

Lodge offers family seaside fun in Maine



ROCHELLE LASH

The Lodge on the Cove is the latest boutique gem created by the Kennebunkport Resort Collection (KRC), a group of unique inns in Southern Maine.

The Lodge is an adorable retro-chic redesign of a classic 1970s motor lodge. A secluded and relatively quiet getaway, except for the antics of children, it is about one kilometre from Dock Square at the centre of Kennebunkport. The hotel is perched atop Chick's Cove — hence the name — that connects to the Kennebunk River.

It is a family-friendly micro-resort with 30 rooms, including one suite with a kitchenette. It's all built around three social hubs: a saltwater swimming pool, a clubhouse with games, books and movie nights and The Dory bar-restaurant. As you would at a motel, you pull your car up and park in front of your room, and unload all your beach gear, so it's convenient.

It's summer, so the beach is a must. The Lodge supplies chairs and towels for use at any of the Kennebunk beaches and also parking permits for the Kennebunk Beach, about three kilometres away.

The 30 guest rooms are divvied up into three buildings so you can find a romantic nest, but the Lodge also has lots to do for kids. The pool is the star attraction and the hotel also offers free bicycles, evening bonfires with s'mores, daily activities and live bands on weekends.

Extra-large, the guest rooms have fresh country-style or nautical decor, with hand-painted wallpaper and headboards, plus flat-screen televisions and the convenience of microwaves, mini-refrigerators and coffee machines. The Dory doesn't operate in the morning, but coffee and muffins are on the house in the clubhouse Café and breakfast sandwiches and fruit are for sale.

The Dory is open-air and diner-style with white furniture splashed with lime, red and aqua.

The menu features all-American comfort food like BLTs, grilled cheese sandwiches, kosher hotdogs, spicy wings, along with sides like sweet-potato 'tater tots, potato salad, onion rings and milkshakes. The build-



The perky Lodge on the Cove in Kennebunkport, Maine, has a new retro-chic design. PHOTOS: KENNEBUNKPORT RESORT COLLECTION



The 30 guest rooms at the Lodge on the Cove in Kennebunkport, Maine, have a coastal vibe with colours of the sea and sand.

your-own burgers can be veggie, chicken, beef or fish, and topped with bacon, cheddar, sour cream and chives, roasted tomatoes or jalapenos. The Scupper is a fancy favourite, with prosciutto and caramelized onions. We're in Maine, so lobster is paramount in lobster salads and lobster sliders. There is a kids' menu, too.

The Dory doubles as a bar with such specials as Boozy Smoothies, the Dark and Stormy cocktail (rum and ginger beer) and the Blueberry Cooler (vodka, lemonade and Maine berries).

For a compact property, The Lodge organizes a lot of fun mini-events to keep everyone engaged: on Sundays, an all-day Bloody Mary bar for grown-ups and Sundae Funday for the kids;

on Mondays, Bingo Baby at 5 p.m. with Happy Hour bar prices and prizes; on Tuesdays there is a movie flashback to the 1980s; on Wednesdays, burgers are \$1 off and ping-pong at 5 p.m.; Thursdays is a bean bag tourney; Fridays feature Happy Hour and Reggae Night; and on Saturdays, local bands rock the house, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

There are off-property happenings, too, with a very Maine accent.

The Little Explorers Farm to Sea package includes a tour of an organic farm and beach-combing excursion. Kids love to explore the tidal pools at the Colony Beach — it's an up-close view of small-scale sea life. The hotel supplies a guide to marine

IF YOU GO

Kennebunkport is a five-and-a-half-hour drive from Montreal via U.S. Highways 89 and 93 and Route 101 east to U.S. 95 north.

The Lodge on the Cove: 800-879-5778, lodgeonthecove.com; 29 S. Main St., Kennebunkport, Maine.

Prices: depending on date, Sun-Thurs., approx. \$139-\$309 US, and Fri.-Sat. \$189-\$389; prices dip after Labour Day and again in October. The Lodge is open until Dec. 6. Rates include breakfast coffee and muffin, salt-treated swimming pool, Wi-Fi, beach-cruiser bicycles, clubhouse, daily activities/entertainment, evening bonfires, live bands on Fri-Sat (June 19-Sept 5). Packages like Little Explorer, Teen Dream and The Eleanor require a minimum two-night stay.

Kennebunkport Resort Collection/ Destination Kennebunkport: 800-

573-7186, destinationkennebunkport.com, kennebunkportresortcollection.com links services of Hidden Pond and The Tides Beach Club on Goose Rocks Beach. In Kennebunkport, guests at the Grand Hotel, the Kennebunkport Inn, the Cottages at Cabot Cove and The Boathouse Waterfront Hotel share the swimming pools at The Cape Arundel Inn & Resort or the Lodge at the Cove. The KRC Supper Shuttle links properties for people who do not want to dine and drive.

Maine tourism: 888-624-6345, visitmaine.com; The Kennebunks: visitthekennebunks.com; Schooner Eleanor schoonereleanor.com, 207-967-8809, departures daily at 11 a.m., 2 p.m., 4:30 p.m.; Aquaholics surf shop: 207-967-8650, aquaholicsurf.com.

life and basic equipment like a net and bucket (for catch and release).

For landlubbers who are unfamiliar with this pastime, the pools are particularly fascinating when the tide goes out every six hours and you can wade around, discovering tiny sea life like starfish, snails and hermit crabs among the seaweed, and barnacles on the rocks. This outdoorsy land-and-sea day winds up with the ultimate summertime treat — an ice cream sundae at The Dory.

The Lodge's Teen Dream package includes lessons on paddleboards or surfboards at Kennebunk Beach from the experts at Aquaholics.

The Eleanor — Gee, I Think You're Swell! package features a thrilling two-hour cruise on the high seas on the 20-passenger schooner Eleanor. You'll have a picnic basket of lobster rolls and sparkling wine; all you need to add is sunscreen and a jacket.

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