

Summer Rush

Looking for some vacation excitement?

Want to turn the ordinary into the extraordinary?

Summer

By Sue Mayfield-Geiger

LET'S FACE IT. THERE ARE JUST SO MANY TIMES YOU CAN SEE DISNEY WORLD, GO TO THE SEASHORE OR PITCH YOUR TENT AT YOUR FAVORITE CAMPGROUND WITHOUT WONDERING: IS THIS ALL THERE IS? OF COURSE NOT! HERE ARE SOME THINGS AND PLACES TO PONDER, AND IF THEY ARE ALREADY BOOKED THIS SUMMER, THEN YOU HAVE PLENTY OF TIME TO RESERVE SOMETHING FOR 2007. BUT CHANCES ARE, YOU WILL FIND SOMETHING AVAILABLE FROM OUR ENTICING LIST BELOW. FROM THE SUBLIME, TO THE SIMPLE; FROM RISKY TO REFLECTIVE, HAVE A THRILLING SUMMER.

STAY IN A LIGHTHOUSE!

Keeper's House Inn, Isle au Haut, Maine

No Television, No Fax, No Email, No Internet, No Electricity – that's right, no electricity!

They make their own diesel fuel from vegetable oil and extract drinking water from the sea. At the end of the day, as the sun sets behind the lighthouse, enjoy your gourmet seafood dinner under the warm glow of oil chandeliers before retiring for the night. Perched on the Maine coast of the Atlantic, the Inn is reachable only by mail boat. Surrounded by spruce wilder-



ness and island panoramas, vast ocean stretches are cut only by the sails of windjammers and the backs of porpoises and seals. No tourist development to detract from the splendor of the island. www.keeperhouse.com

HOLIDAY IN HISTORIC BUILDINGS

The Landmark Trust is a non-profit founded in 1965 that rescues

and restores historic buildings at risk and gives them new life by offering them for holidays. There are 183 Landmarks throughout the world. They include forts, manor houses, mills, cottages, castles, gatehouses, follies and towers. **Naulakha House in Dummerston, Vermont** offers the unparalleled experience of a stay in a house where Nobel Prize winning literature was written (Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Books* and *Captains Courageous*). Kipling's very own furniture still remains – you can even play pool on his pool table. Four bedrooms; three baths, spectacular views. **The Sugarhouse** (also in Dummerston) only sleeps two, but you have access to 571 acres. Same with **Dutton Farmhouse**, but has one more bedroom. The **Amos Brown House** (circa 1802) is located in Whitingham, Vermont; sleeps six. Landmark has rescued more than 200 buildings, all of which were at risk had they not rescued them. www.landmarktrustusa.org

CAN YOU DIG IT?

Go on an archeology dig. What better way to educate the kids about ancient history? Getting kids involved in science expeditions at an early age helps develop critical thinking skills and an appreciation for the natural world. Many of these expeditions make great hands-on learning family experiences, as well as providing inspiration and a model for personal involvement in taking care of our planet. These digs go on year round all over the world. The closest one to us, coming this July: Ancient Civilization on the Mississippi at **Cahokia Mounds Historic Site, Illinois**. These mounds preserve the remains of the only prehistoric Native American city north of Mexico. Covering about 4,000 acres, the Cahokia site was first inhabited around 700 AD and grew to a population of about 20,000 people by 1100 AD. No one knows why the site was abandoned by 1400 AD, though researchers suspect it may

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have been because they cut down so many trees that their environment was no longer able to support the town. www.earthwatch.org

STAY IN A WINDMILL

You can take a windmill tour on the East Coast of the U.S., but if you want to stay in one, is best to travel abroad. Holland, of course, has the most, but our favorite is the **Cley Windmill** on the Norfolk Coast of England. Also on the grounds, the original stables and boat sheds have been converted into three studio apartments. Money no object? Don't mind a long journey? Go to the **Il-Mithna** (Millhouse) in the village of Xaghra on the island of Malta. Sleeps eight (one of the bedrooms is situated half way up the stairs which leads to the tower of the mill). Private courtyard and a grand rooftop view of the village, which is just five minutes away. www.cleymill.co.uk and www.mol.net.mt/ilmithna.

HOW ABOUT A WATERMILL?

The best watermill tours are in New England or the Missouri Ozarks, but if you want to spend the night in one, we suggest the **Burcott Mill** in tiny Wells, England. The water powered flour mill (bread made every morning) has been on this site for over 1,000 years. www.burcottmill.com

HOUSEBOAT VACATIONS

Gather up 12 of your closest friends and rent a houseboat for a few weeks. Or just get away with your own family. There are a vast number of locations that rent houseboats; from lake resorts to the Mississippi River, the choices are out there. Many houseboat rental facilities can be found in National Parks, and of course, early reservations



are a must. Some of the most gorgeous scenery will be found on lakes with mountain views, but closest to home, is **Lake Amistad**, an oasis of color in the south Texas desert. Just 2-1/2 hours west of San Antonio and 12 miles northwest of Del Rio, Lake Amistad and its 850 miles of limestone cliffs and sandy beaches is the perfect getaway. For something a tad more scenic, try **Lake**



*Weatherbury Farm,
Pennsylvania*

Powell on the Utah/Arizona border (steep canyon views) or **Lake Cumberland** in Indiana (thousands of private coves, nestled amongst beautiful lush foliage). Some deluxe model houseboats have upper decks, hot tubs and fireplaces. www.houseboating.org

FARMHOUSES

Imagine your children milking cows, collecting eggs, chasing baby chicks and learning about life on the farm! Farm stays are the freshest way to experience a family vacation.

WEATHERBURY FARM, PENNSYLVANIA

Rise and shine to cinnamon apple pancakes. Then it's off to feed the
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Punta Caracol Acqua Lodge, Panama

BOSS, Boulder Outdoor Survival School



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cattle and chickens. Pet the billy goat, romp with the bunnies, bottle feed the baby animals. Nestled amid the serenity of 100 plus acres of rolling farmland in Southwestern Pennsylvania, Weatherbury Farm is a quiet place, far from the maddening crowd, removed from the cares of the world where meadows and gardens, fields and valleys combine to create a perfect setting of tranquil relaxation. Here the gentle amenities of life are still observed. www.weatherburyfarm.com

PUNTA CARACOL ACQUA LODGE (PANAMA)

Built over the Caribbean Sea, along a mile long coral reefed coast, **Punta Caracol** is constructed using the traditional methods of the **Bocas del Toro Archipelago**. There are nine exclusive cabanas set over the crystal clear waters. The idea is to offer guests a pure and intimate experience with nature. All natural building materials were used – native woods and plants, clays, leafs, bamboo, wild cane and others. From your private terrace you will be able to observe brilliant sunsets and playful dolphins. Solar panels provide electricity and the bio-digester debugs wastewater avoiding any type of pollution of the pristine environment. At night, the restaurant's impressive terrace and thatched roof creates the perfect surrounding for a candlelight dinner. www.puntacaracol.com.pa

BOSS (BOULDER OUTDOOR SURVIVAL SCHOOL)

Boulder, Utah (not for the faint of heart)

Yes, Utah, not Colorado. In the southernmost part of Utah, BOSS makes its home in the **Escalante Mountains**. This is not for sissies. If you feel the desire to learn traditional skills and explore the wilderness without a dependence on modern gear, this is the place for you. NOTE: This is nothing like Outward Bound, so read no further if that is the experience you are seeking. There are a variety of field, skilled, explorer, training and custom course offerings in 7, 14 and 28-day formats; however, you must participate in a basic field course

before you get into the hard stuff. Okay, listen up: Watches, flashlights, tents, stoves, sleeping bags, and backpacks are **not** permitted. You may never need to know how to make fire from sticks, how to build shelters from leaves or snow, or how to make tools from natural materials, but there is a part of all of us that benefits from this knowledge. BOSS's philosophy is "Know more, Carry less." www.boss-inc.com

PRIVATE ISLANDS:

Little Thatch Island, Virgin Islands

Invite your nearest and dearest friends and frolic on your very own private island in the British Virgin Islands. Very pricey, but the cost includes transfers from the mainland, all meals, drinks (yes, from the bar), snorkel equipment, sailing dinghies, kayaks, windsurfers, 24 ft. motorboat with captain, water skiing, fishing equipment, and laundry service. www.unusualvillarentals.com

AMALFI COAST, ITALY

The most romantic views of the Mediterranean are found here. Steep cliffs cascade down into small fishing villages untouched by time. Oodles of villas – from gigantic to quaint are available year round. But, don't overlook the **Hotel Santa Caterina**. Built in 1880 by the Gambardellal family, it is still owned and operated by their offspring. Also, the **Hotel Le Sirenuse Postino**, which opened in 1951 when

the Sersale family decided to turn their summer house in Positano into a small elegant hotel. They started with eight rooms and a large terrace overlooking the Islands of the Sirens. Today the hotel has 62 rooms with all the comforts of a five star luxury hotel without losing the atmosphere of a family home. www.hotelsantacaterina.it and www.holidaycityeurope.com/le-sirenuse-positano/index.htm

CASTLES:

Fenton Tower, North Berwick, Scotland

Just 20 miles from Edinburgh, this 16th century castle provides accommodations for twelve. There has been a fortified tower on this site since the 11th century. To the north of Fenton Tower is a medieval burial site and the remains of the foundations of one of the earliest Christian chapels in Scotland. Enjoy 20 acres of private land with its own lake. Golf, fish, hunt, relax, be treated like royalty. www.fentontower.co.uk

BE DARING! CLIMB INTO YOUR VERY OWN TREE HOUSE

Cedar Creek Tree House, Mount Rainier, Washington

Imagine having your own state park for a weekend, with a clear mountain stream flowing by your cabin – except that your cabin is 50 feet up in a giant cedar tree with a view seen only by the birds! You're living in the tree canopies of a lush temperate rainforest and you can see for miles. This is an earth-friendly, privately owned and operated mountain retreat, located one mile as the crow flies, ten miles by car, from the Nisqually River Entrance to Mount Rainier National Park, and bordering the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. The Tree House Observatory provides spectacular mountain views 100 feet high in a nearby fir tree. www.cedarcreektreehouse.com



THE TREE HOUSE CABIN (CLOSER TO THE GROUND)

River of Life Farm, Dora, Missouri

The Tree House cabin has a great overlook of the North Fork from its private deck. It's the perfect secluded cabin for a Missouri hiking vacation or fly-fishing trip. The River of Life Farm is located in the heart of the Wild Trout Management Area of the North Fork of the White River, Missouri Ozarks. The 275 acres are family owned and cater to those seeking a peaceful environment, and not the masses of weekend travelers. Lodges, tree houses, cabins and campgrounds all come with just the sound of a crackling fire or bubbling river. www.riveroflifefarm.com

UNDERWATER HOTEL:

Jule's Undersea Lodge, Key Largo

Experience marine life up close and personal. But first, you have to dive in! Just to enter the Lodge, one must actually scuba dive 21

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Cedar Creek Tree House, Mount Rainier, Washington

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feet beneath the surface of the sea. Jules' really is *underwater*. Diving through the tropical mangrove habitat of the Emerald Lagoon and approaching the world's only underwater hotel is quite an experience. Even from the inside, Jules' big 42 inch round windows give you all the entertainment you need – swimming by. Can accommodate six. www.jul.com

TAKE THE TRAIN (AS IN WAGON)

Wagons West, Afton, Wyoming

Pawnee Wagon Train, Sterling, Colorado

If you ever wondered how our forefathers made it west, this will give you a small taste of what they endured. A real wagon master will lead you. Bring your spirit of adventure and ladies, don't forget your bonnet. www.wagonswestwyo.com and www.pawneewagontrain.com

Bet you never knew so many varied, quirky things existed! Whatever you do, have a safe, fun and sensational summer. If you do anything out of the ordinary, we want to hear about it. Enjoy your vacation!

Fun Factoids:

AMBASSADOR CITY JOMTIEN, THAILAND

(largest hotel)

The largest hotel in the world tops out at 5,100 guest rooms and suites overlooking 40 acres of beach, Jomtien Bay and the mountains. This massive resort complex, just ten minutes from Pattaya, also boasts the largest swimming pool in Asia, a sports and tennis center, a spa, business services and convention center. www.ambassadorcityjomtien.com

THE POINT RESORT

Adirondacks (smallest hotel)

Located on 10 acres at Saranac Lake in New York, this is indeed a sanctuary of enchantment, deep in the heart of the vast Adirondack wilderness. Originally Camp Wonundra, this was the home of William Avery Rockefeller, where he lived quietly and entertained in the gracious style of The Great Camp era. Eleven guestrooms are spread among four buildings, constructed of massive notched logs. Each room offers a full view of the lake, custom-made beds, spacious private baths, eclectic antiques, Adirondack furniture and enormous chiseled stone fireplaces. www.thepointresort.com

LITTLE PALM ISLAND, FLORIDA KEYS

(most secluded hotel)

A tiny piece of paradise. Don't bring the kids. Assessable only by boat, step onto powdery sands and arrive at your thatched roof, ocean front bungalow. However, be warned: No TVs and no telephones! The resort's Indonesian-themed spa will certainly relieve cell phone and email withdrawal. www.littlepalmisland.com

ITSY-BITSY HOTEL ROOM:

Washington Jefferson Hotel in New York City. Traveling alone or just want to see it out of curiosity? Can't beat the price and you are smack dab in the middle of Manhattan. Built in 1918, some of the rooms were purposely converted for those on a budget. Ranging in size from 7 x 11 ft. to 9 x 12 ft. www.wjhotel.com

BEST INTERNATIONAL HOTEL:

Four Seasons Resort, Bali at Sayan. www.fourseasons.com/jimbaranbay

BEST HOTEL IN THE U.S.:

Rusty Parrott Lodge & Spa, Jackson Hole, Wyoming: Worth the bucks. www.rustyparrott.com