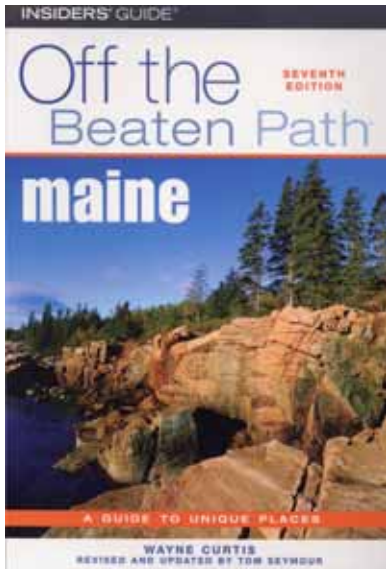


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www.theclaremont hotel.com



Insiders' Guide Off the Beaten Path - Seventh Edition Maine

The Claremont Hotel in Southwest Harbor is one of the best surviving examples of a grand nineteenth-century island resort. What makes it so extraordinary is that it retains not just the architecture and gracefully simple décor, but much of the quiet, dignified character. Built in 1884 on a low rise overlooking the mouth of Somes Sound, the distinguished four-story wooden hotel once attracted the eastern seaboard's gentry, who summered here for weeks at a time. It's been blessedly unchanged over the years and features nice touches, like rush-seated rockers on the porch and a pianist serenading guests during cocktail hour at the boathouse. The big event is the Claremont Classic, a croquet tournament that ends with a dance on the croquet court.

A room for two in season begins at \$180; cottages begin at \$195. The hotel is open early June through mid-October. Call (800) 244-5036 or 244-5036; on the Web, www.theclaremonthotel.com

Wayne Curtis – Revised and updated by Tom Seymour

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Yankee Magazine Travel Guide to New England 2005

The Claremont Hotel,
Southwest Harbor

Mount Desert Island's oldest hotel (c.1884) has the grace and dignity, but not the size of stuffiness, of a grand hotel. Overlooking the entrance to Somes Sound, it also has the best view of any lodging establishment on the island. Wildflowers brighten bureaus, wood floor gleam around Oriental carpets in the sitting rooms, the vintage elevator works, and the dining room is just fine. Request one of the 24 rooms in the hotel itself or one of the eight guest rooms in the annexes. Families will enjoy one of the 14 cottages. Open late May to mid-October. Rates: \$174-\$250, including full breakfast and dinner. 22 Claremont Rod. 800-244-5036, 207-244-5036. theclaremonthotel.com (Map: I-6)

Maine – Editors' Choice

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Forecaster

Opinion - John's Column (by John Cole)

Maine's Own

Maine folks are among those responsible for at least some of that heavy traffic you must have complained about at least once by now. And like a great many other Maine folks, the Boss and I were on the road last week, headed Downeast for a few days in an enchanted world. Our destination, thanks to the kindness of friends, was the Claremont Hotel on Southwest Harbor.

Now 115 years old and growing, the Claremont has been popular for more than a century, and with good reason. Well, several good reasons. One of them, and surely one of the top 10, is its location. Perched on a hilltop overlooking the entrance to Somes Sound on Mount Desert Island, the Claremont commands one of Maine's most splendid prospects, and, I am certain, one of the finest on the planet.

Sitting and rocking (as I have done so many times) in one of the hotel's fine wood-and-wicker rockers on the main building's long, high-roofed porch, the fortunate rusticator gazes east by southeast across the sound's blue and sparkling waters to the rounded mountaintops of Acadia rising green against the sky. To the north, Somes Sound, the nation's only genuine fjord, moves majestically between the mountains as lobsterboats circle their trap buoys like anxious mothers.

It is so quintessentially Maine coast it never fails to take my breath away, and, after a while, restore my faith in the goodness of our lives. That would be reason enough spending time perched on harsh rock ledges, but no such primitivism is required at the Claremont: a most civilized and gentle place, a kind of Never-Never Land in today's frantic and helter-skelter world. A restorative if ever there was.

The sights and the beauty that can be seen from a Claremont rocking chair are exceptional, to say the least. But this past weekend, they were nothing less than remarkable. On Saturday – a day, as you may recall, blessed by clear skies, and a refreshing northwest breeze – a stately procession of more than 100 of the finest wooden boats ever built sailed and motored up Somes Sound from the sea. They were boats that had been built at Southwest Harbor's Hinckley Boatyard, wooden boats conceived, designed, and built in that small corner of Maine by Maine craftspeople: each and every one a thing of beauty and classic performance.

To see these living sculptures in such a breathtaking procession, one after the other, well, I'll tell you, there in that superb setting, it was indeed an unforgettable experience. I know that phrase is over-used, but anyone, landlubber or Midwest suburbanite, fortunate enough to witness that parade of angels afloat will never forget it. I know that for a fact.

So I'm sitting there rustivating in my Claremont rocker and I'm thinking that this is Maine at its best. It is Maine at its best because it's so genuine, so possessed of such an uncommon integrity, a virtue diminishing before our eyes, even in our nation's capital. Well, especially in our nation's capital.

But here is the Claremont, precisely what it claims to be: a summer hote, although this one sets the standard for summer hotels the world around. And there are those Hinckley boats, charged with an integrity of craftsmanship and design that sets them apart, the world around. And there are those famous mountains of Acadia looking down on Maine lobstermen doing their work of generations.

If anyone out there is wondering what Maine should become, it would be a fine thing for them to spend some time in a rocker on the Claremont porch before any decisions are made.

John Cole

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Travel & Leisure

Fall Travel guide September 2007

Where to Stay – The 19th-century Claremont Hotel (22 Claremont Rd., 800/244-5036; theclaremonthotel.com; doubles from \$144, including breakfast), recently redone, is a refreshing change from the homely, doily-clad inns typical of the area. The wraparound wooden porch and 11 of its 24 rooms have views of glistening Somes Sound – North America’s only fjord. Insider Tip Avid cyclist and bike shop owner Steve Boucher suggest you try his favorite ride, “the 12-mile Around the Mountain Trail, which runs from Brown Mountain past Eagle Lake to Jordan Pond House restaurant {207/276-3316; snack for two \$20}, where you can break fro warm popovers and chai.”

Clara O. Sedlak

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National Geographic Traveler 54 Great Inns Expert Picks from Coast to Coast (April 1999)

Great Inns of the Northeast
Claremont Hotel – Southwest Harbor, Maine

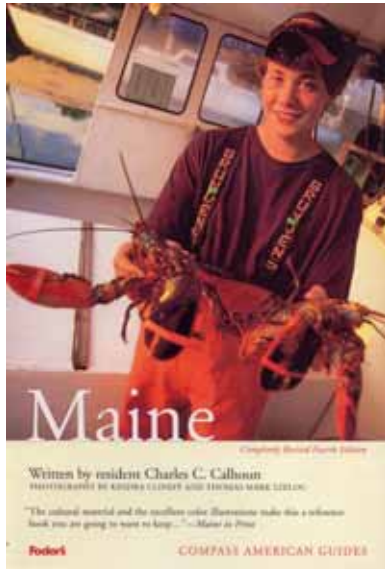
The view from this 1884 Maine hotel is a Down East postcard: lobster boats and sailing vessels backed by granite mountaintops across Somes Sound. Guests at this Mount Desert Island resort can get acquainted over a game of croquet, in rocking chairs on the veranda, or during one of the Thursday evening summer lectures. "This place just exudes Maine," says Christina Tree. Tip: The rooms with water views are worth the extra expense. Open June 11-Oct. 20 29 rooms, 1 suite, 12 cottages, dock and moorings. \$115-155, water-view rooms \$160-200, no credit cards. Policies: 3-day min. in cottages; special discounts for children; not smoking in hotel building. P.O. Box 137, 04679; 207-244-5036, 800-244-5036, fax 244-3512; www.acadia.net/claremont Activities: rowboats, croquet, tennis, and, in nearby Acadia National Park, sailing, fresh-water swimming, summer theater.

Great American Inns by Adam Holland & Nathan Harris

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Maine Fodor's Fourth Edition Compass American Guides

Southwest Harbor's most memorable landmark, however, is the vintage Claremont Hotel (on the National Register of Historic Places), which has looked out over Somes Sound and Cadillac Mountain for more than a century. It is one of the few wooden hotels in Maine to have survived, and it won't be to everyone's taste: there are not TVs in the rooms, and the furnishings are not the last work in design. But in terms of restful surroundings-the only public excitement comes from its famous croquet tournaments-superb views, good food, human scale, and a lightly worn sense of nostalgia, it cannot be equaled in the state. Actually a complex of old hotel and surrounding cottages, the hotel is usually booked well in advance for much of the summer. But you can always have a drink or lunch down at its boathouse and enjoy the scenery, directly across from Greening Island (private), the locale of May Sarton's novel *The Magnificent Spinster*.

Charles C. Calhoun

The article featured the painting with the caption:
The Claremont Hotel has long been one of Mount Desert Island's most evocative resorts.

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Travel section of the September 2003 issue of “Die Zeit” Lovely and expensive

The Claremont Hotel, Maine

On the coast of Maine lies Mount Desert Island. Discovered in the 17th century by a French seafarer who mapped and compared it to a bundt cake, not a luxurious cake- a dessert for the hungry captain. The rounded mountains could also have been described as breasts in the sea. Strangely, those who live on this paradise pronounce “desert” as the French would, putting the accent on the second syllable, which is very unusual for American speakers. Mount Desert Island and the group of islands that make this pine-forested archipelago represent the changing geographical history of the United States. At one point a piece of real estate on this island, which was the size of the German city of Hamburg, belonged to the Rockefeller family. They donated the mountain in the middle of the island to the national government, and this is the beginning of one of the most beautiful national parks of the United States. There are free busses to take visitors around until they land in the tourist trap, Bar Harbor. Those who choose to get off in Southwest Harbor will find a true delicatessen where Rockefeller himself used to buy his peanuts. One can either stay in a bed and breakfast inn, or spend a few days in the Claremont Hotel. One could not find a nicer, more suitable location than this.

It is located on the shore overlooking more islands and the entrance to the longest fjord in America, Somes Sound. This hotel is not luxurious with its yellow-painted, wooden façade and modest amenities. On the well-manicured lawn are two croquet courses where you will find children and seniors participating in this strange game. The colliding wooden balls “cling” with a well-to-do air. Outside of this there is not much else to listen to. There is no elevator music, just the seagulls screaming overhead and distinct groans from the tennis court. The rooms are not fancy, but display a more simple elegance that is New England and which represents “old money.” Style takes the place of Luxury. Also in the summer months of July and August is an open, doublewide foyer one can appreciate a crackling fire in the fireplace. Not because it is cold, but because the management wants to show: We have a lot of wood in Maine.

Aside from this, the Claremont Hotel has a good wine list and serves fresh lobsters for \$18. In the kitchen there is a chef working who does not know what “nouvelle cuisine” is. God bless him! The personnel? There are many well-raised, agreeable, American college students who consider this temporary work. They like their customers, but do not know if one should serve from the right or the left.

Formerly, there was a tie and jacket code in the dining room. This was interesting in as much as the hotel guests stood in line for dinner in shirts, summer jackets and ties. I personally favored the frog green jacket that a crazy guest left behind seventy years ago. To it went a decent nylon bow tie. Unfortunately they have let this requirement slip. In the meantime, an open shirt is acceptable, but no tee shirts are allowed.

The Claremont is a relic from another time, where America was very aware of the division between rich and those who aspired to be rich. With its unobtrusive, well-proportioned surroundings, one is reminded of the novels of Thomas Mann. A path leads to the crystal clear, cold water (16-18 C.) of the Atlantic where one can see a pair of boats and a small bar which no one to knowledge actually takes seriously, and where I have never seen anyone dry for more martinis. In this situation there seems to be no reason to worry about life. One gets the feeling that one could solve the world’s problems in one round of croquet.

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Esquire/May 1996

Man at His Best

Special Places – Four Views of the Bay

The Claremont
Mount Desert

The porch, according to certain experts, makes the inn. It must be broad, with a sturdy balustrade and plentiful wooden furniture, and it must overlook scenery that is inspiring but not so monumental that it leaves one speechless. Talk, after all, is what porches are for. The Claremont's porch meets these criteria. The view is flawlessly orchestrated, a stately progression of green lawn and sun-dappled water, modulating to a low green harbor island and then to the finale, a range of blue-gray rounded hills. The Boston aristocracy, which would have found Niagara Falls, for instance, a garish and untoward spectacle, saw in this elegant natural geometry a flattering mirror of their own ideas of restraint, which is undoubtedly why Mount Desert became their spa of choice in the late nineteenth century.

The Claremont, built in 1883, continues to be sustained by these values. Croquet is the reigning sport, followed by tennis, played on a clay court on the grounds. The hotel's forty-one rooms are light and airy; many are sprinkled with antiques, but never so many as to suggest a period exhibit. There are boats to be hired in the harbor, walks to be taken in the mountains of Acadia National Park, and freshwater ponds to swim in nearby. The dining room serves simple, well-prepared food. The only area where restraint might not be practiced is in the matter of desserts, which tend toward the cathedralesque. The price of a room for two, including breakfast and dinner, ranges from \$130 to \$125 a night. (Tel.: 207-244-5036.)

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John Updike

Claremont Hotel, Southwest Harbor, Maine

Click Clack. Struck-wicket thud.
Human exclamations, mannerly.
Such are the sounds
of croquet, carried on an idle breeze.
Saltwater, just beyond, is steely blue,
bedecked by mooring-balls and colored buoys,
beneath a sky where tufts of cirrus hang
like combings from a pampered, moon-white dog.
Vacationland, all bays and sails and trees.

The lumbermen who rafted logs downstream,
the fishermen whose slickers gleamed through storms,
as did the struggling silver in their nets,
impart, though dead, a hardness to this coast
where, mornings, wickets on their vacant courts
make, with their shadows, rhomboidal pairs of wings.

Maine mountains, vestiges of Appalachians
once mightier than Rockies,
have balding tips, like men, and crumbling sides
that seek to fill the sea with scree and piles
of giant blocks for reassembly
next aeon. Rocking on the Claremont porch
in my fortuity and gazing past
the croquet court and sail-filled, too-blue bay

and shoreline summer homes to pine-dark slopes
that hide their hiking trails, I see a spot,
below the crest, a broad gray bare spot where I
would like to be, like very much, so much
a lightning crackle floods my chest with pain:
the viewer, like the view, is wearing out.

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Connecticut Magazine

April 1988

The Grand Resorts of New England

*A marvelous sense of
privacy and lovely, ever-
changing views....*

The Claremont, Maine

The Claremont, established in 1884, is Mount Desert Island's oldest hotel and on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1978 a much renovation was done, and the hotel, although maintaining its charm, has all the up-to-date facilities of a summertime resort. The setting of the hotel is spectacular, and outstrips the location of any other public lodging on Mount Desert Island. From its numerous sitting areas-the porch with dark green wicker chairs and rockers, the expanse of lawn with broad-armed white wooden chairs, or the new bathhouse where you can have lunch or a drink at night – it is possible to look for imposing Cadillac Mountain across Somes Sound to beautiful waterfront estates in Northeast Harbor. If you bring binoculars along you can clearly see the huge swimming pool at Northeast Harbor's swim club, and all the lobster boats, sailboats and motor yachts that ply these waters. The view changes by the minute, and one never tires of it. This is one of those rare places where you can spend your entire vacation without leaving the grounds, and still have seen some of New England's most beautiful scenery.

The Claremont consists of the old hotel with new dining room, two guest houses, Phillips House and Clark House and 11 cottages. Although the whole complex is certainly larger than a standard inn, the prevailing atmosphere is friendly, helpful and comfortable. There is a marvelous sense of privacy. The rooms in the hotel are decorated with chenille bedspreads, white curtains, and old, comfortable, clean furniture. The floors are a bit creaky, but not to worry – folks here go to bed very early. Phillips House has larger rooms, a shared living room with fireplace and a broad wrap-around veranda. Clark House has a suite, and the cottages have bedrooms, living rooms with fireplaces and sundecks. Ask for a room with a view.

The common rooms comprise a reception area, a game room and the living room. The reception area has a fireplace that is roaring most mornings and evenings. The game room is lined with book-shelves. The living room has a television and comfortably worn furniture. There's also a small porch where all events taking place on the island are listed.

continued>

The dining room has been built so that every table has a view of the water. Jackets and ties are required at dinner; nonetheless, the atmosphere is relaxed, not stuffy. The food is very good to excellent, with an emphasis on fresh fish. Many of the 10 or more entrees that are offered each night, all cooked to order, have a slightly French twist, though rarely depart from solid home cooking. On Saturday night, prime rib with Yorkshire pudding is served. Fresh boiled lobster is available any night. At lunch, served right in the boathouse on the water, simple, delicious sandwiches are available.

There is much to do on Mount Desert Island, but guests who wish to stay near the hotel will find plenty to keep them busy. There are clay tennis courts, badminton and water sports. Rowboats and motorboats are available. The Claremont Croquet Classic, held every August. Guests are invited to participate or sip a drink on the veranda and watch.

Claremont Road
Southwest Harbor, ME 04679
207/244-5036
Innkeeper: John Madeira, Jr.
11 Cottages, 3 suites, 25 doubles,
2 singles; all except 2 with private bath

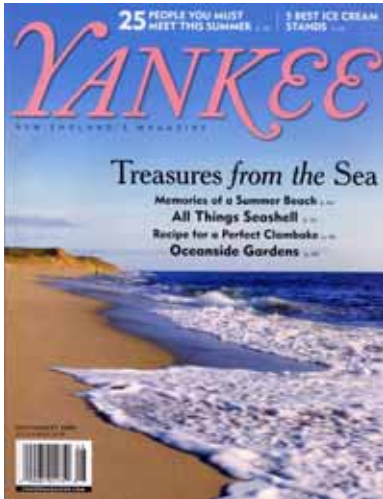
Season (cottages): \$80-\$118EP
Off-season (cottages): \$56 to \$69 EP

Hotel & Phillips House: singles \$65MAP,
Doubles \$110 to \$120MAP
Clark House suite: doubles \$124MAP, \$72EP
Personal check
Children welcome

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Yankee New England's Magazine July/August 2008

The Guide Travel – Rooms of Wonder

Our question to renowned guidebook author Christina Tree was simply: "If you could stay overnight at only five places in New England, where would they be?"

The Best View Around

The Claremont Hotel, Mount Desert's oldest inn, possesses the grace but not the size or formality of a grand hotel – and the Maine Island's best view.

Walking into the comfortably sized lobby, you pour a glass of ice water, ease into a wing chair by the fire or a rocker on the porch, and feel at home. Upstairs the original 35 second- and third-floor guestrooms have been reduced to 24, all with closets and baths, furnished with refinished original pieces and graceful reproductions. Rooms overlooking the tennis court cost less than those with views across the water to Acadia's rounded mountains.

This is the view that mesmerizes guests rocking on the long veranda. It's what you see from every table in the glass-faced dining room, and the from acres of the sloping lawns on which a few people usually dressed in white, clutching croquet mallets and pondering their next move on one of three velvety courts.

It's like chess on grass," observes hotel manager John Madeira, explaining that the first week in August marks the annual Claremont Croquet Tournament but that serious competitors are almost always on hand. So too is Till Harkins, senior local croquet enthusiasts, who'll teach the game to anyone who wants to learn. His usual takers are children, who are very much at home here. Families book one of the 14 housekeeping cottages of one of six rooms in the Phillips House, an annex with its own living room. Light meals are served at The Boathouse.

continued>

A number of guests arrive under sail, and although there are always newcomers, there are also always more repeat visitors, who expect traditions to be honored, such as the inn's Thursday night lectures on serious topics and its Saturday-night concerts, ranging from chamber music to jazz.

To underscore the residency of Daniel Sweimler, one of the area's best know chefs, the dining room has been named "Xanthus," a seemingly cryptic choice – but no mystery to Claremont regulars. Xanthus Smith was a landscape artist who probably bartered his portrait of the hotel in exchange for a room back in 1885. Hanging prominently in the dining room, the painting glows with the captivating spirit that still persists.

By Christina Tree