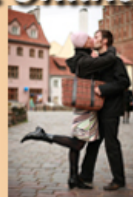




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As Maine Goes, It's Going Well

By Maralyn D. Hill & Norman E. Hill, 'The Tandem Travelers'

There's an ancient political saying, "As Maine goes, so goes the nation." Today, an updated version of that saying might be, "As Maine small business entrepreneurs go, work together, and grow, so goes the Maine tourist industry."

Our International Food Wine & Travel Writers (IFWTWA) group spent 6 days in Rockland, with the last three days on a classic schooner, Stephen Taber. Thanks to the hospitality and generosity of local businesses and Historic Inns of Rockland, we saw in great depth the variety of sites and culinary offerings in the Rockland area.

In the 19th century, large limestone/granite quarries provided massive amounts of stone and employment. Shipments aided in the building of cities such as Boston and New York. Initial techniques of limestone/granite transportation carried considerable risks. When separated from rocks and initially processed, it was quite hot. When loaded onto wooden ships, the heat caused a considerable number of fires, some fatal.

Not all that long ago, because of the quarries and sardine canning plants, Rockland was strictly an industrial town. While some other towns catered to tourism, Rockland was noted for its distinct sardine odor. As this industry and mining started to fade, the economic fortunes of the city faded along with it. As an exercise in gallows humor, one citizen of Rockland characterized the city at that time as a place for a "beer and a beating."

Today, this environment is—NO MORE! Tourism is the primary focus of Rockland, just as tourism is now the largest industry in all of Maine. While other industries remain to provide employment for many of the state's one million inhabitants, such as lobster fishing and shipbuilding, tourism has surged to the top of the list.

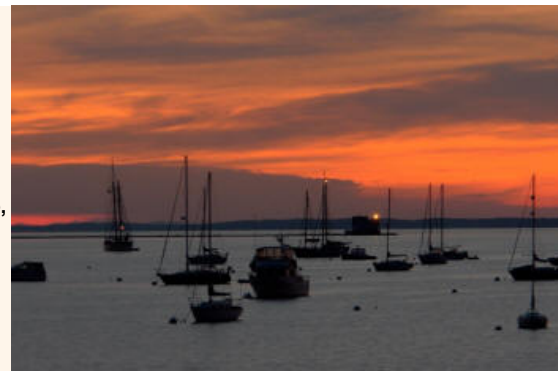
A considerable portion of the state's tourism efforts now revolves around these small businesses. To the extent possible, they emphasize purchasing from and dealing with other Maine businesses. Agriculture, more and more, is tied to organic farming in both crop cultivation and livestock.

Activities and Sites

Rockland has something for everyone. You can enjoy adventure, windjammers, and boat rides, as well as trolley tours and museums. We are only going to focus on a few.

We toured the Farnsworth Art Museum and Wyeth Center. One prominent featured artist is the renowned painter, Andrew Wyeth. Within several weeks of our tour, on June 26, the artist and philanthropist, Alex Katz, will be given the 2010 "Maine in America Award." In total, the museum features around 13,000 works of art.

We visited two spas in Rockland. The Rheel Day Spa has been characterized as a "unisex green spa," with some of its furniture covered with material that is anti-bacterial and made of recycled plastic bottles.



Big Blend Radio Interview



Maralyn Hill discusses Rockland, Maine

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The Tandem Travelers are a traveling writing team made up of Maralyn D. Hill and Brenda C. Hill - co-authors of 'Cooking Secrets - The Why and How' and 'Our Love Affairs with Food & Travel', plus Maralyn's husband Norman E. Hill author of 'Winner and Final Chairman' Learn



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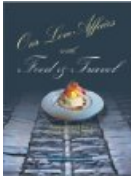
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Some attendees described it positively as providing a zen-like experience. In addition to enjoying massages, we thoroughly appreciated its willingness to provide use of showers when coming off trips on the Stephen Taber.

The SkinKlinic specializes in treatments using all natural Hungarian products known as "Eminence." This spa is also unisex. The Skin Clinic is a medi-spa and has two registered RNs as part of its licensed staff. It offers the services of a regular spa and then includes many treatments only available at a medi-spa.

Our IFWTTWA group visited the Maine Lighthouse Museum. There are still about 53 functioning lighthouses along the Maine coast (5,300 miles stretched out). Today, all are operated automatically. Whether automatic or, historically, manned by dedicated lighthouse keepers, they have provided a vital part of ship safety.



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For many years, the lighting function of these lighthouses was provided by a French brand known as Frnselles. These lamps came in varying sizes, but were very efficient in penetrating seacoast fogs. Forty watt bulbs seemed like 150 watt, and when in operation they used 1,000 watt bulbs—hence the light visibility averaged 10 miles.

In earlier days, lighthouse keepers and their families lived year around in the houses. One prominent 16-year old, Amy Burgess, achieved heroic status when, trapped during a storm without her father, she kept the lighthouse operational and served as defacto family head.

When ships foundered, lighthouses often provided lifesaving rescue efforts. One device for rescue was the Lile Gun. It would shoot ropes out to the damaged vessel and enable a tie to the ship. Then, sailors on board would be ferried across the ropes secured by the gun, to reach shore. The Rockland Lighthouse Museum is an amazing stop.



A fascinating museum has just opened, the Sail, Power and Steam Museum. Jim Sharpe is its owner and inspiration. His museum contains a wide variety of historical small ships, early steam engines, and devices for loading and unloading ships. One source of his machines and ship models is from the Snow family, who operated a very large shipbuilding company on his museum site. In a family basement, he found a treasure trove of historical model vessels.

The Owl's Head Transportation Museum is truly one of Rockland's notable sites. It includes an array of model automobiles, from even before the turn of the century through the 1930s. These include some of Ford's Model Ts to classic Packards and Duesenbergs.

Owl's Head also features several restored models of classic planes, such as the Wright Brothers model from Kitty Hawk and mail carriers from the 1920s. Besides the cars and planes themselves, viewers can take tours around the outside premises in a Model T. On some days, airplane tours in these restored models are available.



It doesn't make sense to visit Maine without learning about its lobster industry. Lobster fishing is still a prominent Rockland industry. For decades, lobstermen recognized that the supply of ocean lobsters is finite and they self police to fish responsibly. For example, lobsters over and under prescribed amounts (under 3.5 inches or over 5.5 inches from bottom of head to tail) are thrown back. Similarly, females with eggs are not harvested. Modern lobster traps have small doors, enabling smaller creatures to escape.

The lobster industry took a severe hit in 2009, due to the economic downturn. Retail prices of lobsters plummeted to around \$2 per pound, even though costs of boat gasoline and bait kept expenses at around the same \$2. Now, economic recovery, albeit slow, seems to be starting.

As an industry, lobster fishing depends on terrain claimed by individual fishermen. Considerable aggression is employed to protect each terrain. Attempts of newcomers to enter the local industry are very difficult to effect.

One working lobster pound known as Ship to Shore Lobsters provided our group with a very educational tour of this fascinating industry.

Some of our group went out with Captain Jack's Lobster Adventure on a working lobster boat. Steve named the lobster tour boat and business after his grandson. Only six can go at a time, but you pull traps, toss or keep depending on size and eggs, and learn the difference between male and female. Captain Steve has many lobster tales to liven up the adventure.

Another experience for us was to visit the new Farmer's Fare, which provides a unique combination of gardens, kitchen facilities, and farmers' market. Products of local organic farming are prominently featured. The Fare's motto is "Gathering People Together

to Make Joy and Eat Ice Cream.”

We were fortunate to tour the James Beard awarded Primo Restaurant. This represents the dream of its owner, Melissa Kelly She was trained by her Italian grandfather. Primo mostly relies on its own herbs and greens, as well as its own pigs and chickens. These animals are fed with the same types of home grown organic products. When they use other farmers, they know all details about their livestock.

Trolley tours, with narration, are available to go through Rockland’s historic district. The National Registry of Historic Places lists over 145 structures as having historic significance. There is also a wine trolley tour with the wineries we visited listed below.

Maine now has an established wine industry. These vintners are part of the small business entrepreneurs mentioned above. Our group visited three: Sweet Grass Winery and Distillery, Savage Oakes Winery, and Cellardoor Winery.

Sweet Grass is also a working farm. Besides its wine section of 3.5 acres, the farm’s owners, Elmer and Holly Savage, grow pigs and fascinating Belted Galloway cattle that look like Oreos. Savage Oakes is currently the only vineyard in the state to use 100% of its own grapes in wines. Its owner, Keith Bodine, also makes apple wine on his 200 year old farm. Cellardoor Winery provides an elaborate tasting facility and store that serves lunch. Owner Bettina Doulton acquired the operation in 2007 and has hired experienced wine professionals to run daily operations and dramatically improve the quality of the wine.

Windjammer Cruise

A small group of us continued on a 3 day wine cruise on Maine windjammer, Stephen Taber. This schooner was built in 1871, but has been lovingly cared for and remains in pristine condition. It also boasts of being the oldest documented vessel in continuous service in the U.S. It has never missed a season. Its current owners are Captain Noah & Jane Barnes.

It has no motors, but, depending on wind conditions, can be pushed by a small motorboat. Indoor plumbing is fully functioning. Sleeping facilities are accessible by ladders, as is the kitchen galley. Depending on weather, meals are served on deck, but can be moved into the galley.

Our first day on board was cold and dreary, although visibility was good. That night, we were very grateful for our extra warm clothing. However, the next day was glorious and sunny and really made up for the previous 24 hours. A few adventurous souls braved diving into the ocean, which remained at a frigid 50 degrees despite the warm sun. If desired, you could help raise and lower the sails and anchor, quite a chore.

Our excellent meals were amazing and prepared in a 1920s wood stove. Nothing was too complicated for Chef Amy. Jane Barnes oversaw two exceptional wine tastings. Jane has the ability to explain and serve that encourages the novice and delights the well-seasoned.

Rockland Dining

A variety of Rockland restaurants, bakers, and winegrowers provided our group with a dinner/reception at Rustica Cucina Italiana Restaurant. Such treats as mussels, salads, tapas and desserts provided an example of savory meals to come. We were also able to mix and meet with other local businesses that made our trip possible.

One dinner was at the newly opened Pearl Restaurant. The food and water view on three sides was a hit. Those who ordered lobster were delighted.

We enjoyed a progressive lunch, dining at all four of the Historic Inns of Rockland—Berry Manor Inn, Captain Lindsey House Inn, Granite Inn, and the LimeRock Inn. Each inn provided a savory and sweet pie like they do for National Pie Day in January.

We enjoyed another lunch at Café Miranda, with its extensive eclectic menu that goes far beyond well-known lobster fare. Its owner, Kerry Altiero, offers Thai, Italian, and other fares. In a section of bar seats, his cooking activities are readily visible and he often describes them while in process.

One night, our group split up for dinner, taking in several Rockland restaurants. These included the above mentioned Rustica Italiana Cucina, Café Miranda, Amalfi Restaurant, and In Good Company as well as Lily’s. We all brought back glowing experiences.

A highlight of our IFWTWA tour was a lobster bake in the garden of the Captain Lindsey House. Besides delicious lobster, corn on the cob, and wine, the conclusion was a notable dessert of strawberry rhubarb pie. In addition, the Fiore establishment provided a tasty array of olive oils and balsamic vinegars for a tasting. We also met a husband and wife team who devised a new marketing effort to expand lobster sales using the internet. Their firm, “Crate to



Plate," lets you purchase a trap for a month, 3 months, or a season and get the catch. You can check online to see how many lobsters are in your crate and ready to ship live when you want. With our primary Maine hosts, the Historic Inns of Rockland, we had a delicious fun-filled evening.

On our trip back to the airport, our group from the schooner made one last notable stop. This was at Cold River Vodka Distillery. Here, we sampled vodka produced from Maine potatoes, rather than the grain used in most well known vodka brands.

Historic Inns of Rockland

Our IFWTWA tour could only have taken place with the efforts of the Historic Inns of Rockland. All are B & Bs. They deserve lengthy descriptions, but below are brief ones:

Berry Manor Inn—This 1898 Victorian style award winning 12 room inn is one of Maine's premier B&B's. It's been decorated with attention to detail in every aspect. The beds are all custom made and delightfully comfortable. It has the charm of the Victorian era with up-to-date luxuries. All guest rooms have luxury baths, complimentary high-speed Internet access, air conditioning, phones, flat-screen television and use of well-stocked guest pantries complete with homemade pies. This four diamond B&B has been recognized by Maine as an "Environmental Leader in Hospitality." Owners Cheryl Michaelson and husband Mike LaPosta say, "We are committed to pampering our guests while proving that one doesn't need to give up comfort, luxury, or service to stay in an environmentally friendly inn." 81 Talbot Avenue, Rockland, Maine 04841. Tel: (800) 774-5692 or (207) 596-7696



Captain Lindsey House—Switch to thinking old English Inn blended with a Maine sea captain's home built in 1832. As soon as you step inside, the hospitality is evident. The antiques, down couches and well-stocked library draw you inside to relax. The library also has a desk and computer port for guests. You can also use complimentary WiFi in other areas of the inn. Fresh flowers are in every room and down comforters are on each bed. Owned by Captains Ken and Ellen Barnes, the inn conveys their personality, as they owned, restored, and sailed the 1871 Stephen Taber for 25 years. Patricia Payeur, Innkeeper, is equally charming. All rooms and suites have a phone, computer modem port, television, air conditioning and private bath. These modern conveniences do not detract from the antiques. You can enjoy your breakfast in the oak paneled replica of an English pub, the garden, or delivered to your room. Afternoon treasures include a cool drink, sherry or port with some delicious snack. Once the weather is cooler, guests prefer to gather by the fireplace for afternoon tea. 5 Lindsey Street, Rockland, Maine 04841. Tel: (800) 523-2145 or (207) 596-7950.



Granite Inn—This B&B was built in 1840 of gray granite, quarried nearby. Federal colonial in style, it overlooks Rockland's busy harbor with the fresh sea air and gulls flying. It is in the National Historic District of Rockland, green certified, and pet-friendly. Joan and Ed Hantz completely redid the inside of the structure. Joan's design background shows throughout with bright, clean cut and comfortable furnishings intermingled with select antiques. You'll enjoy a hearty gourmet breakfast, wireless Internet, handicap accessible, State of Maine Environmental Leader certified, and an inviting front porch that beckons you to sit and enjoy. 546 Main Street, Rockland, Maine 04841. Tel: (800) 386-9036 or (207) 594-9036

Lime Rock Inn—A turreted Victorian mansion turned into a B&B, its Queen Anne architecture makes you think about a bygone era. Your Innkeeper owners Frank Isganitis and PJ Walter traded a suit and tie and busy urban life to one of gracious service. Hearty breakfasts, private fireplaces, whirlpool or European soaking tubs and king beds welcome you. The Inn is WiFi enabled and has a guest computer as well as complimentary refreshments in the guest pantry. Like the other Inns, the LimeRock Inn is high in ratings and rated an Environmental Leader. 96 Limerock Street, Rockland, Maine 04841. Tel: (800) 546-3762

Just as picking a favorite activity or spa was difficult, so is picking my favorite inn. We have been fortunate to experience all of them and each has its own charm. We would suggest looking at their rooms online to determine which one meets your needs. Historic Inns of Rockland, Maine, www.HistoricInnsOfRockland.com. You can also discover the various tours and specials offered

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