

Leaving Lexington kennebunkport, me



Eating Lunch at The Landin overlooking the River.



Entering Kennebunkport crossing the bridge over the Kennebunk River that divides the Lower Village and Kennebunkport. The bridge is known locally as the Taintown bridge because the town on the far side, to Kennebunkporters, 'tain't Kennebunkport.

By Laurie Atwater
Photos by Jim Shaw

As summer slips into the rearview and shorter days and cooler temperatures prevail, there's still time to jump in the car for a little trip north. Just an hour and a half up each way and you can enjoy all the seaside charm of Kennebunk—beaches, vistas, shopping and a little bit of Lexington, too. I'll explain that later.

So gas up the vehicle and hit 95 North past Kittery, York and Ogunquit and head right for Kennebunkport for a charming weekend getaway. Check out the Old Colony Hotel website for last minute deals (they are open through late October). We did and were pleasantly surprised with a beautiful room at this historic resort for half the usual price! The hotel was built in 1914 and the family owners have preserved the atmosphere of a grand New England vacation spot with its casual elegance and friendly atmosphere.

Overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and the mouth of the Kennebec River, the hotel boasts views that are guaranteed to take you far away from your troubles and back in time. Huge lobbies are designed for mingling among guests and rolling lawns sprinkled with Adirondack chairs beckon you to stop and take in the sunset show over the water. In the main building you can forget television, but who needs it when you can take a dip in the beautiful pool or play shuffleboard under the lights! Families have been coming back to this huge Georgian style hotel for years and you can see why. After dinner slip into the pub off the pool for a drink and while away the time chatting with all of you new best friends (you just may run into people you know—we did)!

If you have a little more time to plan check out the luxury accommodation available in November. Call **White Barn Inn & Spa** [www.whitebarninn.com]—a Kennebunk landmark. It is part of the

exclusive Relais & Châteaux collection of the finest hotels and gourmet restaurants and it is accordingly quite pricey but it boasts a fine restaurant and a full service spa.

Once you have a place to stay you can venture out for a little shopping in the charming village of Kennebunkport. Step into **carrots & company** [www.carrotsandcompany.com] and you'll be greeted by an actual VW Beetle outfitted with cute hand painted magnets with Maine themes. All kinds of cute gifts stuff each corner of this shop. We peek into **The Whimsy Shop** to check out the handmade accessories and strike up a conversation with Barbara over the Little Man bags that I recognize from Artisans Way (sadly no longer in business) in Lexington. Of course—small world—Barbara is from North Attleboro and commutes almost every day! Her son owns the ice cream shop/deli next door—The Old Salt's Pantry—and Mom pitches in by running the gift shop in this charming 1740s building! At minka [minka-



Shopping minka for handcrafted jewelry, natural skincare and beautiful candles, Scalawags for doggie accessories like these Bayline leashes made by lobstermen. Whimsy Shop for bags by Little Man and Maine Art for fabulous garen sculptures.



home.com] I discover that artist/owner Michelle Laroche used to work at Filene's in Burlington. When they closed, she had the opportunity to do her own thing and she took it. She also showcases her creativity as a florist in nearby Wells at Blooms Flower Shoppe [**blooms-flowershoppe.com**]. She and her painter husband are committed to the creative life creating products that use local, organic products. Michelle created her own line of skin care using natural oils and has many fans with eczema or with sensitivities while undergoing chemo. She also creates beautiful jewelry which she sells in her shop. There's really something for everyone in Dock Square from tee shirts to gifts for your pet at **Scalawags Pet Boutique!** When you hit that mid-morning slump, step into **Dock Square Coffee** to recharge and relax with a latte or espresso. Two choices for lunch—stay in the square or venture off. If you stay in the square and want to overlook the water, check out upstairs at **The Landing** [**www.landingintheport.com**]. They offer traditional coastal fare—seafood platters and haddock sandwiches along with lobster dinners and the like. The view of the harbor is pleasant and ever-changing and the prices reasonable (lunch with wine about \$50). If you're feeling a little more adventurous and you've had it with shopping, check out **The Clam Shack** [**www.theclam-shack.net**] located just on the other side of the bridge at the entrance into Kennebunkport. While crossing the bridge stop to enjoy the tranquil beauty of the water (kayakers abound) and then dive in to a box of fried clams or one of their delicious "lobstah rolls". *Epicurious.com* voted them one of the top ten seafood shacks in America, Rachel Ray visited and featured them in her magazine, the Bushes are rumored to enjoy their fare and many travelers love their stuff. Check out any online reviews and they are raves. You can also buy seafood to take off on a picnic which is what we recommend you do...they will steam your clams for you or wrap up your lobster roll (don't forget fried dough or whoopee pies if you have a sweet tooth), and you can motor off to **Goose Rocks Beach** out Route 9 to gobble them up while catching some rays. The sand is soft, the waves gentle and the scenery breathtaking.

While you're out on Route 9 you may want to pull into **Hidden Pond** [**www.hiddenpondmaine.com**] and check out what just might have to be your next big splurge vacation. Labeled a "boutique resort," Hidden Pond is the brainchild of developers Tim Harrington and Juan Urtubey who purchased the 60 acres of balsam woods and developed it into a unique resort featuring 14 one and 2-bedroom designer cottages—each with a unique sensibility that is decidedly NOT pine-paneled and woodsy! This unique spot also features a Grand Lodge with a pool, nature trails, art classes, yoga classes, bonfires, a gym and a tented spa and a garden that is open to guests who want to cook in their well-appointed kitchens. The property closes in October, so stop by to get a look and plan ahead! Wow!

Do you have enough energy for a night out? Head over to **Federal Jack's Restaurant and Brewpub** [**www.federaljacks.com**]-turn on right just before the bridge into Kennebunkport-for a frosty one to end the day or a "brew with a view" as the locals say. All of the beers available at Federal Jack's are hand-crafted. Home of **The Kennebunkport Brewing Company**, this was the original site of what has become Shipyard Brewing in Portland. The brewery was built on the site where

19th century shipyards built schooners known throughout the world for their grace and speed. Federal Jack's was named for one of the most famous ships built on this site in 1908—the Federal Jack. If you are too tuckered out in the evening, head over in the morning for their famous Sunday Brunch.

Now I promised to tell you about the Lexington connection in Kennebunkport and here goes. At the **Seashore Trolley Museum** [**www.trolleymuseum.org**] in Kennebunkport, we asked specifically about "Car 41"—the Minute Man trolley that was part of the electric railway that ran in Lexington in the early 1900s. We were turned over to Lexington resident and trolley enthusiast Ed Dooks along with Doug Carrier, a graduate of Minuteman High School, who is the project manager for Car 41. These fellows are real transportation enthusiasts and spent a good deal of time telling us about the museum and specifically about Car 41 and its restoration. It is really a fascinating place. You can read more about Car 41 next month in the *Colonial Times*.

There's so much more to do in Kennebunkport—theater at **The Arundel Barn Playhouse** or the **Ogunquit Playhouse** numerous galleries to visit and several historical sites to tour—that you'll have to plan a return visit. As you're heading out of town make sure to drive by the **Wedding Cake House**, a federal style house built by shipbuilder George Washington Bourne in 1825 and located at 104 Summer Street. After a fire, Bourne rebuilt the carriage house and barn in a Gothic style he had admired on a trip to Milan. He did all of the elaborate carpentry himself and it is quite a testament to his workmanship and way over the top by any standard.

On the way out of town, check out **The Best of Everything** [**www.bestofeverythingkennebunkport.com**] shop (on the right just over the bridge heading south) for a great collection of silver jewelry and the **Tom's of Maine Outlet** off Main Street in Kennebunk for great deals. Follow Route 1 to Wells where you can stop at the **Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge** [**www.fws.gov/northeast/rachelcarson**] in Wells. The mile long, accessible, self-guided "Carson Trail" nature walk is located at the refuge headquarters. At this time of year all types of waterfowl visit the area on their migratory paths and it can be a relaxing end to a busy Maine weekend!

Hidden Pond
If you prefer more privacy, one of the 14 cottages of Hidden Pond may be the ticket. Charming and inviting—great to rent with another couple.



The Colony Hotel

In Kennebunkport you have many choices for lodging from the traditional to the nouveau. Top to bottom: The Colony Inn has served vacationing families since the early 1900s. With the feel of an old New England Resort, it's a great place to enjoy the traditional casual elegance of the coast with other families.

