

# DIRTY DANCING ON KEZAR LAKE

By Peggy Newland

"Where are the dance instructors?" my friend, Joan, asks as one of the friendly front desk attendants whisks us off in a golf cart to our lakeside cottage.

"Oh, you'll see us all tonight at the Broadway Cabaret," he replies, winking.

We're at Quisisana, which comes from an Italian phrase meaning "place of healing" but in front of us, it's more lakeside Broadway, with the vibe of cabin-central Catskills ala "Dirty Dancing." Sunset and cocktails on a veranda before donning a sundress for dinner and a show? Sure. Built for musicians and theater lovers, Quisisana offers nine performances a week so you can get your fill of chamber music, opera, and of course, the razzmatazz of Broadway shows and tunes. Most of the youthful staff are recruited from top music conservatories and their energy is contagious. In a good way.

Our cottage, Andante, is decked out in knotty pine with white-washed paisley charm, and it overlooks Kezar Lake, with views across to the distant White Mountains. A lit-up vanity mirror adds to the excitement. When the dinner chime rings, Joan and I wander over woodland paths to the candlelit dining room, naming each of the unique cabins along the way: Bole-ro, Harmony, Adagio, Nocturne. We enjoy glasses of pinot grigio with our saffron lobster risotto and fresh sweet peas. Our waitress is one of the soloists for that evening's show.

"I'll be singing with the jazz combo," she tells us.

An adapted rough-hewn barn is elegantly tableclothed and lit by tea lights, and cocktails are abundant. Joan and I are entertained by tap dancers, future Broadway stars, and snappy jazz ensembles. We clap until our hands hurt and clap even more for encores and then walk back to our cottage under a night sky of stars.

The next morning, after a breakfast of "Quisi" waffles, bacon, fresh blueberries, and multiple cups of coffee, Joan and I head off in a canoe for a lake tour of islands, loon nesting grounds, and clear lake gliding on

the curved and quiet Kezar. We look for Stephen King's lake house, but are content to cruise past rustic camps and elegant summer cottages. Tributaries open into twisting coves and hawks careen past pines. Upon return, we grab a couple of picnic lunches and scope out some cushioned chaise lounges on the "quiet beach" and take afternoon naps. Swims to and from the raft are refreshing interludes. Two opera singers float past us on stand-up boards, a flotilla of kayaks dock, and an acapella group is warming up for cocktail hour.

The sunset blazes, turning the lake fiery red and orange, as we enjoy shrimp and canapes. Joan and I make fast friends of families who return year after year for "culture and relaxation" and at dinner that night, we chat with a couple who met here fifty years ago. "Love at first sight," they nod. They are surrounded by great-grandchildren.

It's buffet night, with lobsters, grilled salmon, carving stations, and local farm grown vegetables and salads. The pastry table is an extravaganza of chocolate cakes, strawberries, shortcakes, blueberry pies, ganache, and cupcakes of every filling and frosting.

"This is heaven," I say, pouring chocolate sauce on some gelato.

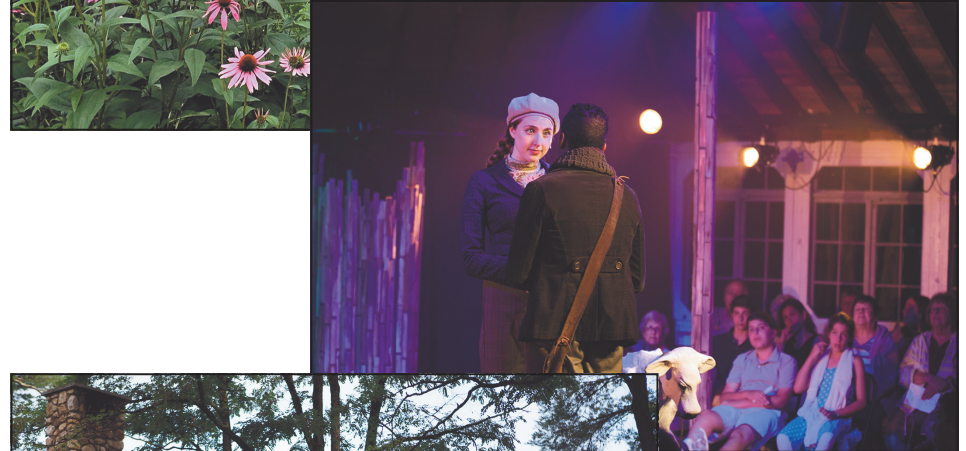
One evening, on the screened, wrap-around porch of the Music Hall, a chamber ensemble of cello, viola, and violin are accompanied by the pianist. Between pieces, the call of loon echoes, and the crickets sing.

"This is the most relaxed I've been in a long time," Joan whispers.

"And the most full," I add, as the moon rises in front of center stage.

We have two more days of theater, cookouts, shuffleboard, arias, yoga, ensembles, jazz trios, and napping. The next morning, we've made plans to cycle around the narrows, following the Saco River, and circling around the entirety of the lake. Of course, we'll be back in time for cocktails, sunset, dinner, and a show.

Quisisana is perfection with a touch of jazz, a Broadway-inspired jewel on the edge of a lake.



Courtesy photos



## if you go

**Quisisana. [www.quisisanaresort.com](http://www.quisisanaresort.com).**

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