

Lake Estate on Winnisquam has its soft opening Friday

By Dan Seufert Union Leader Correspondent | Aug 12, 2025



A rendering of the pool in front of the Lake Estate on Winnisquam.

PATTI ROCCO had a dream one night about five years ago in which she and her husband built a luxury hotel and restaurant in the heart of the Lakes Region.

On Friday, she and husband Ed will realize that dream when they have their “soft” opening of The Lake Estate on Winnisquam in Tilton, the \$90 million hotel built with senior partners Dan Dagesse and his wife, Elaine, who are the co-owners of the Nucar automobile sales and service chain in New Hampshire.

What they have built aims to impress visitors and locals, who should also benefit when the hotel and its restaurants provide tax revenue for each town as well as the employment opportunities the new inn is offering — though it is already fully staffed with about 150 local workers.



Ed and Patti Rocco stand on the porch of one of their new buildings at The Lake Estate in Tilton.
Dan Seufert/union leader correspondent

But though there are luxury hotels in the state, and some four-star venues among them, there are no five-star hotels, Ed Rocco said. To get five stars in the hospitality industry, your hotel and restaurants must meet many architectural, policy, staffing and other requirements, and the rules are strict, he said.

“It has to be earned,” he said. “We had to build it to be a five-star hotel.”

The goal is five stars for the resort, which has the slogan “Unassumed Luxury.” The hope is to reach that level soon, he said.

“When we reach our goal, I think you could plunk this place right in downtown Aspen or Vail (Colorado) and it would fit. I think it’s going to be an iconic presence on the New England Landscape in the next two to three years. I think we’re going to become a household name.”

The 114-room luxury resort will be open year-round. It has a long list of amenities to offer guests, including a 5,000-square-foot spa, three spacious outdoor pools, 24-hour room service, and valet parking.



The “relaxing area” for guests leaving the spa at The Lake Estate.
DAN SEUFERT/union leader correspondent

Constructed by builders from around New Hampshire and designed by world-class resort designers and Samyn-D'Elia Architects of Holderness, the resort sits on the 36 acres where the Anchorage Cottages once stood on the shore of the state's fourth-largest lake, Winnisquam, a popular summer spot for swimmers and boaters, as well as many summer cottage owners.

"And that's what we are hoping, that people will feel like coming here is like visiting a wealthy friend with a place on the lake," he said.

The name "Lake Estate," in fact, came from that thought, Patti Rocco said.

There are several restaurants with varying prices in the 640-foot-long building that houses the entire resort. The hotel has 150,000 square feet of space on four levels. Among the 114 guest rooms are 18 suites.

The buildings are built in a classic style with all-new wood and New Hampshire granite. The lobby has a 42-foot-tall ceiling. The carpets are Asian and European, the paintings are from a mix of local artists and foreign painters. The furniture is American/European. The guest rooms are spacious and also have high ceilings, and most have views of the iconic lake.

The local staff was hired over two months this spring, and they are paid "a few dollars more than the market rates in the area," Rocco said.

Everything is upscale, including the room prices, which will range from \$400-\$1,200 per night. The hotel will cost about \$100 more per room than any of its competitors.

But they will not necessarily be competing with local hotels and motels. The resort conducted a market analysis that found its main competitors are The Cliff House in Maine; The Lodge at Lake Placid, New York; and the Omni Mount Washington.

"Think of the Ritz Carlton, think of Four Seasons," he said. "We're not here to compete with the other places in the area, who all do a great job. We're here to offer something different, something that New Hampshire doesn't have."

The resort has hired a world-class chef, Chris Viaud of Milford, and the spa will be led by Lakes Region native Martha Zyla, who brings more than 20 years of experience in the retail, spa and hospitality industries having owned and operated a chain of retail stores throughout New Hampshire and having served as spa director at the Inn at Mill Falls in Meredith for almost two decades.

Ed Rocco grew up in the Boston area. Patti Rocco is originally from Gilford. The couple said they will do a grand opening ceremony in September. There are already more than a dozen weddings booked for the resort's numerous event rooms for the fall already, Patti Rocco said.

Stephanie Loeber, the resort's press agent, said she expects the resort to be so unique, "it's going to put this area and the state on the map."

"This is very exciting for the hospitality industry in New Hampshire," she said.