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GOLF

Delawana Pines GC is a 9-hole pitch and putt with a target range. Use of the course is included in your stay. There is an extra charge for range balls, but club rentals are free at the course and range. For championship length 18-hole play, the hotel packages a spring and fall golf getaway with Brooklea G&CC. Staff can arrange tee times any time of year with Bonaire GC, Hawk Ridge G&CC or Brooklea.

Families Will Wanna Delawana

By Laura Aiken

Some childhood memories are as fleeting as the countryside seen from the seat of a Ferrari. Others are tattooed to the mind, infinite reminders that evoke emotion no matter how much time passes. The family vacation is one event that always strives for a place of permanency, with expectations running as high as the excitement.



Delawana Inn Spa & Conference Resort is geared to over deliver on the promise of a memorable family getaway. In fact, they are so in tune with family holidays that they offer packages catering specifically to single parents. This is very innovative in an industry based on double occupancy rates that don't bode well for one person travelling with children.

"We now see blended families that met here as single parents," says Lisa Lauder, sales and marketing manager for Delawana, adding that she believes the single parent customization is likely exclusive to the resort.

Located in Muskoka's Honey Harbour, Delawana has culled an endless playground of activities from 25 acres of rocky outcrops, sandy beaches, golf and its own island. The fun begins May long weekend and runs until Thanksgiving.

Guests will find some neat offerings such as wave runner safaris, a climbing wall, sailing, a water trampoline and complimentary sunset cruises on the Miss Midland, but also everything usual of a northern resort—tennis, boat rentals, horseshoes and campfires. Evening entertainment mixes musicians and comedy with magicians. The social itinerary runs the gamut of yoga, a family juggling workshop, cooking demon-

strations, golf clinics, kid's arts and crafts, karaoke, billiards tournament and pool parties.

"They don't really see the value they get through the package until they get here," says Lauder. Meals are packaged as well (excluding lunch in the summer), making it nearly an all-inclusive vacation. Alcohol, spa services and a few items like jet skis are additional costs.

Tack on fully supervised days camps for kids (two of which stay free), and it seems no surprise that Delawana has won City Parent reader's choice award for best summer resort for four years straight and earned 5-stars from Hotel Fun for Kids, the highest rating awarded by this web based company that reviews hotels and resorts specifically on their level of service to children. Definitely bring the kids, but resort policy is no pets.

That's just a small sample of what's included in your holiday package. In short, it's easy to be busy, but no sweat to be lazy. There are five different types of accommodations to kick back in, ranging from houses to smaller chalets and suites. This resort is not for the family looking for the ultra modern experience. The cottage feel is rustic and generational, not condo luxury. Think porches and wicker not balconies and leather.



Bay Area Golfing magazine toured the Cape House, one of the home rentals, which sits in a semi-secluded spot overlooking Georgian Bay. The sweet

The Gris  brothers, who operated the Royal Hotel across the channel, bought Victoria House in the 1920s. Fred Gris  took over, handing the management down to his son Didace and daughter-in-law Mary, who raised five sons and four daughters while running the resort. Victoria House became the Delawana Inn under the Gris s. Local lore says that a Chief named Delawana lost his daughter in a rock-fall and this is how the name came about. By 1935, Delawana had the capacity for 100 guests and all the modern amenities of the day to keep competitive. Fire destroyed the main building in 1952, which was rebuilt only to be wiped out again by flames in 1973. The family rebuilt once again. In 1996, a Toronto development company purchased the Delawana from the Gris  family.

walls hits you upon entry, where you find a full kitchen. This spacious but true cottage even has a kid's bedroom tucked under the stairs and ladder-like climb up that lead to loft beds. Delawana is an earthy vacation, but it still offers the spa experience. This year they've added treatments especially for kids and teens. And the dining goes beyond BBQ. Executive Red Seal chef Krista Weston heads up the fare for the dining room, lounges, bar areas and Mackinaw restaurant. Meals are mixed up with a la carte nights, buffets and BBQ's.

Guests may want to take the time to check out the many old photographs and memorabilia hanging in the lobby and lounge areas. Delawana has been hosting guests since Nathan Nickerson and sons opened it as Victoria House in 1897.

The resort may have evolved over the years but the landscape is timeless. It's an excellent place to see the Northern Lights (Aurora Borealis), a light show of greens, reds and purples only seen in the north, with September being the best month to witness it. There are many natural sights to take in on this UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Royal and Beausoleil islands are popular for hiking and the Wye Marsh Wildlife Centre is the spot for eco programs for kids. Nickerson cottage is available for rent on Royal Island and comes with exclusive use of a boat.

With over a century of experience in the memory-making business, perhaps Delawana will be just the place to earn a permanent spot in your family scrapbook. ☺