



The centrepiece of NewVida Preserve in Jay, N.Y., is a remodelled Adirondack lodge surrounded by 2,000 acres of private land. *NEWVIDA PRESERVE*

# NEWVIDA PRESERVE IS THE HOSPITALITY HEARTBEAT OF ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN LIFE



**ROCHELLE LASH**  
*Hotel Intel*

The NewVida Preserve near Whiteface Mountain, N.Y., is a vintage lodge and large estate that captures the outdoor spirit of the majestic Adirondack region.

NewVida is a vacation getaway with many enticing features. To start, it's an easy 90-minute drive south of Montreal, and it offers Canadians a 10 per cent discount.

In only a few months, NewVida has become the hospitality heartbeat of the quiet communities around Jay, Wilmington and Au Sable Forks. It's the local go-to for folksy evening entertainment, casual weekend dining and happy hour, as well as a gym, yoga classes and a vast network of trails criss-crossing a 2,000-acre domain.

For visitors, NewVida's lodge of 14 rooms and suites is the draw. The Adirondack A-frame architecture and handsome cedar walls spell traditional rustic comfort, but there also are modern touches like QR codes for dinner reservations, rain

showers and progressive massage techniques in the mini-spa.

NewVida can be a laid-back country escape, a family holiday, a base camp for adventure or a springboard to four-season action. The two-time Olympic region is prized for snow sports, plus hiking, fly-fishing and an unparalleled calendar of culture and competitions. (Whiteface is a seven-minute drive away; Lake Placid is about 25).

**Outdoors:** NewVida's most distinguished aspect is its unspoiled expanse of property — a rare private playground that is about three times the area of Montreal's Mount Royal.

It's the reincarnation of the former Paleface downhill area, which closed 40 years ago and has evolved into an ecosystem with wildlife roaming two mountain summits, rocky cliffs, dense woods, fields and waterfalls.

More than 50 kilometres of old ski runs and carriage roads are available for trekking, cross-country and back country skiing, snowshoeing, Alpine touring and mountain biking. If you conquer the four kilometres to the summit, you'll score breathtaking 360-degree views of the Adirondacks, but there are many compelling outlooks along the way.

"We are unique," said Rick Vidal, who co-owns NewVida

with his husband Matt Vidal. "It is the only resort of this scope in the region, with history, an extensive tract of land and proximity to Whiteface."

Hospitality is a relatively new pursuit for this accomplished couple who enjoy rejuvenating historic properties. Matt is a lawyer with Google, and Rick was a data scientist at Google and also a physician. They have three young children who happily explore the outdoors. They also own scenic Cascada Farm, a collection of cottages in the Hudson Valley, north of New York City.

**Indoors:** NewVida's guest rooms and suites are decked out in relaxed, back-to-nature decor with denim, plaid or gingham bedcovers, basic wooden furniture and contemporary woven rugs over oak floors.

It's the simple life, but the towels and linens are superior and the bathrooms are updated, along with heating, air-conditioning, blackout shades and Wi-Fi, though there are no TVs.

The lodge has a studio for yoga and the lesser-known practice of Nia, which incorporates dance moves and tai chi. The massage range includes myofascial, craniosacral aromatherapy and deep tissue.

NewVida's summer plans include opening an indoor lap

pool and expanding the spa with a sauna and beauty services.

**Food and drink:** NewVida's Restaurant and Craft Bar flow together in the Adirondack Great Room, where a soaring cathedral ceiling with pastoral views and sturdy log-and-timber dining tables create a down-home mountain ambience.

The scene is a throwback to yesteryear's wholesome family days and friendly neighbourhood nights. Live bands perform on Fridays and Saturdays and the social calendar also includes Paint & Sip evenings and poetry readings, with movie screenings in the works. If you simply want to chill, the rambling lodge has lounges with a pool table, board games and a large-screen TV.

Dinner highlights are tomato bisque, crab cakes, cavatelli Bolognese, stuffed portobello mushrooms, salmon with jasmine rice and New York strip steak. The Craft Bar's small plates include steak tacos, chorizo meatballs or caprese flatbread, and the slick cocktail list includes Winter Sangria, with red wine, cinnamon and orange liqueur.

The Bistro, a daytime café, serves all-day breakfast and weekend brunch. (Dining hours vary).

**Whiteface:** Whiteface boasts the longest lift-serviced vertical drop

## IF YOU GO

Jay, N.Y. is about a 90-minute drive south Montreal

**Regional info:** Lake Placid: lakeplacid.com or Regional **Office of Sustainable Tourism (ROOST):** 518-523-2445, roostadk.com and whiteface-region.com.

**Whiteface (ski/ride):** 518-946-2223, 877-ski-face, whiteface.com, Wilmington, N.Y.

**NewVida Preserve:** 518-946-6192, newvidapreserve.com; 6394 Route 86, Jay, N.Y. Lodging open daily.

**Price:** Canadians get a 10-per-cent discount. Regular rates from US\$185 per night, for two, plus tax, including a resort fee. Some rooms sleep four. Weekends, summer and holidays can be higher. Including trails, fitness area, guest fridge/espresso/tea, playground. NewVida's private members can access facilities.

in the East (965 metres/3,166 feet). It has a new detachable, four-person lift connecting the Bear Den Learning Center to the main mountain, and riders can unload at mid-station or continue upward.

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# Natural beauty rules in England's Lake District

Enjoy picturesque hikes, serene water and stone bridges, **Rick Steves** writes.

For more than a century, North England's verdant, hilly Lake District has attracted nature lovers. The great poet William Wordsworth lived, trekked, and was inspired here. Whether you're a serious hiker or someone who prefers to ponder panoramas from inside a pub, it's easy to enjoy the English outdoors in this green landscape of gentle ridges, serene lakes, rock fences, stone bridges, and fluffy sheep.

The district's southern lakes are handier to London and more promoted, but I like to focus on the northern lakes — Ullswater, Buttermere, and Derwentwater — which are every bit as scenic, with nowhere near the crowds.

The town of Keswick, near Derwentwater Lake, is my favourite home base for the region. It was an important mining centre through the Middle Ages, but slate, copper, and lead gave way to tree-hugging tourists in the 19th century.

One of the area's most photographed and popular lakes, Derwentwater, has four islands, good

boat service, and plenty of trails. Cruises run around the lake and to trailheads — including the one to Catbells, a 1,480-foot hill above Derwentwater.

One summer, I finally struggled up and over Catbells — a walk I'd recommended for years (and felt guilty for having never actually hiked in its entirety). The weather almost kept me in. But I was glad I ventured out — I welcomed the wind "blowing the cobwebs out" (as my B&B host warned), atop the hill, the comedic baaing of sheep, and being "the stick figure on the ridge" for those observing from distant farms or boats on the lake ... as others have been the stick figures for me.

The hike confirmed the soundness of the advice I'd long heard about Britain's weather: Don't wait for it to get better. Blustery winds and wet skies are part of the scene; consider them a blessing. The majority of "bad weather" comes with broken spells of brightness. As they say here, there's no bad weather ...



For more than a century, nature lovers have come to England's Lake District in the country's northwest to hike its hills. *RICK STEVES*

just inappropriate clothing. And if you're in a hiking area and your clothing is inappropriate, your B&B host can likely loan you a heavy coat (along with the best local map).

And, oh, the joy of a pub after a good hike. Studying the light on ruddy faces while sipping the local brew has always been part of the magic of travel in Britain. When your face is weather-stung and your legs ache happily with accomplishment, a pub's ambience sparkles even brighter.

When you're done hiking, Keswick is a delight for wandering. The town's centrepiece, Moot Hall (meaning "meeting hall"), was a 16th-century copper warehouse. Graphite was first discovered here centuries ago. A hunk of the stuff proved great

for marking sheep in the 15th century. In 1832, the first crude Keswick pencil factory opened; today you can learn its history at the Derwent Pencil Museum.

If you visit, you'll discover that English holidaymakers take their dogs with them on vacation. The town square can look like the Westminster Dog Show, and the Dog and Gun pub, where "well-behaved dogs are welcomed," is always full of patient pups. If you are shy about connecting with people, pal up to an English pooch — you'll often find they're happy to introduce you to their owners.

About three miles (4.8 km), east of Keswick, there's a mini-Stonehenge drenched in Lake District beauty: the Castlerigg Stone Circle. For some

reason, 70 per cent of England's stone circles are here in the northern region of Cumbria. Castlerigg is one of the best and oldest in Britain, and an easy stop for drivers. The circle — 90 feet (27 metres), across and 5,000 years old — has 38 stones mysteriously laid out on a line between the two tallest peaks on the horizon. They served as a celestial calendar for ritual celebrations.

I like to imagine this setting when ancient people filled the clearing in spring to celebrate fertility, in late summer to commemorate the harvest, and in the winter to mark the winter solstice and the coming renewal of light. Festival dates were dictated by how the sun rose and set in relation to the stones. The more that modern academics study this circle, the more meaning they find in the placement of the stones. For maximum "goose pimples" — as they say in England — be here at sunset.

The Lake District is a land where humanity takes a few steps back and looks on as nature rules. The weather, like a dark army, storms overhead. Hiking along a ridge, buffeted by wind, and marvelling at the commanding, 360-degree view makes me feel small, yet ready to take on the world.

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