

# Homes & Leisure

**Antiques** Value soars on rare Avro lighter **F3** | **Travel** Tracking Twain by the marks he left **F8**



Treetop Haven opened this year in Mount Tryon, PEI, and features five geodesic domes, each mounted on a raised wooden deck. PHOTO: PAULINE STEEVES/SUBMITTED

## RECHARGE THE MIND AND BODY ON P.E.I.

**CATHY DONALDSON**  
TIMES & TRANSCRIPT

It's 6:47 a.m. and I'm feeling more relaxed than I have in weeks. Sitting cross-legged on a chair, cup of tea in hand, I watch shards of sunlight dart through the tall, swaying birches outside. A symphony of birds tweet away.

Soon, I have company to breathe in the peaceful beauty, five gal pals who just rolled out of bed in rooms adjacent to me. We arrived the previous afternoon

for a three-day getaway to Prince Edward Island to a tree pod at Treetop Haven in Mount Tryon.

Our pod is one of the rental property's five geodesic domes, each igloo-shaped mound constructed of a metal frame covered in a white, vinyl-coated polyester with transparent window sections, all mounted on a raised wooden deck about 3.5 metres from the red earth. The Great Horned Owl unit we booked sleeps up to six, with two bedrooms, a full bathroom, a small kitchen and a lounge area with a

double sofa bed. Its 700 sq. ft. interior is fully equipped with dishes, towels, bedding and fans (sorry, no air conditioning), making it the closest thing to glamping I've ever experienced. A private hot tub on the ample deck is an added bonus.

After my friends and I enjoy the morning sights and sounds while ingesting an array of caffeinated products and our own breakfast items, we push furniture aside to make room for yoga mats brought from home. Since there is electricity but no WiFi or television at

Treetop Haven, which opened this year, I've also toted my laptop with some yoga videos downloaded.

As the sun streams through the pod's largest window area, we begin an episode, slowly moving through downward dogs and cat/cows, our occasional missteps producing laughs and ensuring the workout never becomes too intense. We ditch the laptop the next day and ad-lib on the deck. Treetop Haven owner Sheila Arsenault noted we could pay for a yoga instructor or massage therapist,

but we were fine to improvise.

That afternoon, Arsenault – who lives in a more traditional structure on the 20-hectare site – gives us another opportunity to recharge our minds and bodies with forest bathing. If you're not familiar with the term, erase any images of my crew running around in bikinis.

Known in Japan as shinrin-yoku, forest bathing is the act of being immersed in a forest and feeling a profound sense of

PLEASE SEE → **P.E.I., F5**

## Family modernizes home that still fits the neighbourhood

**SANDY DENEAU DUNHAM**  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**BELLEVUE, WASH.** • From her sunny front yard, Ellen Weiss points out two houses that look an awfully lot like hers — classic split-level, midcentury modern — and they are just the tip of the seriously sloped design iceberg.

"This house was replicated numerous times on this block and one street up," she says. "Now a lot of people are adding on."

Ellen and her husband, David Weiss, already have — twice, in fact, since they moved to Robinswood in 2006. Over the years, through two major projects designed and driven by Ellen, the Weisses' home grew from 1,700 to 2,700 square feet, adding a whole lot of modern function, flow and flair in the process.

Thing is: It still looks exactly the same from the sunny front yard.

"Nothing on the front face of the house changed," Ellen says. "We wanted to make sure that the final product fit into the surrounding neighbourhood, which is largely made up of modest midcentury ramblers."

After moving from another Bellevue neighbourhood, which "wasn't a neighbourhood," Ellen says, the whole family really loves this one: It's close to a couple of interstates, with great schools and bicycle-friendly streets for Jacob, now in sixth grade, and Hannah, in fourth. (Weiss kitties Theo and Ruby wisely steer clear of the local coyotes.)

Ellen has a master's degree in landscape architecture from the University of Washington, where she also studied construction management. (She completed all the master's coursework but became pregnant before tackling her thesis.)

Her background was helpful in a talent-translating way, she says, but Ellen clearly broadened her home-project horizons here.

"I designed every aspect of both



Ellen Weiss served as general contractor for one remodel and designed two for her family's 1954 home in Robinswood, adding 1,000 square feet, all without changing the front facade. "We wanted to make sure that the final product fit into the surrounding neighbourhood, which is largely made up of modest midcentury ramblers," she says. PHOTO: STEVE RINGMAN/TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

remodels and acted as general contractor for the first one," she says. "I scheduled inspections, meetings, ordering, every last thing."

(See?!)

Phase One of the Weisses' remodel transformed the two-story portion of the home with a brand-new master

suite on the top level and a new office and guest room downstairs, along with a bigger and better guest bathroom and family room. Phase Two expanded

the kitchen and dining area, reconfigured the living room and entry, and

PLEASE SEE → **HOME, F4**

## Homes&amp;Leisure



Known in Japan as shinrin-yoku, forest bathing is the act of being immersed in a forest and feeling a sense of well-being while there. It can also mean simply taking a walk in a park. Here, Treetop Haven owner Sheila Arsenault, right, pauses with Linda Taylor under a lofty birch on Craig's Way Trail, a path designated for forest bathing. PHOTO: CATHY DONALDSON

## Recharge the mind and body on P.E.I.

P.E.I. → F1

well-being while surrounded by trees. It can also mean simply taking a walk in a park. Though it may not be surprising to anyone who has spent time in the woods, studies have shown that such visits can have real physical and mental benefits.

Arsenault remembers the sense of calm and happiness she felt trudging through forests with family while growing up on P.E.I. She missed those treks while living in Saskatchewan, where she worked as an electrician.

The pace made Arsenault reflect on her life and that of her young daughter, Danika. When her brother, Craig, died of a rare form of leukemia in 2011, Arsenault's desire for a change intensified and led her to use skills she'd learned prior to becoming an electrician – travel and tourism management.

"Craig loved his work and I realized I didn't want to wake up not loving what I do," says the Summerside native. "I also didn't want to miss out on time with my daughter. When I decided to move back home two years ago and create a business on our family land, I wanted to do something unique, which led me to develop the tree pods and look at the health benefits of the woods. When I read that walking in the woods can reduce things like anxiety and depression, I knew I was on the right track."

Treetop Haven has designated trails for forest bathing, including Craig's Way, created in her brother's memory. Still under construction, the path is on course to being a lovely space to commune with nature, taking visitors through a tranquil mix of mature trees, delicate ferns and a wide variety of other plant species. If you're lucky, you might catch a glimpse of a pink lady's slipper, P.E.I.'s provincial flower.

While wandering the forest floor on a hot afternoon, my body doused in a generous quantity of bug spray, I ponder how the landscape would look in winter. As if our minds are linked, Arsenault said two of her pods would be heated and available to rent year-round while the others would operate from April to October. A two-bedroom costs \$200 to \$250 nightly plus tax, with a two-night minimum. Also available is the Nest Venue Centre,



P.E.I. blue mussels from The Blue Mussel Café in North Rustico. PHOTO: CATHY DONALDSON

which can fit up to 100 for meetings and events.

The next day, we leave our pod community and find more opportunities for relaxation, this time in the form of sunny walks along some of P.E.I.'s new-to-me beaches, from the deep red sands of Chelton Beach along the Northumberland Strait to North Rustico Beach on the Island's northern coast, bordering the Gulf of St. Lawrence. A robust summer breeze whips up the surf at all stops and lets any remaining tidbits of tension in my body drift away (as does a later hot tub soak under the stars).

During our brief escape to Canada's smallest province, I rediscover another of my favourite ways to unwind: strolling through quaint shops in towns like Victoria-by-the-Sea, chatting with locals and, of course, devouring wonderful seafood.

I'm still dreaming of the outstanding mussels and chowder at the Blue Mussel Café in North Rustico, the amazing crab-crusted haddock at Broadway 45 in

Kensington, the full-on lobster dinner at the Lobster Barn Pub and Eatery in Victoria, the finger-lickin' lobster roll at that same town's Landmark Café and much more. My getaway meals were blissful, likely all the more luscious due to my stress-free frame of mind.

Even non-fishy fare like the gorgeous cinnamon roll from By the River Bakery in Hunter River, the scrumptious rhubarb-cream chocolates from Island Chocolates in Victoria, and the fresh-out-of-the-oven roasted beet, corn, and goat cheese pastry from The Handpie Company in Borden have me itching to return to P.E.I. sooner than later.

In the meantime, I'll continue basking in my island-made zen, fully aware – as a sign in one shop I visited noted – "You can shake the sand from your shoes but it will never leave your soul."

Cathy Donaldson, ckdonald@nbnet.nb.ca, is a writer based in Moncton. She was a guest of Treetop Haven and Tourism Prince Edward Island.



Limbering up with some yoga on the deck of a pod. PHOTO: ANNE CONNORS/SUBMITTED



Inside the Great Horned Owl pod was a small kitchen, two bedrooms, a full bathroom and a lounge area with sofa bed. PHOTO: CATHY DONALDSON

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- Authentic Hawaiian Luau with dinner, drinks, and entertainment
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- Half Day Guided tour including Diamond Head Crater, Pearl Harbor Visitor Center and the USS Arizona Memorial; Honolulu's Historic District with views of the State Capitol, the King Kamehameha statue, and the National Cemetery of the Pacific and Honolulu Memorial
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July 24 - 29, 2017

- 5 nights deluxe accommodations: 1N Campbellton NB, 2N Percé, 1N Matane, 1N Rimouski
- 9 meals: 5 breakfasts, 4 Group dinners (Group dinners in Campbellton, Percé, Matane & Rimouski)
- Boat excursion to Bonaventure Island & Percé Rock
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October 10 - 16, 2017

- Return Premium Motorcoach transportation from the Maritimes
- 6N Premium accommodations: 1N TownePlace Suites – Bangor NE, 2N Historic Eagle Mountain House – Jackson NH, 2N Newport Beach Hotel & Suites – Newport RI, 1N Hampton Inn & Suites by Hilton – Augusta ME
- 10 Meals; 3 Group Dinners, 1 Lunch and hot breakfast daily
- ½-day professionally guided tour in Newport
- 1-¾-hr. train ride and three-course lunch aboard Conway Scenic Railroad
- Rhode Island Welcome Reception
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### 6-DAY CAPE COD & MARTHA'S VINEYARD TOUR

September 6 - 11, 2017

- 6N deluxe accommodations; 1N Portland, MA, 4N Cape Cod at the Holiday Inn & Suites Hyannis, 1N Augusta, MA
- Hot Breakfast daily, 3 Group Dinners in Cape Cod
- 4 Professionally Guided Tours: Boston & Historic Hyannis, National Seashore & Provincetown, Dunes Tour AND Martha's Vineyard!
- Entrance fees to: Kennedy Museum & Baseball Museum, Sandwich Glass Museum (Entrance fee, plus glass blowing demonstration), Plymouth Plantation – Mayflower Replica II
- Shopping excursions, including Faneuil Hall & the unique shops of Cape Cod & Martha's Vineyard

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September 25 - October 1, 2017

- 6N deluxe accommodations: 1N Riviere-du-Loup, 2N Quebec City, 2N Hotel Tadoussac & 1N Rimouski
- 10 meals, 6 breakfasts and 4 group dinners
- 3-hour whale-watching tour in Tadoussac, Saguenay Fjord Region
- 1 professionally-guided tour of Quebec City
- Admission to Montmorency Falls, famous shrine at St. Anne de Beauport, Pointe-au-Père Maritime Historical Site to visit and explore the Empress of Ireland display
- Shopping excursions in Quebec City

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### 10-DAY NATURAL WONDERS OF NEWFOUNDLAND TOUR

August 6 - 15, 2017

- Tickets for all ferry crossings
- Overnight sleeper cabin for sailing from North Sydney to Argentina & Port Aux Basques to North Sydney included
- 9 nights deluxe hotel/ferry accommodations: 2N aboard Marine Atlantic Ferry, 2N St. John's, 2N Gander, 2N Cowhead & 1N St. Anthony
- 15 meals: 7 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 4 group dinners
- Professionally-guided sightseeing tour of St. John's
- 2 sightseeing cruises: Whale & Puffin Cruise, Bay Bulls, Twillingate's "Iceberg Alley"
- Admission to all parks & attractions including: Signal Hill, Cape Spear National Historic Area, Gros Morne National Park, Port Aux Choix Historic Area, L'Anse aux Meadows (Viking settlement), The Matthew Replica II and the Prime Berth Fishing Museum

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### 18-DAY SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN "NO FLY" BREAKAWAY CRUISE TOUR

January 31 - February 17, 2018

- 3 nights accommodations (2N pre-cruise and 1N post-cruise) 1N NYC, 2N Maine
- Half day guided sight-seeing tour of New York City
- Upscale group dinner in New York City
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner daily during the cruise
- All entertainment aboard the Breakaway including Second City Comedy Group
- 1 Private group cocktail reception on board Norwegian Breakaway
- 14-Night Cruise aboard the NCL Breakaway

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### 5-DAY CHRISTMAS WITH THE BOSTON POPS ORCHESTRA PREMIUM TOUR

December 6 - 10, 2017

- 4N accommodation: 2N Bosto, 1N Augusta, 1N Bangor
- 6 Meals: Breakfast daily, 2 Dinners, including a Farewell Dinner with a complimentary glass of wine or beer
- Ticket to see the Boston Pops Orchestra live in concert
- Half-day guided historic city tour of Boston
- Visit Faneuil Hall & Quincy Market

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### 8-DAY AMERICAN THANKSGIVING IN NYC & BOSTON

November 19 - 26, 2017

- 6 nights accommodations: 1N Portland, 4N NYC, 1N Boston, 1N Augusta
- Ticket to the HOT Broadway Show "Beautiful: The Carole King Musical"
- Ticket to Radio City Music Hall's Christmas Spectacular starring The Rockettes
- Ticket Included for World Trade Observation Centre
- 5 meals: 3 breakfasts & 2 group dinners
- 2 half-day professionally-guided tours: one in NYC & another in Boston
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