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this week's feature

Eagle Ridge Resort and SpaThe Perfect (Semi) Staycation
by erica bethe levin

07/07/2010



If you're looking for a perfect (semi) Staycation, Eagle Ridge is your answer. Located *just* four hours from the hustle and bustle of Chicago (hence the 'semi' part), you'll feel more like you're 12 hours away (which is a good thing when you're trying to avoid emails, cell phones, car horns and nagging bosses).

Eagle Ridge Resort and Spa, located in the heart of Galena, is known for three things: romance, shopping and golf. And if my experience at the resort was any indication, good things happen in threes.

After the pleasant – albeit four hour – drive to the Galena Territory, you arrive at Eagle Ridge, which is arguably the heart and soul of the town. 6,800 acres of lush, green land lay saturated with beauty, foliage, hiking, golf, restaurants, massages, trails, boating, fishing, general stores, biking, horseback riding, hot air balloon rides, lakes and the like. The resort is a relaxing haven made for just about anybody (packages vary from the Girlfriends Spa Getaway to the Family Time Getaway to the Romantic Getaway). The place is impossible not to adore.



Because of the myriad options for habitation, couples, families, groups of friends or the solo adventurer could make themselves at home for a day...or four. With options ranging from one to eight bedroom villas and distinctive homes to an 80-room inn atop Lake Galena, there is something for everyone.

I went as a couple (plus a small Yorkshire Terrier) and opted for the one bedroom villa (there are dog-friendly options if you're traveling with a canine companion – just ask). Ours happened to be situated on a golf course with Adirondack chairs and a grill right in our backyard. The house had two baths (perfect), a fully equipped kitchen (although no cooking was to be done), a living room, an upstairs bedroom, DVD players, a large bathtub and enough peace and quiet to make you want to scream. And I would be remiss if I didn't mention the fact that there is not a single streetlamp, allowing for some of the most pristine, clear, beautiful stargazing I've ever experienced.

Although I would have been perfectly comfortable hibernating in our villa with cheese, crackers, wine, the dog, the bathtub and a few DVDs, there was an adult summer camp worth of activities to experience.

For one, there are 63 holes of award-winning golf. As a non-golfer, this didn't necessarily do it for me, but the Stonedrift Spa definitely did. The Swedish/Deep Tissue massage I received certainly rivaled the likes of such upscale spas as the Peninsula, the Park Hyatt or the Trump. Some massages tend to leave you a little cold or frigid – in a valiant effort to go above and beyond the norm, Stonedrift warms you right up with hot stones, hot towels, a hot eye mask, a hot bed and a hot heating pad. Not to mention the cucumber sandwiches and hot tea in the waiting room. Oh, and all the products are 100% green and organic.

I'm also a non-horseback rider, but the Shenandoah Riding Center got me back in the saddle. Although scared ****less, I rode that horse for an hour (at a tranquil walk-not-quite-jog pace) through Eagle Ridge's many hills and meadows. I mandated that we wear helmets for fear of some *Wild Hearts Can't Be Broken* moment, but it was a very, very worthwhile experience. I encourage all city dwellers to try it at least once.



The only amenity that I could find fault with would be the restaurants, whose food was (at best) generic country club cuisine. My recommendation would be to utilize your villa's kitchen or grill, or venture into downtown Galena, a mere six miles away, where quaint, old-school looking bars and restaurants run rampant.

Eagle Ridge Resort and Spa is the perfect (semi) Staycation. Although high-speed wireless internet access is available, opt not to use it. Take advantage of the serenity, the romance, the beauty, and the outdoorsy -ness of it all. You'll be back in the city before you know it, missing the conspicuous lack of emails, cell phones, car horns and nagging bosses.

comments (1 response so far)

Christago from Lakeview

July 7th, 2010 6:32pm

What a great place! Just got back from a wedding over the 4th of July weekend and it was so great!