

Continually drawn to the dock by the bay

Mark Pavilons



The sun is shining and you're near the water. What more could you ask for?

That's how the owner of our resort put it to me during our family's week-long stay.

Adrian was right.

The Pavilons clan returned to the historic Delawana Inn Resort, which is currently undergoing a resurrection of sorts, thanks to the new owner.

This place holds a lot of significance for our family and likely thousands more who've graced its shores over the past 117 years.

For our family, two of our three virtually grew up with summer holidays at the Del. In fact, one of them visited the place while still in mom's tummy. It became our home away from home and for many reasons, it just felt right.

The Delawana Inn first opened its doors in 1897. The Del is situated on historical Georgian Bay in Muskoka, which is rich in natural beauty, legends and folklore.

Much of its appeal has to do with the property itself - 25 gorgeous waterfront acres. Adrian mentioned that's what drew him to the place, too.

The Delawana Inn is now a self-catered resort that offers accommodations including cottages, chalets and cabins. Accommodations are available year-round.

Roughly 30% of the units are revamped and open, with more coming on stream on a regular basis. The owner has some great plans and is giving the dock-side a very nice face lift. He hopes to attract people throughout the fall and winter, too. The area is known for many ski resorts and brings out ice fishermen and snowmobilers in the winter months.

They have opened several of the smaller cabins and all cabins include a charcoal BBQ, small fridge and washroom. While they don't have kitchen facilities (they never did), one is available at the main office building.

The main building, which consisted of a dining room, several lounges and meeting rooms, is currently closed. The owner is assessing the opportunities for this building and hopes are it will be re-open in some form in the coming years.

We really didn't know what to expect, since we've been pampered by the all-inclusive Del over the past 12 years. In its heyday, it was a hive of activities for the kids, featuring beach parties, pool parties and nightly entertainment.

Now, while the scenic property and lodgings remain, it's strangely quiet. But if you listen closely, you can still feel the vibes from summers past.

Staying on a gorgeous piece of Georgian Bay real estate and having the beach all to yourself has many benefits.

And we were never bored. Our mornings began with an hour-long canoe or kayak trip around Royal Island, area coves and nearby marinas. That was followed by a quick lunch and an afternoon at the beach.

We made several home-cooked meals and spent the evenings together as a family. We even ventured to Midland and caught a movie at a drive-in - an experience which the kids thoroughly enjoyed. Very nostalgic.

This property has a secure place in our hearts. I thoroughly enjoyed this year's get-away and have nothing but praise for the property. I think its future is in good hands.

Carting a family up north to any resort can be a tiring and costly affair. We found the rates at the Del reasonable and you can choose the length of your stay.

Really folks, the idea of a family vacation is to get away from the hustle and bustle of our everyday lives, soak up nature and just relax and spend time together. You want a place with no pressure, no schedules, no appointments.

The Del fits the bill, as it always has.

For those who like exploring, Honey Harbour is a quaint little village, surrounded by water, and dotted with islands and channels for exploring by boat. Honey Harbour serves as a launching point to the 30,000 Islands that make up the Georgian Bay geography.

Honey Harbour is a great fishing destination and you can fish for pike, bass and perch right off of our docks. A boat launch is available at the end of Honey Harbour Road and we have ample slips and boat trailer parking available.

We were busy, active and relaxed, from sun up to sun down.

The on-site staff were great and any minor problems were handled quickly and efficiently. Again, it feels like you're part of a family, sharing the back 40 of grandpa's estate.

Our kids are already asking about a return visit.

Can you imagine the fall colours, or cross-country skiing? How about searching for ancient, multi-colours rocks on a well groomed beach in July?

All of this awaits.

You don't have to take my word for it, I am biased after all. Visit their website, give them a call or test the place out for a night.

There's so much history and beauty throughout Ontario, only an hour's drive away.

It really is ours to discover.?