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## Kennebunkport Festival NO BUNK, a Wild Week of Frivolous Fun!

*By Norman E. Hill and Maralyn D. Hill 'The Tandem Travelers'*

We three journalists, Maralyn and Norm Hill and Michelle Winner, arrived on Monday night, June 4, 2012, figuring our high expectations about the Festival would be met. They were. This Festival covers several Maine towns, including Kennebunkport and Kennebunk.

The annual Festival itself has been in place for several years, but Maine Magazine has been involved for the last two. Since this benefits *Share our Strength*, which provides food to schools so no child goes hungry in Maine, community support is phenomenal. It would be difficult to pick a better location, since the towns abound with charming old mansions and homes, many of which had been built by New England sea captains.

The three of us split up for lodgings. Maralyn and I stayed all six nights at Hidden Pond Resort and Spa. This establishment is outside of town, although it provides guest delivery and pickup into Festival areas and anywhere close you may want to venture. Many guests bring their own cars, as we did. Two types of rooms are provided, two bedroom cottages and single big room lodges, where we stayed. Our dwelling featured high ceilings and a stone fireplace, stretching to the top.

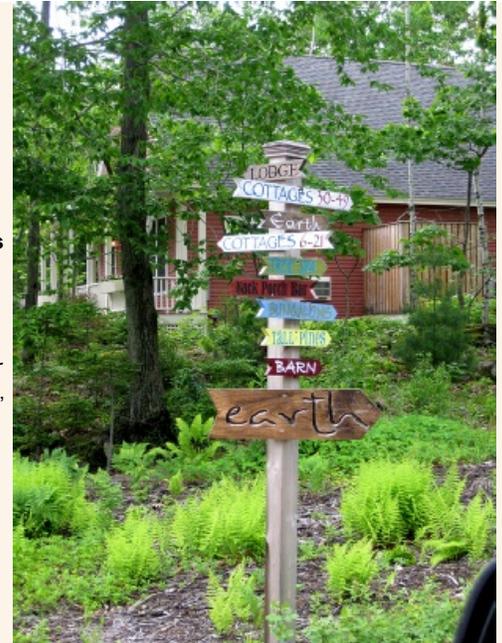
Hidden Pond is open eight months of the year, May through December. According to Manager Kristen Caouette, during this period, it enjoys 94% occupancy, including 70% who are repeat clients from prior years.

Michelle stayed at two B&Bs in town. One was The Inn at English Meadows, owned by Eric and Liz Brodar. All three of us toured their establishment and were quite impressed. They emphasize simplicity, white lines, high-end amenities, and an absence of "doilies" often associated with B&Bs. The owners indicated that their clientele is somewhat younger than average at B&Bs, which fits their marketing plan. Asa English was the original homeowner, but the house has been extensively remodeled, to fit the Brodar's goals.

In addition to such charming B&Bs, the Kennebunkport area also contains several huge, beautifully restored hotels. One is the Colony Hotel, located right on the water. In several respects, the Colony resembles the landmark Del Coronado Hotel in San Diego. Its elegant white exterior includes a huge covered porch.

We couldn't possibly have taken in all events in the Festival. But in our five days from Tuesday through Saturday, we covered and enjoyed as many as possible. We enjoyed days to ourselves and did not start partying until evening.

Our lunches started off with Mabel's Lobster Claw Restaurant. My fried clam roll was very good, and Maralyn said her clam chowder soup was among the best she ever tasted. This was Michelle's first experience with a lobster roll, thoroughly enjoyed. It was easy to see why Mabel's is renowned throughout



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### Big Blend Radio Interview



**Norm & Maralyn Hill discuss the Kennebunkport Festival**

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[The Tandem Travelers](#) are a traveling writing team made up of Maralyn D. Hill and Brenda C. Hill - co-authors of 'Cooking Secrets - The Why and How' and 'Our Love Affairs with Food & Travel', plus Maralyn's husband Norman E. Hill

the area.

On Saturday, attended the Grand Tasting at the Colony Hotel. We tasted and sampled from many chefs, wine makers, drinks, and treats, as we enjoyed several rooms of artwork on display. Most of the show's paintings, about 75%, had objective themes, which we enjoyed tremendously. Two tasty features were a form of pork-kabob with bacon wrap-around the pork and a soup creatively named "Kamasoupstra." The soup won us both over.

Our first festival cocktail reception was at One Dock at the elegant Kennebunkport Inn, the next was at the Old Fort Inn, and another was sponsored by Hinckley Custom Boat Builders, works of art themselves. The final reception on Saturday was at the Earth Restaurant, located on our Hidden Pond grounds. Managed by Danielle Walker, Earth offered a wide variety of creative cocktails. Norm enjoyed one called "Moscow Mule." Although this libation has been around for a while, and does contain a kick, its taste was great and new to me. Danielle spent several months during the winter, learning to improve her mixology skills.

One morning, when we picked up Michelle, we received an extra treat. Her hosts, the Broders, invited us to join Michelle for breakfast. This included yogurt with bananas, eggs soufflé with glazed bacon, and croissant with a special butter. For Norm, the bacon was truly outstanding and Maralyn enjoyed the bananas and yogurt.

Our dinners were all outstanding and different. Most were in private homes where a professional well-known chef came in to create magic. Our first was for twenty at the King-Guffey residence, a new home with a southwestern, rather than New England, décor. Dinner courses, complete with excellent wine pairings, were Maine scallops, Maine poached lobster, stuffed quail, filet of beef, and, for dessert, rose petal flan. These creations were the work of chef Shannon Bard and her staff of Zapoteca Restaurante y Tequilera in Portland.

Hosts John and Anne Raffaelli hosted dinner for twelve at their lovely seaside home. We enjoyed homemade mozzarella, Maine seared scallops, roasted rabbit leg, and, finally, strawberry shortcake prepared with excellence by chef Harding Lee Smith of The Room in Portland. We enjoyed meeting so many interesting people, both local and from far away.

Bettina Doulton, owner of Cellardoor Winery, hosted a festival within the Festival. She is known for her events and keeps topping the one before. Inside a huge tent, mussels, appetizers, cheese buffet, and a dessert buffet were served, with plenty of tables for sitting. Pop the Kennebunk was the theme and we were almost literally transported to a French cabaret. An excellent band (calling themselves a "Big band with a French accent") played Glenn Miller and other classic romantic songs. They were followed by can-can dancers, a singer and pianist duet that included "S'Wonderful", a burlesque dancer, and topped off by a well-known lusty New York singer, Alice Tan Ridley, a star of the New York City subway system at the 42nd Street Station. The tent was amazing, and even featured the most elegant "Port o' potties" ever seen outside with paneled walls. Believe it or not, Maralyn photographed them she was so impressed.

Another seaside home that hosting was at the Webster house. We think the crowd was about seventy-five or so. Selections were prepared by chef Geoffroy Deconinck and staff from Natalie's at the Camden Harbour Inn of Camden. Due to the size, things were buffet style, but those of us who wanted to sit, found plenty of room. Maralyn was partial to the salmon, which was perfectly prepared, and Norm preferred lamb. The selection of desserts was outstanding.

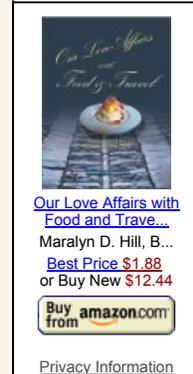
Our final dinner was at Earth Restaurant. Appetizers included a corn dog and almonds combined with prosciutto. Norm especially enjoyed the filet portion of entrees but for Maralyn, everything met high expectations. At one of the dinners, and also at the art show reception at the Colony, we met several artists who had created the works we enjoyed. These included Craig Mooney and Brad Betts. One painting, of a ship at sea, was striking in its intensity.

Except for Saturday, we were on our own during the day and explored much of Kennebunk and Kennebunkport. Norm was patient as Maralyn and Michelle checked out resale shops and found some bargains. We felt quite privileged to be among the six or seven journalists who covered the event.

**In future years, we hope to return to the Kennebunkport Festival and take in more of its offerings. The charm of the area captured our interest, enthusiasm, and it was just plain fun. People were wonderful. To see a small area get behind a charity to support these events to benefit *Share our Strength* was heartwarming.**

**To learn more you can visit [www.kennebunkportfestival.com](http://www.kennebunkportfestival.com) or <http://kennebunkport.org>**

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