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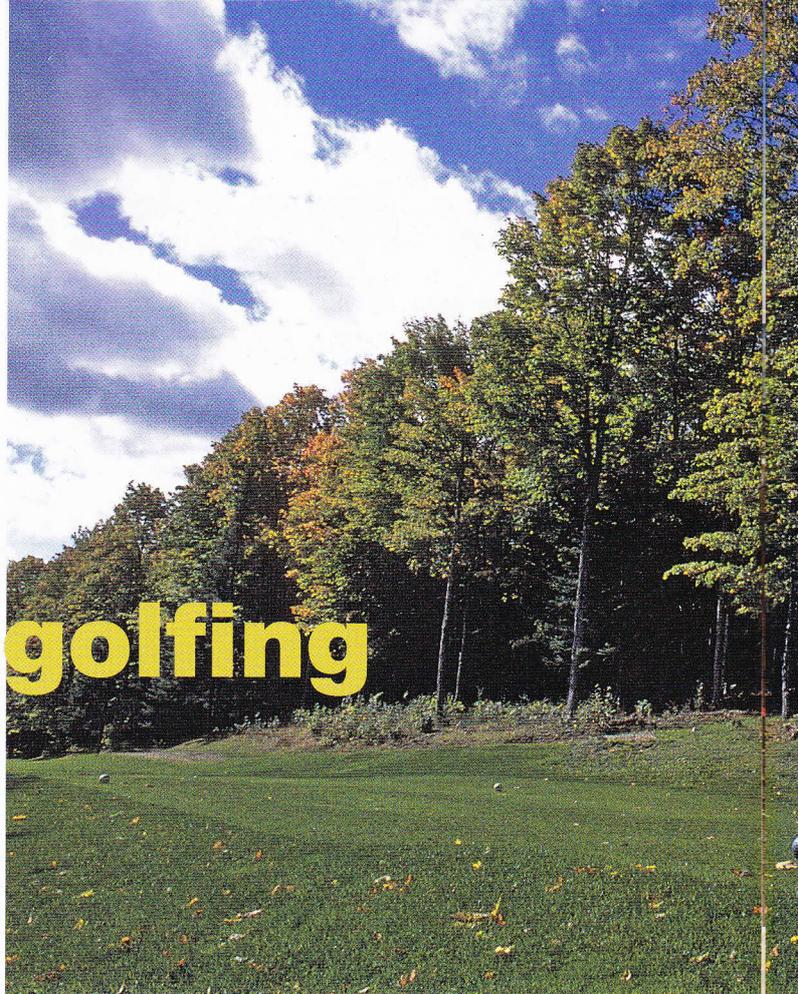
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Left: going for the long drive at NB's Fraser Edmundston Golf Club.



Above: Teeing off at the Aroostook Valley Country Club, which straddles the Canada/US border. Below: Lakeside Lodge, near Grand Falls, NB, home to Karl's German Cuisine. Bottom: the Lodge and the nearby cabins overlook a private lake.

Wining, dining and golfing

New Brunswick's St. John River Valley offers a great golfers' getaway

by Dale Dunlop

Last year, with summer rushing toward autumn, my wife and I realized that we had played almost no golf—so we decided to do something about it. But where to go? I searched “New Brunswick golf” online and came up with the golfnb.com website, which provided information and deals on all five of New Brunswick's scenic routes.

Since we had decided to go for the best deals, we quickly realized that the upper St. John River Valley looked like the ideal destination, with many attractive packages that included accommodation, dinner and golf.

We headed from Halifax to Edmundston, NB, where we would begin; we would make our way back toward Nova Scotia over the next few days.

Auberge Les Jardins Inn

Our first stop was the Auberge Les Jardins Inn in Edmundston. The attraction was a package that included a “signature” room with a Jacuzzi, plus dinner for two with wine at one of the most acclaimed restaurants in New Brunswick, and a full breakfast and golf for two (with cart) at the nearby Fraser Edmundston Golf Club. We arrived by 4pm, which allowed us time to take a very pleasant stroll through the New Brunswick Botanical Gardens—just a five-minute walk from the Inn—before settling into the aptly named and decorated Maple Room. The cuisine at the Inn's restaurant was superb.

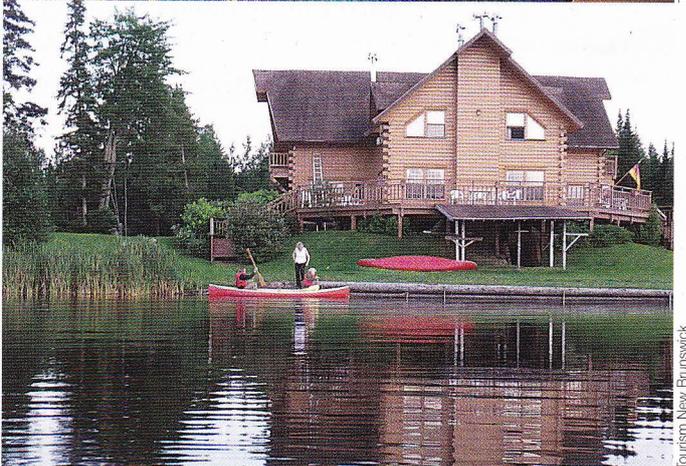
Fraser Edmundston

We were up and at it for an early start to our New Brunswick golf odyssey, with a 9am tee time at the Fraser Edmundston Golf Club, in Edmundston. We were fortunate to be joined by Dan and Don, two local retirees who provided a wealth of course knowledge as well as amiable company.

Fraser Edmundston opened as a nine-hole course in 1926 and expanded to 18 holes in 1947. It has hosted two Canadian Amateur Championships, one won by the legendary Moe Norman in 1956;



Tourism New Brunswick



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If you go, check out these links

- golfnb.com
- lesjardinsinn.com
- jardinnbgarden.com
- golfedmundston.com
- lakeside-lodge.com
- grandfallsgolf.nb.ca
- avcc.ca
- castleinn.ca

Golf New Brunswick

Norman still shares the course record of 64. The course is lined with mature trees and surrounded by wooded hills, making some holes distinctly reminiscent of Highland Links in Cape Breton.

After the round, we enjoyed a very good and well-priced lunch at the course restaurant. Things were off to a good start.

Lakeside Lodge

Next stop was the Lakeside Lodge, home to Karl's German Cuisine, another renowned eatery in this part of the world. The Lakeside sits on its own private lake not far from Grand Falls, NB, and—important to golfers—equidistant from Grand Falls and Aroostook Golf Clubs.

The main lodge is a large log building; six smaller log cabins are spread out along the lakeshore. Despite the fact that it was a beautiful late summer day, we seemed to have the place to ourselves. Since the restaurant was closed on Mondays, we had stopped and picked up supplies for a simple in-cabin repast. After that, we took a walk around the small lake on a path that started behind the lodge. Later, we sat on the deck and watched the sun set over the lake as we listened to a chorus of crickets.

Grand Falls Golf Club

The next course up was Grand Falls Golf Club, located minutes outside Grand Falls, NB. We had no difficulty securing a 10am tee time on short notice.

As at Edmundston, we were joined by a local member, Steve, who was a retired Border Patrol officer from Limestone, Maine. In this area, it is common for clubs to have both Canadian and American members. Although fairly short, the course felt long due to a number of uphill holes and long par fours, which provided a good challenge.

We finished up early in the afternoon, which gave us time for a very



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good, if traditional, cheeseburger and hot hamburger lunch at the Laid Back Pub in downtown Grand Falls. This was followed by a walk on some of the trails that provide outstanding views of the world-famous gorge and falls. Eventually, we returned to the Lakeside Lodge to relax on the deck of our cabin.

At 7pm, we took the short walk to the main lodge for dinner at Karl's. The entrance contained decals that reminded patrons that Karl's has been featured in *Where to Eat in Canada* for the last 10 years in a row. We sat at a table overlooking the lake and perused menus that, as expected, featured many German specialties. Forsaking the more common Wiener Schnitzel, we tried Jaeger Schnitzel and Zigeuner Schnitzel—who knew that German cooking could be spicy hot? Both were excellent, as was the Spaetzle that accompanied them.

For dessert, the Black Forest Cake was miles ahead of the gluey concoctions that sometimes pass for this otherwise tasty torte. The wine list was small, but with enough variety to satisfy most palates.

Aroostook Valley

The next course was Aroostook Valley Country Club, famous for its international layout; it is the only course in Canada and the US that is located on both sides of the border—in Ft. Fairfield, Maine, and Four Falls, NB. The clubhouse is in Canada, but one parking lot and the pro shop are in the US. "Out of bounds" takes on new meaning here—and is easily identified on a number of holes by substantial white concrete international boundary markers.

The club's international duality is novel to visitors, but is apparently and comfortably irrelevant to club members and staff. There are no customs officers or border patrols stalking the course. We didn't even see a course marshal, but having a passport is recommended.

The course setting is beautiful, amid rolling hills with a patchwork of gold and green fields separated by hardwoods and conifer stands. The course designers took full advantage of the natural beauty and potential challenges of the area in the course layout.

Holes have names like "Cardiac Hill"—offering a good hint as to what golfers will face. Two holes in particular stand out, with elevated greens cradled by tall, majestic cedars and guarded by carefully placed traps. The day we played, the greens were wet, but were fast despite that. Our miserable putting couldn't be blamed on tricked up greens or poor conditions.

Castle Inn

Our last stop was the Castle Inn, in the sleepy little town of Perth-Andover, NB. Built in 1932, the Inn does indeed resemble a small castle, complete with stone turret. It sits high above the St. John River at the end of private drive, so it is relatively secluded, but only about a minute from the Trans-Canada Highway.



Tourism New Brunswick



Courtesy of the Castle Inn

The dining room at the Castle Inn in Perth-Andover, NB. The Inn, pictured above, was originally built as a private residence, and was named "Normandy" because of its Norman Chateau facade.

The entrance leads into a lounge area that reminded us of a small English pub, dark and cozy. Our accommodations were very spacious and included a huge bathroom with a Jacuzzi; we also had a fireplace—just the place to curl up and relax before going down to dine.

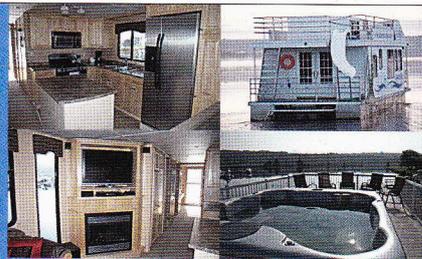
The dining room was on the ground floor of the turret and featured a surprisingly varied menu. Chef Chris Cornhill is Scottish and had trained at a restaurant we had eaten at in Edinburgh many years before. His training had clearly paid off; the meal was delicious.

After a good night's rest, it was time to head back to Halifax, pleased with the time we had spent exploring this beautiful area of New Brunswick. 🐾

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