

TRAVEL

Fall tour caters to seniors who want more

Rockland's 'edutainment' package promises to pamper

By Sharon McCully

The mid-Maine town of Rockland is offering a special package in September designed to stimulate and pamper seniors once the busy tourist season ends and children return to school.

Tucked between Portland and bustling Old Orchard, trendy tourists, have replaced the muscle-bound labourers and weathered seafarers who forged a reputation for this renaissance town from the depths of lime pits and rugged coastal waters.

Their legacy however, remains at the heart of Rockland's tourism industry, and is celebrated today by artists, innkeepers, restaurant and museum operators.

Perched along Penobscot Bay, an archipelago 30 miles wide by 30 miles wide, this mid-Maine town of 10,000 was ideally situated 200 years ago for shipbuilding, lime stone and lobster fishing.

Central to the town's prosperity, according to local historian David Hoch, was Rockland's rich lime deposits. Responding to a construction boom in Boston and New York, builders in the late 1700 - early 1800s needed lime as



The LimeRock Inn combines luxurious accommodation with a true culinary experience.

mortar to seal bricks and to make plaster for walls and ceilings, Hoch explained.

Harvesting Rockland's lime deposits buried some 400-feet underground, burning it, and transporting the volatile lime casks by ship to market, was dangerous work undertaken only by the hardy, or, some may say, the foolhardy. Labourers came from as far as Italy to

work at the lime kilns, while others carved out a living on the docks constructing specially designed ships to carry the highly combustible cargo to distant markets.

Transporting lime by sea was an occupational hazard since even the slightest amount of water could create a chemical reaction causing combustion. As a re-

sult, shoreline residents were less than welcoming to lime ships in distress. It wasn't until 1900 that the railroad replaced schooners and by 1950, new materials replaced lime and Rockland, touted as the lime-producing capital of the world, needed a new claim to fame. Suffice to say while hardened men laboured deep in pits and along the rugged coastline, town fathers and industrialists prospered.

Evidence of their success is a hallmark of historic Rockland today, which boasts 142 buildings recorded in the National Register of Historical Buildings, and the town's rich history is feted year-round with a schedule of special events.

Three award-winning inns in this coastal town, located less than four hours from the Eastern Townships, contribute to the preservation of the town's heritage by maintaining the integrity of the historic homes, and offering tour packages that celebrate the town's roots at a plethora of art galleries, historic tours, museums, festivals and bay excursions.

Berry Manor Inn, Captain Lindsey House and the Lime Rock Inn are independently owned and operated, but share a penchant for pampering and perfection that has won each one coveted awards and a place in the registry of exclusive inns in the company of Hovey Manor in North Hatley and Ripplecove Inn in Ayer's Cliff.

PLEASE SEE ROCKLAND PAGE 11



SMCCULLY

Berry Manor individualizes each of its 12 rooms and this one is designed especially for you.



SMCCULLY

Rooms at all three historic inns have earned a place in the registry of exclusive inns.

RECORD

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2005 PAGE 11

TRAVEL

ROCKLAND:

CONT'D FROM PAGE 10

Berry Manor innkeepers Cheryl Michaelson and Michael LaPosta purchased their 107-year-old Victorian mansion in 1991 and co-opted their respective mothers into helping restore the stately home, making a lie of myths about mothers-in-law, or too many cooks in the kitchen. Both moms bake pies, serve breakfast, act as tourist guides and contribute to the homey feel of the inn.

Each of the eight rooms in Berry Manor's main house, and four others in the carriage house, has been distinctively restored with painstaking attention to historic detail. (Handsigned wallpaper from the original owners is preserved behind glass, shadow-box style.) Guests are transported to Victorian times and the amenities enjoyed by the vice-regal. Elegant bed and bathroom linens, functional fireplaces in the bedrooms coupled with exquisite bath and shower facilities make the comforts of even the most elegant home fall a tad short in comparison.

The reason of course, is that the entire family of innkeepers is at the beck and call of guests, rolling out perfectly flaked pie crust for the blue-ribbon raspberry pie, concocting award-winning gourmet breakfasts like Cheryl's blueberry soup, baked havarti and egg with a dollop of peach salsa that packs a punch, lemon poppy-seed muffins, and more freshly brewed coffee than you dare drink before setting off on a guided tour of Rockland's historic homes.

A block away, Captain Ken and Ellen Barnes are setting tea for afternoon guests at Rockland's oldest inn, Captain Lindsey Manor, to be enjoyed in the 'secret garden' of wild flowers and climbing vines, or in the event of rain, in the inn's comfortable parlour where the two seafarers will re-



SMCCULLY

David Hoch is Rockland's foremost authority on the lime industry.

gale you with stories of their adventures to exotic places aboard their schooner, the Stephen Taber, the oldest documented vessel of its kind in continuous recorded service. The Stephen Taber, which sails Penobscot Bay, is as much a part of Rockland lore as the Lindsey House - the town's former waterworks building.

The Barnes family's nautical history made them a perfect match for the one-time home of Captain Lindsey. Built in 1832, the sea captain's home had served as Rockland's waterworks headquarters until the Barnes purchased it and converted the offices into a first class inn. The couple, who met while on faculty at Washington State University - she was the first female drama prof on staff and he taught lighting and set design - share a passion for adventure, and for the sea, logging innumerable nautical miles before purchasing the inn, gutting it and restoring it to its original grandeur.

The result is a well-earned spot in the registry of exclusive inns. Enter the red door of Capt. Lindsey Inn and you are immediately immersed in comfort. Each

room is luxuriously furnished with thick but weightless duvets, colourful fabrics and cushions, and a television stowed away in a mahogany cabinet. En suite bathrooms come equipped with all necessities - and perks such as exquisite toiletries and Egyptian cotton towels. But forget the Jacuzzi. Ellen says they are too noisy.

She is equally unequivocal about the elaborate breakfast served buffet-style each morning from the oak hutch to be enjoyed in the garden on nice days, in the sunny breakfast nook in cooler weather or in your bedroom if you feel like it. Barnes says she doesn't want someone else choosing what's on her breakfast plate - thus the delectable buffet.

Barnes and the new owners of the Lime Rock Inn share the belief a happy guest is a well fed one.

Frank Isganitis and partner PJ, new owner-operators of the Lime Rock Inn, want guests to have an extraordinary culinary experience as well as a memorable stay in this elegant historic inn reminiscent of an important page in Rockland's history. Built in 1890 for Congressman Charles Littlefield, the inn is best known by locals as the former house/office of Dr. Oram Lawry from 1940-1994.

The new innkeepers were blessed with an exquisitely furnished and breathtakingly beautiful inn when they entered the business six months ago and they've been reveling in the madness since. Isganitis, a former banker who makes a mean butter-pecan waffle, chuckles when he recalls his days as a business loans officer. Now on the other side, Isganitis says he would ask his finance colleagues to show more compassion for independent business owners and he would warn new entrepreneurs, "it will take longer and cost more than anticipated."

The three independent innkeepers have joined forces to offer several unique travel experiences in historic Rockland. September will feature an opportunity for seniors dubbed "edutainment". Recognizing that today's 55-plus group want more than beach and bingo, the innkeepers have created a package that includes a guided historic walking tour which will explore some of the local landmarks including a Sears Craftsman kit home, a visit to the local historic museum with exhibits from the Civil War and the lime stone industry, and a visit to the Farnsworth museum which features the works of three generations of Wyeths - N.C. was an illustrator for classics such as Robinson Crusoe, his son Andrew captured much of the scenery of Rockland, and grandson Jamie's ornithological



COURTESY HISTORIC INNS

Lobster and lighthouses are twin loves in Rockland.

painting are said to be as instructive as Robert Bateman's study of birds.

Luxury accommodations and gourmet breakfasts will be offered at the inn of choice, each offering a 25-percent discount to seniors taking advantage of the three-day September Seniors Package which includes:

- three nights lodging, Sunday - Thursday offered at a 25-percent discount for those taking the package which includes breakfast for two each morning with afternoon refreshments, a guided walking tour of Rockland's Historic District offered 1-3 p.m. on 9/6, 9/13 and 9/20 and the choice of any two of the following museums or activities (choices must be stipulated upon booking in order to assure tickets are available):

- 2 tickets on Captain Jacks lobster boats to learn about lobster fishing and take your own hand at hauling traps
- 2 tickets Farnsworth Art Museum and Wyeth Center
- 2 tickets to the Maine Lighthouse Museum
- 2 tickets Owl's Head Transportation
- 2 tickets on the Maine State Ferry to Vinalhaven or North Haven Islands to tour Penobscot Bay Islands.
- Opportunity to join Wednesday discussion groups lead by Historical Society experts:

8/31 Dr. Kahn, Medicines of yesteryear at LimeRock Inn

9/7 Dave Hoch, A look back at Rockland's Lime Industry at Berry Manor

9/16 Capt. Ken Barnes, The Lore of the Sea at Captain Lindsey House

Prices range from \$385-635 per couple, plus tax and gratuities, depending upon room and inn choice, available Aug. 29-Sept. 30, 2005 (excluding Labour Day, Sept. 5).

For further information on the September Seniors Package, visit www.HistoricInnsOfRockland.com. To book your September Senior Package, call toll-free 1-877-ROC-INNS (877-762-4667)

THE PACKAGE

Lighthouses and lobster are synonymous with Rockland and both are found in abundance.

A tour on Captain Jack's authentic lobster boat is both enlightening and entertaining. A masterful storyteller with a keen entrepreneurial spirit, Captain Jack marvels at his good fortune at having paying customers watch him work. As he hauls his traps, he shares his knowledge of his catch, as well as the seals, porpoise and various species that inhabit Penobscot Bay.

The Maine Lighthouse museum offers a fascinating history of the technology that provided safe passage to seafarers for centuries. Boasting one of the largest collections of lighthouse lenses used to guide ships, the museum is a must-see for anyone interested in maritime history or the solitary life of those who manned the remote lighthouses.

For those with a sense of adventure or just a yearning for the serenity of open water, join Mike and Julie Rogers - and perhaps five-month old Lily - on their schooner, the Jenny Norman.

This industrious young couple earned their sailing stripes crewing on windjammers, and in 2000 purchased the 68-foot Jenny Norman, then spent the next three years rebuilding and restoring it to its former glory. Both are expert sailors and a tour of Penobscot Bay on their schooner can very quickly turn into the highlight of a trip.

Then there are the galleries, the museums and the historic walking tour. A stroll through Rockland with Judy Shorey is as invigorating as seeing things through the eyes of rediscovered childhood. After living upstate for most of her adult life, Shorey recently returned to her family's ancestral home and revels in sharing the history of the town - the way it was, the way it is and the people who made it happen.