

# TRAVEL+ LEISURE

THE

*Hotels*

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FROM PARIS TO BALI, SINGAPORE TO SANTORINI

**T+L Editors Pick the Best New  
Hotels in the World**

# The Original Rustic Chic

In New York's Adirondack Mountains, a wave of hotels and resorts is recapturing the arcadian glamour of the region's 19th-century heyday.

By Peter Terzian

One of five self-service bars at the Point, a resort on the shores of Upper Saranac Lake in northern New York.

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**IN THE YEARS AFTER THE CIVIL WAR**, Manhattanites of means began fleeing summer in the city for northern New York State, made newly accessible by the recent railroad boom. Some headed for the lakes and forests of the Adirondacks, where elite families like the Rockefellers, Merriweather Posts, and Vanderbilts built their own private lakeside “Great Camps.” By the turn of the century, more than 180 hotels had opened across the mountain range, many with amenities familiar to resort-goers today: golf courses, barbershops, children’s playrooms. Other affluent travelers decamped to Saratoga Springs, just south of the Adirondacks. Lavish hotels lined Broadway, the posh spa town’s main street, including the Grand Union Hotel, which was for a time the largest in the world.

But in time the region fell out of fashion with the monied class. Most of the area’s hotels, built of wood and remotely sited, went up in flames. New highways brought inexpensive motor lodges. Growing up in nearby Albany, I knew little of this history. (I remember a strip-mall Woolworth where the Grand Union Hotel stood.) But last summer my husband, Caleb, and I discovered that a handful of the old luxury hotels survive or have recently been reborn, allowing travelers to once again experience Saratoga and the Adirondacks in fin de siècle style. Here’s how we toured them.

## ADELPHI HOTEL, SARATOGA SPRINGS

Built in 1877, this 32-room hotel was the boutique alternative to its gargantuan neighbors. It reopened in 2017 after a renovation that evokes Gilded Age elegance with a palette of gold and royal blue, massive marble bathrooms, and lots of tufted upholstery. Yet the place still feels crisp and modern, thanks to such high-tech amenities



From left: The Adelphi Hotel, in Saratoga Springs; toasting s’mores at the Sagamore resort, on Lake George.

as bedside controls that allow you to open the drapes without getting up.

On the evening Caleb and I visited, we chose a sidewalk table at Morrissey’s, the hotel’s cocktail lounge, and watched the *passeggiata* of preppy families and chattering teenagers against the backdrop of Broadway’s carefully preserved Victorian architecture. We ordered a pickled stone-fruit salad that we’re still talking about and a plate of flatbreads and hummus topped with greens and feta. Just inside the restaurant, two young men sang Neil Young songs from the late 1960s, when the town was a stop on the folk-music circuit—another layer of history. [theadelphihotel.com](http://theadelphihotel.com); doubles from \$209.

## THE SAGAMORE, BOLTON LANDING

An hour’s drive north, this grand property on a private island off the western shore of Lake George sits like a queen among the vintage motels. Its original 1883 structure burned to the ground, as did its replacement. The current iteration, which dates from 1923, encompasses not only the mammoth main building but also seven multiunit lodges. The interiors aren’t slick or trendy—our room, in one of the lodges, was decorated with twig furniture and large photographs of animals. But the atmosphere is cheerful and comfortable, the clientele diverse. Wandering the island’s 70 acres, we came →



across staffers helping kids make s'mores, a Southeast Asian family playing soccer, and a band of young escapees from a wedding reception capering on the lawn above the lake. [thesagamore.com](http://thesagamore.com); doubles from \$159.

### HOTEL SARANAC, SARANAC LAKE

The town of Saranac Lake, two hours farther north, is a dot of civilization amid wilderness. The six-story Hotel Saranac, a landmark since 1927, recently underwent a four-year refurbishment that brought out its Jazz Age roots, with handsome dark woods and plush navy and orange fabrics in the guest rooms. The main entrance is in a covered passage that recalls the hidden shopping arcades of early-19th-century Paris. But the Great Hall, the second-floor lobby and lounge, is the showstopper. It's modeled after a room in a medieval Florence palazzo, down to the hand-painted ceiling. [hotelsaranac.com](http://hotelsaranac.com); doubles from \$131.

### THE POINT, SARANAC LAKE

One of the most famous of the Great Camps was built in the early 1930s, at the end of a secluded forest road on Upper Saranac Lake, for William Avery Rockefeller II, a descendant of John D. Fifty years later the 11-room complex of four lodges was turned into a resort. Pierre and Laurie Lapeyre, a New York City couple who

have vacationed at the Point for more than two decades, purchased the property in 2016 and supervised a substantial renovation.

The Point's team of managers, servers, chefs, and boathouse attendants have a genie-like ability to provide things you didn't even know you wanted. Ask to row to a picnic spot, as we did, and they'll stock your backpack with a gourmet lunch in bento boxes, along with stainless-steel knives and forks, cloth napkins, a map, sunscreen, bug spray, and a marine radio. When you return, pleasantly exhausted, they'll appear with a plate of freshly baked cookies.

Our room, in a cottage out of a German fairy tale, was done in what you might call Adirondack Gothic: pine paneling, a thousand throw pillows in as many patterns, and a stone fireplace topped by a towering mantel clock. The other accommodations ranged from Mr. Rockefeller's cozy former study to the boathouse's massive upper story. Most guests dress up each night for a superb four-course dinner at the communal table in the taxidermy-rich main hall. Formal

wear is requested on Saturday and Wednesday evenings, because that's what the Rockefellers wore to dinner. But you can also eat in the kitchen, or on the dock by candlelight.

Dogs are welcome, and Toby, our 10-year-old shepherd mix, frolicked with Romeo, the resident Lagotto Romagnolo. Caleb and I fell into a cycle of reading, napping, and hiking with Toby—a cycle I often interrupted to sneak bites of the goodies left in our room every morning:

blueberry cake, house-made potato chips.

On our last afternoon, as we sat on the patio of the main lodge before lunch, I realized I'd lost track of the time, the day, even where I was in the universe. Not because of Rockefeller traditions or rustic antiques, but because of something more ancient: sun and sky and pure air, the blue lake, the white and purple wildflowers sweeping down to the shore, the hum of insects—the very things people began coming to the Adirondacks for in the first place. [thepointsaranac.com](http://thepointsaranac.com); doubles from \$1,750, all-inclusive. ✕



From top: Kayaks and canoes for guest use at the Point; coconut muesli with hazelnuts and berries at the resort.