

# Kennebunkport’s Colony marks 100 years

Landmark Maine hotel goes back in time, with swimming, cycling and lawn games

The 100-year-old Colony Hotel in Kennebunkport, Maine, is a family heirloom.

Members of the Boughton clan have long been the stewards of this picturesque landmark that overlooks the Atlantic Ocean near the centre of town.

For a good part of its tenure, this 1914 summer resort was the epicentre of upper-class social life, society weddings and tea dances.

Today, life isn’t quite as refined or ritzy, but the Colony is still a grande dame with a gracious air and an exceptional staff. Here, you enjoy Maine’s timeless attractions: the seaside, garden tours, porch life and freshly caught lobster. And Kennebunkport is strong on golf, tennis and sailing.

The decor in the main hotel, done by principal owner Justena Boughton, is vintage. The lobby is a Victorian vision of red velvet settees and satin pillows. The main-building guest rooms, all beautifully maintained, are rather feminine with floral wallpaper and ruffled white curtains. (But the 125 rooms are spread over five buildings, and the East, Galland, Florence and Boughton Houses are more modern, with TVs, air conditioning and contemporary furnishings.)

People count at the Colony. Guests often return during the same week year after year, so they get to know each other as well as the regular employees.

Its loyal clients include families who revel in the beachfront and the large heated swimming pool, and dog-lovers whose best friends can frolic in the sea and enjoy the extensive grounds. The Colony’s ballroom still dances with more than 40 weddings every summer — but never more than one a day, so there is only one bride on the property at any one time.

**Spectacular setting**

The Colony is one of very few Kennebunkport hotels to be located on the beach, which ranges from sandy to pebbly sandy, depending on the tide. The hotel also has a large outdoor pool, heated to a balmy 35 C and surrounded by royal blue loungers and



ROCHELLE LASH  
CHECKING IN

red and white umbrellas — a picture of Americana.

But the Maine coast is compelling, rain or shine. When bad weather hit, I walked the shore anyway and was swept away by the grey skies, mystical fog and waves crashing against rocks, all part of the dramatic seascapes that inspired great artists, such as Winslow Homer and Alfred Thompson Bricher and authors Kenneth Roberts and Booth Tarkington.

**The canine chronicles**

Dogs get treats and their own blankets. The hotel is so welcoming that it has been awarded Five Bones from a pet-travel website, www.bringfido.com.

New Englander Hans Hoyer has been visiting the Colony since he was a kid (that’s more than four decades of seaside fun) and now he vacations there several times a season with his wife, Diane, and their dog, Charlie, a golden retriever.

“Charlie loves the Colony so much that we have to spell out the hotel’s name when we’re making plans because he gets too excited,” Hoyer joked.

The pinnacle of the social season is the Dog Lover’s Weekend, from Oct. 24-26, which will feature dog yoga, agility demos, first-aid training, a canine costume party, art shows and the long-awaited Doggie Dip, when it’s everyone into the pool — a hilarious sight — before the water is drained for winter.

If you love dogs, watch for photographer Chris Becker’s adorable series, Canine Bliss, which pops up at galleries around town (www.chrisbeckerphoto.com). It shows dogs — some with sunglasses — hanging out car windows in the breeze.

**1914 versus 2014**

The 100th is a special year, so guests are greeted during check-in with sparkling wine, part of the Colony’s centennial celebrations. And the hotel is offering tours of



PHOTOS: COLONY HOTEL

Dogs are welcome at the Colony Hotel in Kennebunkport, Maine. On the last day of the season in October, they will be allowed to take a dip in the swimming pool.

## IF YOU GO

**Colony Hotel:** 800-552-2363, 207-967-3331, www.colonymaine.com, 140 Ocean Ave., Kennebunkport, Maine. Pet-friendly, \$30 per day, per pet. Open May through October.

**Price:** 125 rooms and suites, \$189-\$469 U.S., per night, depending on ocean, river or garden views; including buffet breakfast, Wi-Fi, heated salt water pool, beachfront, 18-hole putting green, Sunday afternoon tea, parking, Thurs.-Sat., bar entertainment, Dog-Lover’s Weekend activities and weekly calendar, including pet photography, concerts, putting contests.

**Packages:** with Cape Arundel Golf Club, cruises on the Rugosa lobster boat or the Pineapple sailing ketch. Extras: bicycle rentals, Sunday yoga.

**Cuisine:** A full buffet breakfast is included for all guests, with great baked goods by pastry chef Martha Dempsey.

The Porch Dining Room, an oceanfront rotunda, has fine dining 6-9 nightly, until Labour Day, with lobster bisque, clam chowder, crab cakes, steak and lobster. Friday night features the Mariners Buffet of seafood, through July and August.

The pub-style Marine Room Lounge has live entertainment, 5-7 p.m., Thurs.-Sat., and a day-to-evening menu of burgers, tacos, flatbread and steamed lobster.

The adjacent Poolside Ocean Terrace has a lunch-time grill (through September) and the pub menu until 9 p.m.

the ballroom and other historic spaces, as well as what’s called the back of the house — the kitchens and laundry.

Your leisure time might have a last-century quality:

the Colony has swimming, cycling, a putting green, lawn games including shuffleboard and, in the lounges, board games and a library of books.



The 125-room Colony Hotel in Kennebunkport, Maine, has an exceptional location, complete with an Atlantic Ocean beach and a heated outdoor pool.

The hotel’s new eco-ventures include recycling and energy and water conservation. The hotel has eliminated Styrofoam, aerosols, toxic cleaning materials and garden chemicals, and it uses biodegradable guest toiletries.

On the tech side, there is free Wi-Fi throughout and an iPod docking station in each room, but the Colony almost totally bypassed the television era.

There are no TVs in the main building guest rooms, only a few large screens in various lounges and 36 rooms

in other wings that have them.

“Of course, people can bring a tablet and stream TV, but parents really like that their kids aren’t glued to a screen,” said general manager John Martin, who is a member of the owning family.

“We’re all about the great seaside.”

The writer was a guest of the hotel, which did not approve this report.

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