Resort's 24-hour fitness centre, three pools (one indoor and two outdoor), small lake craft (kayaks, rowboats, pedal-boats). In summer and fall there are afternoon barbecues, movies by the pool, wine tastings.

Lake Placid Visitors' Bureau: 866-447-5224, lakeplacid.com. Adirondack Region: adirondacksusa.com, adirondackexperience.com, visitadirondacks.com; lakechamplainregion.com; Whiteface Mt. and Olympic installations: whiteface.com

try skiing on the Olympic run, dogsledding on Mirror Lake and bobsledding Olympic Sports Complex. Lake House's Room No. 5 is named for Whiteface.

This week, the Lake Placid Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism launched adi-

ronacksusa.com, an interactive web guide to the vast, protected near-wilderness of the Adirondacks region, including the mountains, waterways, and communities such as Lake Placid, Tupper Lake, Essex, Westport and Ticonderoga.

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