

G FOOD

THE BOSTON GLOBE • WEDNESDAY • DECEMBER 18, 2013

A TANK AWAY THE KENNEBUNKS, MAINE



HILARY NANGLE FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Kennebunkport's Dock Square is hopping in summer, but in winter visitors have the same places to themselves.

A romantic getaway, without summer bustle

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In summer, it takes strategy and luck to score a parking spot, a dinner reservation, and sometimes even a room in the Kennebunks. Not so in winter. While the region doesn't roll up the sidewalks after the Christmas Prelude festivities end in mid-December, it does become remarkably quiet. Winter is the time to plan a romantic escape, shop without crowds, enjoy off-season lodging rates and sales, or play outdoors.

STAY

These accommodations remain open through winter and include breakfast. The tony **White Barn Inn** (37 Beach Ave., Kennebunk, 207-967-2321, www.whitebarninn.com, from \$370) pampers guests with impeccable service, posh accommodations, and a spa. The elegant **Captain Lord Mansion** (Pleasant St., Kennebunkport, 207-967-3141 or 800-522-3141, www.captainlord.com, from \$179) is a meticulously restored sea captain's home with amenities the good captain never envisioned. Two sister properties are at the heart of Dock Square: the new riverside

Boathouse Waterfront Hotel

(21 Ocean Ave, Kennebunkport, 207-967-8233, www.boathouseme.com, from \$135) and the meticulously renovated 1899 **Kennebunkport Inn** (1 Dock Square, Kennebunkport, 207-967-2621, www.kennebunkportinn.com, from \$250). The interior of the Greek Revival-Queen Anne **English Meadows Inn** (141 Port Road, Lower Village, Kennebunk, 207-967-5766, www.englishmeadowsinn.com, from \$179) is contemporary, with accents including Asian art, Picasso lithographs, and Art Deco lighting. The **Hounds Tooth Inn** (82 Summer St., Kennebunk, 207-985-0117, www.houndstoothinn.biz, from \$130, plus \$30 per pet) extends a welcome paw to pets and their owners. The **Seaside Inn** (80 Beach Ave., Kennebunk, 207-967-4461, www.kennebunkbeach.com, from \$119), a newer, two-story motel-style building under ninth-generation ownership, is the only truly beachfront property in the area.

EAT

Drink in river views along with pub fare at **Federal Jack's** (8 Western Ave., Lower

A TANK AWAY, Page 24

► A TANK AWAY

Continued from Page 22

Village, Kennebunk, 207-967-4322, www.federaljacks.com, \$10-\$20), the brewpub that gave birth to the Shipyard label. The menu at **David's KPT** (207-967-8224, www.boathouseme.com/davids, entrees \$15-\$30) ranges from pizza and lobster rolls to crispy skin duck breast and mixed grill; **Opus Ten**, a second restaurant within David's, serves a fixed, nine-course menu (\$75). The meats, fish, vegetarian, and vegan entrees at **Bandaloop** (2 Dock Square, Kennebunkport, 207-967-4994, www.bandaloop.biz, \$17-\$29) are locally sourced, free-range, all-natural, or organic. A pianist plays on Friday and Saturday evenings at **On the Marsh Bistro** (46 Western Ave. [Route 9], Lower Vil-

lage, Kennebunk, 207-967-2299, www.onthemarsh.com, entrees \$24-\$42), where lighter fare is served in the bar. Overlooking Cape Porpoise Harbor is a double find: **Pier 77**, a casual restaurant upstairs, and **The Ramp Bar and Grille** (77 Pier Road, Cape Porpoise, 207-967-8500, www.pier77restaurant.com, \$10-\$26), a sports bar serving lighter fare tucked below. Dining options at the **White Barn Inn** (see above) include the jacket-required five-star barn (from \$110 for a four-course menu) and the far less formal and pricey bistro (\$18-\$36).

DURING THE DAY

Depending upon the snow conditions, walk, snowshoe, or ski the 7 miles of trails lacing 1,690 acres of woods, beach, and

coastal salt marsh at the **National Estuarine Research Reserve of Wells Reserve** (342 Laudholm Farm Road, Wells, 207-646-1555, www.wellsreserve.org). **Harris Farm** (280 Buzzell Road, Dayton, 207-499-2679, www.harrisfarm.com, \$15 adult) has 40 acres of maintained cross-country trails; rentals and lessons are available. Stroll 3-mile-long **Goose Rocks Beach** (Kings Highway, 207-967-0857) or explore the pathways lacing the 66-acre riverside grounds of the **Franciscan Monastery** (28 Beach Ave., Kennebunk). Don't miss the statute there created by Lithuanian artist Vytautas Jonynas for the 1964 New York World's Fair. Bundle up for a 30-minute sleigh ride with **Rockin' Horse Stables** (245 Arundel Road, Kennebunkport, 207-967-

4288, www.rockinhorsemaine.com, \$100 minimum, \$15 adult, \$5 child). Delve into regional history at the **Brick Store Museum** (117 Main St., Kennebunk, 207-985-4802, www.brickstoremuseum.org, \$7.50). Shop the boutiques in Dock Square and Kennebunk's Lower Village; although some shutter for winter, others remain open. Shop for fine craft and home decor pieces at **Abacus** (2 Ocean Ave., Kennebunkport, 207-967-0111) and **Compliments Gallery** (Dock Square, Kennebunkport, 207-967-2269). Find a fun mix of utilitarian and whimsical nature-inspired treasures at **Day-trip Society** (4 Dock Square, Kennebunkport, 207-967-4440). **Dannah** (123 Ocean Ave., Kennebunkport, 207-967-8640) is jam-packed with women's acces-

sories. Need a good read, find it at **Kennebooks** (149 Port Road, Kennebunk, 207-967-6136). **Keys to the Kitchen** (155 Port Road, Kennebunk, 207-967-4904) carries everything for the kitchen but the sink.

AFTER DARK

Night life is slim in winter, except during special events. Enjoy quiet live weekend entertainment at **The Pub at One Dock**, in the Kennebunkport Inn. Within easy striking distance, if roads are clear, are Saco's **IMAX Theater** (779 Portland Road [Route 1], 207-282-6234, www.cinemagimovies.com) and Portland's performing arts venues and bars.

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