

# Artful Living

WINTER 2021



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# AMERICAN BEAUTY

AT THE POINT, YOU CAN ROUGH IT LIKE A ROCKEFELLER.

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**WOODSY YET UTTERLY REFINED, THIS HISTORIC CAMP** hidden in the Adirondacks is one of the ritziest resorts in America. The five-hour drive from New York City is a commitment, culminating deep in the forest. That's where you happen upon a fanciful entrance fashioned out of branches. "You're at the end of a dead-end road and you feel you've lost your way," says Assistant General Manager Tony Loscavio. "But then it all begins."

Perched on a bluff alongside Saranac Lake, the Point is the former estate of William Avery Rockefeller Jr. It was constructed in 1933 in the style of the Great Camps built by the Gilded Age elite. Making its debut as a resort in 1980, the property quickly racked up accolades and became North America's first Relais & Châteaux hotel. More recently, it underwent an extensive multimillion-dollar renovation, and today, it's filled with rich textiles, antique bureaus and Hudson River School paintings. There are no locks on the doors so it feels more like a home. The walls are clad in polished oak, the vintage boats made of rich mahogany. Dinner is served promptly at 8 o'clock (black-tie of course).

With all this grandeur, it's no surprise privacy is key. Only 22 visitors are permitted at a time. Wi-Fi is limited, and guests are encouraged to unplug. Everything is included in the price, from breakfasts to bonfires, private hiking excursions to personalized picnic spreads. Feel free to peruse the historic collection of art and photography, with many pieces dating back to the Rockefellers' time here. Then sit in front of a crackling fire and savor a cognac hand-selected from the private cellar fit for a tycoon — all yours to fully explore.

Of course, this high-style take on roughing it is nothing new. The Great Camp era dates back to the 19th century. As cities became more populated, affluent families like the Astors, Vanderbilts and Rockefellers decamped to the Adirondacks, where they built extraordinary wooded retreats. These log mansions featured architectural flourishes and furnishings made from tree branches. Smooth stones were pulled from nearby rivers and used as decorative embellishments.

You'll find that same Rockefeller luxury today, along with legendary personalized service. Case in point: One guest recalls a fishing excursion when a Point staffer magically appeared to bait everyone's hook then left behind a basket of treats. Another time, a couple casually mentioned a drink from a favorite New York City spot. Hours later, that very cocktail appeared in their room, recreated exactly. Then there was the visitor who was uneasy about hiking in the mountains, so a staff member accompanied her. After dinner, she returned to her room to find a beautifully framed photo of herself smiling on the trail. "We're always looking for those little moments of magic," notes Loscavio.

One of the most memorable moments is the early morning "soft knock." At an arranged time, a Point staffer will gently knock on the door then slip into your room to stoke the fire and deliver warm coffee and pastries — pure bliss. During the winter, Adirondack chairs and a fully stocked bar are set out on the frozen lake, where skating and curling are on tap. And if you take a hike through the woods, you may happen upon a secret cottage. Step inside. The fire has been lit, and the table is set with savory treats — all there for you to discover.

But surely the highlight is the nightly dinner. On Wednesdays and Saturdays, it's a black-tie affair. Drinks begin on the terrace overlooking the lake, then diners are seated for an elegant seven-course meal complete with wine pairings. Strangers quickly become friends, recounting the delights of the day. "It's a tradition that goes back to when the Rockefellers were in residence," Loscavio explains. "They would entertain family, friends and important guests from other Great Camps."

With all this luxury, guests often feel a tinge of melancholy when it comes time to leave. So to make your departure a bit easier, staffers will deliver your car to the front of the lodge, perfectly cleaned and filled to the top with gasoline. Driving away, you may just feel like a Rockefeller. ●