

COVER STORY

The Couples' Resort – Bear Trail Inn

FINDING SECLUSION
JUST FOR US

by Brenda Sloane
additional photography by Chris Fertnig

have finally found the ultimate escape for my sweetie and me.

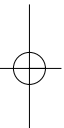
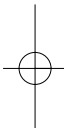
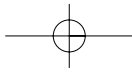
The best part is that it is for couples in one of Canada's most ideal places; an exclusive getaway where you and your partner can rekindle romance and celebrate your relationship. So, start packing and leave the kids at home. The Couples Resort is nestled on the north shore of Lake Galeairy, a 20-minute drive from the Algonquin Park Visitors' Centre. Only 3 1/2 hours north of Toronto and west of Ottawa, The Couples' Resort is an ultra luxurious escape for you and that special someone.

On arrival, it is great to stretch our legs after the car ride and breathe (yes breathe) in the clean fresh air, no smog here! This city girl takes in the view of pristine waters and breathtaking scenery; it is a far cry from my usual bumper-to-bumper traffic. You'd never know that the resort, originally named The Bear Trail Inn, was established in 1967 as a hunting lodge

with seven cabins and a wilderness of game. In the early 1980s, the clientele was primarily sportsmen, many from Europe. The Sorensen family recognized the attractions of their spectacular wilderness location, applied some innovative thinking, and developed what is now a full-spectrum inn. About fifteen years ago, John Sorensen, son of the original owners, took over the management of the resort and began focusing his efforts to change the hunting lodge to ultra luxurious accommodations for couples only.

We checked into to our Lakeside room and my sweetie immediately started to plan our stay. I was hoping for a long soak in the Whirlpool Bath tub while admiring a crackling fire in our room. His idea was to partake in some outdoor recreation; he was trying to decide on an afternoon boat ride, a walk on one of the numerous trails or a bike ride. We decided to ride bikes on trails through all of that wonderful wilderness. There are plenty of things to do and The Couples' Resort is all about getting away from it all and concentrating on the two of you.







Couples can cocoon themselves in a Lodge Lakeside room like ours or a luxury (bridal) suite or the Cedar Cottages are also available; they all are perfect choices. The rooms offer rustic refinement and the furnishings are from the Art Shoppe and Deboer's of Toronto. The accommodations are on the water front with their own private balcony. All the necessities are provided, including hypoallergenic duvets and pillows, wood-burning fireplaces and in-room whirlpool tubs, some suites even have private, outdoor hot tubs. Stacks of firewood near the door are in unlimited supply for your stone fireplace, which is in view of your Whirlpool Bath tub.

Dining at the resort can be dangerously seductive and believe me when I tell you the resort prides itself on its food; I had to leave my diet in the parking lot. Dinner is served in the dining room of the main lodge and is a four-course meal. The culinary

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team consists of Belgian-trained Chef, Ronnie, and the long time sous chef of Subie. Tonight's menu starts with Bruschetta bread, Greek salad and Mexican chickpea soup. I am famished from my afternoon bike ride. The entrée I choose is succulent medallions of venison marinated in olive oil and herbs, and served with a wild blueberry sauce, grilled vegetables and garlic mashed potatoes. Other choices include pistachio crusted pork tenderloin, filet mignon sotto bosco, and various meat, fish and fowl dishes. The dessert menu is even more tempting with a selection of cakes and pies, but Gertrude Sorensen's own private recipe for chocolate almond torte steals my attention. It is decadently delicious! Vintage wines and beers from around the world are available in the bar and as an accompaniment for your fine dining. If you don't want any distractions you can have dinner in your room; room service is gladly provided. Service is exemplary and discrete in the dining room and everywhere at Couples' Resort; it's part of their philosophy.

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It is the Couples' Resort philosophy that there is no late night entertainment; no distractions; thus encouraging you and your partner to go back to your comfortable room, be with each other, and rebuild the emotional connections that daily life may have eroded.



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The next morning I decide what I’d like to do today is visit the Spa. From the variety of services available and I treat myself to a massage. I could have chosen to have it in my room and not even have to get out of my robe! Certified therapists, Annica, Vern, Lucille and Robin provide body moulding, Shiatsu, Thai-Yoga massage, body wraps and facials. I melt as Lucille starts to loosen a few knots in my tense muscles and then I start to drift off as the fresh air and the lapping of the nearby water lull me to sleep. I am gently awoken as Lucille says our hour is over, really? I am sure I have only been here for minutes but as I glance at my watch, she is right. I relax in my room, as I think an afternoon nap is in order. I don’t feel a bit guilty!

Various indoor and outdoor activities are available. In summer, swimming, tennis, badminton, canoeing, kayaking, sailing, bicycling, fishing, horseback riding, and groomed trails for hiking are all at couples’ disposal. In the winter months, you can snowshoe, cross-country ski, ice fish, horse ride and dog sled. Outside is a salt-water pool with an indoor facility soon to be completed.

A well-equipped fitness room, a sauna, and a recreation room, which includes billiards, table tennis, Foosball, shuffleboard, and darts are also inviting. Gertrude Sorensen’s oil paintings, along with other artists’ work, grace the dining room and there is on-site Art Gallery.

The Couples’ Resort is one of the best honeymoon and wedding resorts in Canada. It is a totally interpersonal experience focusing on you, as a couple. “We don’t often take the time to rebuild a relationship before we go ahead in life,” comments John our host, Relax! Enjoy intimacy, fun and adventure together while experiencing the peace and tranquillity of nature. Refreshed and romance rekindled, your return to daily life is a little easier.

I know that the drive home will seem to be a long one, but my return to this paradise won’t be that long away, as I already made my next reservation on check-out!

Seasonal rates apply. Gift certificates are available. For more information log on to www.couplesresort.ca, or call 613-637-2662; Fax 613-637-2615.

