

Postcard from a local getaway: Oiseau Bay Eco-Landing Resort

BY JEAN COOPER

We've all read about great vacations to various far-flung hot spots, but have you experienced some of the hidden getaway opportunities right in our own backyard?

Oiseau Bay Eco-Landing is a resort that combines outdoor adventure, historic tourism, and relaxation to provide guests with a memorable eco-friendly experience.

On Labour Day weekend, my Mom and I had the distinct pleasure of joining our friends Larry and Linda Anderson for a weekend at Oiseau Bay. Mom is 82 years old and had often heard about "the Oiseau" - be it the Bay, the resort, or the Rock. Well, this weekend she experienced it all.

We arrived Saturday afternoon to our comfy accommodations in the White Cottage. We were just settled in when we toured the other cottages on site that combine antique elements with modern-day convenience.

Next, we were invited by our host Cam Hilborn to swim in the waterfalls. Not only is Cam a wonderful guide, but the group we were joining included Becky Freedman and her friends.

Were we in great hands; no massages from Becky this time, but what a lovely way to connect with people. One young gentleman even ran after our cart to give my mother a flower. Chivalry certainly is in full glory with these young people!

Back in our cozy cottage, Larry and Linda fired up the barbecue to make a chef's delight. Dinner on the porch overlooked some guests playing croquet and a sunset view to rival all others.

Many laughs and much conversation later, and we were off to bed under down comforters. Next time I hope to save some energy for a relaxing soak in the antique tub.

Morning came quickly, and Larry, Linda and I laced up our hik-

ers to climb the Oiseau Rock trail. The ascent was a challenge (if only for me), but it was all worth it when I plunged into the refreshing lake on top and saw the breathtaking views of the Valley.

I can only imagine what the fall leaves would look like from this vantage point - if only I were an artist!

Back at the resort, we jumped in some kayaks. It was a great first time out for them, and we saw a hawk, some ducks and a great blue heron, as well as a postcard view.

We weren't back on land for long when Cam took us to see the ancient petroglyphs on the Oiseau rock face. Mom and I served up a Greek feast to cap off our full day and we fell asleep to loon songs.

The next morning, Mom enjoyed perusing the historic photo albums and journals of the original owner, a fascinating American gentleman farmer by the name of PK Smith.

Larry was given a personal tour of the remains of the historic hydro generation station built on the property in the 1940s.

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We gained a renewed sense of pride in our area and were reminded that it had once been a "destination" where people would travel great distances to holiday in our renowned wilderness.

How special it is that we still have the chance to enjoy this treasure that was founded nearly 100 years ago.

All too soon it was time to pack up. Sure, bright weather and great travelling companions are unbeatable, but where else in the world could you find a vacation spot that appeals to all ages from one to 82?

It is easy to understand why there are so many return guests from Canada, the United States, and Europe.

Some are hooked on the summer's pleasures of life on the mag-



The Oiseau Creek Falls and beautiful swim on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River between Chaudière Falls and Deep River. Cam Hilborn provides visitors with a natural setting for a relaxing getaway.

nificent Ottawa River; others on winter activities like cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling in the Laurentian mountains, and skating at the base of Oiseau Rock; some even want to try their hand in harvesting ice blocks in February (after all, many of the same people come back in the summer to enjoy a chilled beverage from the historic ice chests).

You can get there by the river route or by a two-hour drive from Deep River. It's well worth the travel, because once you have been there you will be hooked on returning for a family reunion or relaxing getaway.

For those who cannot let go for long, you can still be connected to the outside world through the wonders of technology.

If you find this rendition hard to believe, check out the website www.oiseaubayresort.com.

Thanks to our host Cam and to our fantastic friends Linda and Larry for such a memorable time!

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