

THE EXPRESS

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MAGAZINE

Yes, Chef!

A SWEET HOMECOMING
FOR A PASTRY ARTIST
IN BRIDGEHAMPTON

Harvest

GOSMAN'S REBORN | STROLL LOVE LANE | KOREAN FLAVORS | SETTING SAIL | BMX COMMUNITY

TRAVELS *with* HANNAH

LAKE, LUXURY AND MAPLE CREAM

*Exploring the quiet magic of New Hampshire's
historic towns, artisan shops and scenic shores*

In May — smack between so-called mud season and the start to summer — I drove north, just over an hour from my Massachusetts house to New Hampshire's Lakes Region. The region is not a singular destination; those who know the Lakes well know that to discuss them is to discuss many lakes, perhaps the largest and most tourist-attracting of which is Winnepesaukee. My trip focused on both the eastern and western sides of the region, traversing towns like Wolfeboro, Laconia, and Tilton.

My first stop was at the 4-room Top of the Ridge Farm Bed & Breakfast, which opened in 2020 in New Durham, a 20-minute drive from the eastern part of the region. Owned by Tatiana and Gino Michelizza, the former of which moved to the United States from Italy over three decades ago, the petite inn sits on six acres of property and proudly overlooks the Mount Washington Valley.

Tatiana, embracing her Italian roots, has made food a priority at the inn. Breakfast, I found, was comprehensive, a multi-page menu that offered everything from a traditional egg platter to fresh produce (asparagus season arrived on my plate next to an over-easy egg). Neapolitan-style pizza, served at dinner, and cicchetti platters, courtesy of Venice, are extra — but well worth the gastronomic and financial investment.

When I wasn't relaxing by the picture window with a book during my stay, I was exploring some of the local towns of the region, like Wolfeboro, billed as The Oldest Summer Resort in America. One chilly afternoon, I took my time wandering through the Wolfeboro Antiques & Artisan Barn, contemplating the purchase of a 1986 World Series Red Sox baseball (it was \$250, and I'm a Yankees fan, but the Sox lost that series in epic fashion) and pulling the trigger on two souvenir spoons from 1975 and 1980, the birth years, respectively, of my husband and me.

After a few days in New Durham, I shuffled off to the west, for a stay at the new and impressive Lake Estate on Winnisquam. The luxury resort, which opened late in the summer of 2025, offers 114 rooms and suites; a 6,000-square-foot spa with multiple treatment rooms; a private movie theater; and both casual and fine dining concepts, thanks to James Beard Award-nominated chef Chris Viaud. The rain didn't let up during my stay, but I hardly minded an excuse to sit inside by the main lobby's fireplace, where reading a book was made that much better by panoramic views of New Hampshire's third-largest lake, Winnisquam.

On my second rainy day in Tilton, I met with



OPPOSITE PAGE, THE PRESCOTT FARM ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER; ABOVE, NUTS AND HANDMADE CHOCOLATE AT KELLERHAUS; BELOW, RELAXING AT THE LAKE ESTATE.

Garrett Bethmann, Manager of Communications and Engagement at Canterbury Shaker Village, a 700-acre National Historic Landmark and museum, preserving a historic Shaker village originally established in the late-1700s. The Village is currently undergoing five building preservation projects and is also expanding offerings to include a variety of special tours and participatory events for visitors. The emphasis, Bethmann says, is on "rediscovering Canterbury Shaker Village," offering history reframed for a new, modern audience.

Later, I checked out the Prescott Farm Environmental Education Center, which operates year-round, providing nature-based programming for kids and adults. With 160 acres of land, the nonprofit Center provides plenty of outdoor fun, like hiking trails and a playground made from "found" natural materials. In 2023, an expansion of the Center allowed for an increase in programming. Now, visitors can spread out in the fully updated educational kitchen while learning how to make a sourdough starter, or meet with fellow artists in the "Connector," another new building that houses art education.

Before heading back to the resort for a mandatory rainy day spa treatment (the 60-minute

Lakeside Grove Revitalizing Body Scrub, which combines fine cane sugar with nourishing oils for an exfoliating experience), I stopped by Kellerhaus, a chocolate, ice cream, and gift store celebrating 120 years in the Lakes Region. Owner Daryl Dawson offered a full peek behind the curtain and even took me downstairs to watch as handmade chocolates were enrobed and readied for storage and, eventually, packaging. The Lake Estate places a homemade Kellerhaus peppermint patty on each guest's nightstand at turndown every evening, a touch I appreciated even more after seeing the chocolates in their infancy.

The next morning, following a leisurely breakfast in the Lake Estate's dining room, where I watched the weather clear for the first time in days, I headed to the Lakes Region Art Gallery, a space representing the work of 30-35 local New Hampshire artists (the Association itself has 56 members). Sherwood Frazier, a photographer and the current sitting president of the Lakes Region Art Association, ushered me through the space, pointing out artists by name; the Association represents fine artists, photographers, and three-dimensional artists, many of whom were displaying their work. Each year, the gallery hosts multiple shows in the space, including the preeminent juried event, the LRAA 86th Annual Members Exhibit.

Before I headed out of town, I made sure to visit Just Maple, the decades-old project helmed by co-owners Roger and Barbara Proulx. The two process their own maple syrup each season,



offering different grades, as well as a selection of maple-themed goods. They make maple candy and cream themselves and outsource other maple goods from local farms, like maple-apple butter from nearby Apple Hill Farm and maple mustard from Blackwater Mustard Co. Dragging pretzels — Roger Proulx suggested two for the best bite — through a jar of maple cream, I realized that it was the perfect sweet ending to a stay in the Granite State. ■