

Living

You can stay in this elaborate Maine treehouse for \$289 a night

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Ida Lennest | BDN

Aerial bridges connect the different structures that are all part of a single tree house option at Seguin Tree Dwellings.

Is there a kid out there who hasn't dreamed of having their very own treehouse? A place high up in the leaves and branches to escape the grownup world below.

For adults who harbored that dream, some outside-the-vacation-box thinking innkeepers in Maine are letting grownups spend time reliving those childhood memories, albeit in a far more upscale manner.

There are seven tree houses in Maine available for overnight rentals or extended stays on the online lodging site AirBnB.

Think luxury tiny house meets The Little Rascals' club house up in the air.

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“There is just the whimsy of the idea of a tree house,” said 40-year-old Philip Francis, who with his wife Marsha Dunn, also 40, operate **Seguin Tree Dwellings** in Georgetown. “It’s a connection to the childhood imagination with a whole new airiness of life up in the trees.”

Forget discarded odd-sized pieces of scrapwood, broken windows and frayed rope ladders. The tree houses at Seguin feature clean lines, a minimalist decor and floor-to-ceiling vintage windows which appear to bring the outside into the dwelling.

The flagship tree house at Seguin is the three-building among the branches Souhegan with a two-story structure containing a master bedroom on the second floor with a kitchen and bathroom on the first floor. This is connected by an aerial walkway to the second building, which serves as either a living space or second bedroom. A second walkway in the trees takes guests to the third structure with a wood-fired cedar hot tub 18-feet above the ground.

Each of the three tree dwellings have decks with river views, kitchens and full baths with hot and cold running water.

Francis said he and Dunn knew almost from the first day they walked their land in Georgetown a few years ago that they wanted to branch out into something out of the ordinary.

“We were hiking on the land the first time and noticed all the stunning views, but the best access to those views was up in the trees,” Francis said. “So we climbed the trees and that really got our minds thinking.”

Francis said he and Dunn also wanted to offer something far off — and above — the beaten path for vacation goers.

“When you go away on vacation you are trying to break out of the everyday routine,” he said. “That’s why you go somewhere different and we wanted to make something really different.”

At Seguin, there are three “tree dwellings” which Francis describes as “part modern tree house and part vintage tiny house.”

All three were designed by Dunn to include private decks, verandas and, in one case, the wood-fired hot tub.

“Each one is unique and you would not call them rustic,” Francis said. “They are still part of the trees but there is also a really modern aesthetic.”

Thirty three-year-old Cindy and Josh Ring, 37, were also looking for something a little different and, together with Josh Ring's parents Frank, 60, and Karen, 59, Ring, they built **Timberstone Adventures** in Stoneham — a “treesort” with three tree houses and a disc golf course.

“My in-laws were actually living in a tree house because their own house burned down so they moved into the tree house they were building for the grandkids in Springfield rather than move into a hotel,” Cindy Ring said. “They wanted to move into our area so we just decided to do tree house rentals with disc golf — you don’t see many of those [and] we wanted something out of the ordinary to draw people.”

Now the whole family runs the “treesort” together.

Since opening a year and a half ago, Cindy Ring said they have been booked consistently with people delighted to find grown-up versions of their childhood tree forts.

“I think it brings back that little piece of childhood,” she said. “Everyone loved tree houses as a kid and now they can stay in one as adults.”

The Rings built their tree houses using lumber off their own land and equipped two of them with full kitchens and even a jetted bathtub in one.

“We also have a ‘primitive’ tree house that comes with its own outhouse,” Cindy Ring said with a laugh. “But people really seem to enjoy that one, too.”

The tree houses at Seguin are open from April 1 – the end of October, except for Souhegan which is available through Jan. 1. Prices for a night’s stay start at \$289 during the week and run to \$299 on weekends. There is a minimum three-night weekend stay.

At Timberstone the 1,200-square-foot Grand Oak tree house sleeps eight and includes a full kitchen, two full bathrooms — one with a jetted tub — two living rooms and a custom built spiral staircase.

Overnight fees start at \$89 for the primitive Birdie House — no running water and an outhouse — and run up to \$279 for The Grand Oak. There is no minimum night stay requirement, but single night reservations are slightly more expensive.

Timberstone tree houses are available from Memorial Day Weekend to November.

Both Ring and Francis admit there is a bit of their own childhood nostalgia in the updated tree houses.

“I attempted to build one growing up and as far as I got was a platform,” Cindy Ring said with a laugh. “I’m not really bitter about not having one but it would have been cool.”

Francis did not get much farther as a lad, saying his best attempt was a board in a tree.

“It’s such a simple thing really, this dwelling space elevated in the trees,” he said. “But it gives you such a different perspective from up there.”

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