

North American Country Inns / Bed & Breakfast,

Summer 2000

Civilized Wilderness in an Old Growth Forest ,

by Crista Mechlinski

You love the thought of a canoe trip but you're not crazy about sleeping close to the ground. You'd like to hike the old growth forest but you'd also like to flush your toilet at the end of the day. If you want to swim in a quiet lake and drink wine rather than warm beer hauled over one too many portages, a few nights at Smoothwater Wilderness Lodge in Temagami , ON may be the most civilized way to back to nature.

But don't expect total luxury at the lodge. But do expect something that far exceeds your memories of summer camp. While you may start to remember that summer camp taste of s'mores and canned spaghetti as you drive through the town of Temagami , it's certainly not what you can expect to eat at the lodge, located 14 km north of the town, just off Highway 11 on James Lake .

The main building is also the owner's residence. Caryn Colman, Francis Boyes and their daughter, Emily, welcome Lodge guests into their home each day for meals. Guests sleep in a separate building. The rooms vary in size, are decorated in cheerful colours and homey furniture. Many of them are showcases for Caryn's watercolours. It's the kind of cozy accommodation that doesn't give you the impression thousands of others have shared the space.

Arrive an hour or so before dinner. If you'd like, bring your own wine and beer, Smoothwater's staff is happy to keep it chilled and open it for you when you arrive for hors d'oeuvres. All overnight guests gather in the living-room before the cathedral window to enjoy nibbles and get acquainted before sitting down together for a meal. Meals are beautifully presented and taste as good as they look. Chicken Marbella one night, savoury pies the next, poached whole salmon on another. Everything is accompanied by organic produce, fresh baked breads and desserts you simply can't refuse. Smoothwater's staff encourages you to linger and sip your herbal tea on the deck before retiring. Of course, they're happy to help you plan your outdoor adventure for the following day.

Smoothwater is primarily an outfitter. That means it can arrange guided canoe trips, kayaking or hiking excursions that last a day or trips into the wilderness for several nights. Packages are also available: kayak one day on Lake Temagami and then fly to Lake Obabika the next to hike through Ontario 's old

growth forest. But come back in the evening to the comfort and convenience of the lodge. A gourmet breakfast sends you on your way and lunch with a guide is provided for the day. Your guide can tell you more than you ever wanted to know about animal droppings along the trail then turn around and serve you tea in bone china cups on the rocky shores of a pristine lake!

Temagami is home to 300-year-old forests, ruffed cliffs, rocky shorelines and Ontario 's highest ridges. Smoothwater Wilderness Lodge opens the door, shows you the way and offers you a warm welcome when you return._

While You're There:

Be inspired to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Take in a canoe clinic or book your trip around one of many workshops: cooking, twig furniture, photography, painting, yoga.