

STONEHURST MANOR SAYS BIENVENUE

New Hampshire inn welcomes Canadians with attractive deals



ROCHELLE LASH

A visit to one of the most popular and picturesque establishments in New Hampshire's Mt. Washington Valley makes for an irresistible deal.

Stonehurst Manor in North Conway is reaching out to Canadians with its Bienvenue Lodging Package, featuring discounts on visits from Sundays to Thursdays during certain time frames. Depending on the room, accommodations with a fine breakfast and dinner will run as low as \$65 US per person, per night — rates that are especially attractive considering the lacklustre loonie.

If you factor in New Hampshire's tax-free shopping at the North Conway outlets, two kilometres from the hotel, and moderate prices at neighbouring snow-sports areas, this is a New England wonderland.

Stonehurst is the quintessential inn — romantic, friendly and indulgent, with good food and drink and the grace of an 1877 mansion. The country resort is at the heart of a large estate of forests and hills near the foothills of the White Mountains.

The grounds embrace the original, historic Manor House, with 26 guest rooms and suites, four dining spaces and a lovely lounge featuring an impressive fireplace. The newer accommodations are the Townhouse Condominiums, tucked into the stands of pine trees; the spacious, modern three-bedroom apartments are ideal for families or groups.

Stonehurst has trails outside the door that are used for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and fat-tire biking in winter, and walking and mountain biking in summer. The inn also operates a summertime pool and hot tub.

Sleep and eat: The guest rooms are formal Victorian-style boudoirs, with antique furniture, four-poster beds topped with lacy canopies and ornate bedspreads and drapes in vivid jewel tones — turquoise, emerald, amethyst and ruby.

Some rooms have fireplaces or hot tubs, or both, and many have

IF YOU GO

North Conway, N.H., is a four-hour drive from Montreal via Highway 10 east, Route 55 south and U.S. Highway 91 south to Route 302 east.

Stonehurst Manor: 800-525-9100, 603-356-3113, stonehurstmanor.com; 3351 White Mountain Highway (Route 302), North Conway, N.H. Price: Bienvenue Lodging Package for Canadians, US\$127-\$170 per night (Manor House only, Sun.-Thurs.), including breakfast and dinner for two, valid Nov. 1 to Dec. 21, Jan. 3 to Feb. 11 and Feb. 28 to May 26. Townhouses have a minimum of two nights until June, or three on holidays, and seven during July and August. For townhouse guests, a breakfast-and-dinner plan costs US\$39.

Tourism information: Ski New Hampshire, 800-887-5464, skinh.com Mt. Washington Valley: 877-948-6867, mtwashingtonvalley.org Mt. Washington Valley Ski Touring and Snowshoe Foundation: 603-356-9920, mwskitouring.org Mt. Washington Auto Road SnowCoach: 603-466-3988, mtwashingtonautoroad.com

mountain views. The flat-screen TV in every room is a nod to modern times.

The library lounge is rich with deep, comfy seating and a wood-burning fireplace that is the perfect country attraction. The action perks up with a menu of martinis, mojitos and coladas, blended with mango, pineapple, pomegranate, acai and blueberry.

Breakfast and dinner are served in four intimate spaces, two of which have fireside tables. Mornings feature cinnamon-apple French toast, eggs Benedict, prime rib hash, strawberry waffles with maple syrup, and trout and eggs topped with lemon-caper butter and baked beans.

Stonehurst handles a lot of celebrations, so food is paramount. The executive chef is Avi Deiter, the executive sous-chef is Brian Garvin, and at least one of them has a passion for Italy. The menu features shrimp Fra Diavolo,



Stonehurst Manor's perfect country lounge features a fireplace and a martini menu. PHOTOS: STONEHURST MANOR



When the snow falls, Stonehurst Manor is at the heart of a winter-sports wonderland.

braised short ribs with papardelle, marsala chicken, veal with porcini, and linguine with clams. The pasta is homemade.

Stonehurst is a two-hour drive from the Atlantic coast, and the New England signature dishes include lobster in puff pastry, crab cakes, mussels, clam chowder, seafood cioppino and maple-glazed scallops. Other delectable main courses are truffle-seared

salmon, prime rib, lamb shank and roast duck.

Stonehurst will go all-out gourmet with its Chef's Table dinners on Nov. 4, 11 and 18. The evenings begin at 5 p.m. with a Manager's Cocktail, featuring drinks and hors d'oeuvres served in the lounge. Then it's on to a four-course dinner at 6 p.m., with a secret theme. The chef will visit each table, describing the cuisine

and answering questions.

Mt. Washington Valley: The Mt. Washington Valley is a paradise for sports in the great outdoors, including tubing, skating and snowshoeing.

Stonehurst's guests get discounts at the nearby downhill centres Cranmore Mountain, Wildcat Mountain and Attitash, all of which have a range of challenging trails and kid-friendly slide sports.

The inn is adjacent to one of the trails in the Mt. Washington Valley Ski Touring and Snowshoe Foundation, which has 45 kilometres of trails. You also can step out the door and ski through the woods and into North Conway village for lunch or hot chocolate — or outlet shopping!

For something different and daring, the SnowCoach at Great Glen Trails is a winter sightseeing adventure that brings you up, up, up the thrill-packed Mt. Washington Auto Road. This is a rollicking ride through the trees and tundra of various ecosystems, reaching a spectacular lookout at about 4,200 feet. It's scenic, but you have to be prepared for high winds, ice and snow, even in autumn. The powerful, customized nine-passenger vans are equipped with tractor-like drivetrains.

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