

A red barn overlooks Mount Sunapee

Sunapee, New Hampshire

Mega-star Steven Tyler, lead singer of Aerosmith, has a home on Lake Sunapee. He took Oprah Winfrey on a personalized tour of the lake. You can watch it at youtu.be/A-W7I5jsnflk.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA LEVERE

Sunapee, an Algonquian Indian word meaning “Goose Lake,” may just be one of southwestern New Hampshire's best kept secrets. The idyllic town is home to Mount Sunapee, which offers hiking, skiing and more, and Lake Sunapee, a 10-mile long sparkling body of water that stretches through Sunapee, New London and Newbury. The lake water is so clear you can see straight to the bottom, and in the winter months, the lake usually stays frozen until April or even May. For those old souls who appreciate the lesser taken path, Sunapee invites you to slow down and appreciate its picturesque beauty, without having to share the view with hoards of crowds. For those who like to pair their sightseeing with some downhill action, Mount Sunapee hosts 66 trails and slopes that cover 233 skiable acres. Not a fan of flying down a snowy hill at 20 miles per hour? You'll find cross-country skiing, ice skating, snowshoeing, snowmobiling readily available, as well as lots of tasty eats, drinks and shopping.



Photo courtesy Nikki Crockett

Skiing & more



If skiing — downhill and cross-country — or snowboarding is your thing, you're in good hands at **Mount Sunapee Resort** (1398 Route 103; mountsunapee.com), which is right off the Mount Sunapee traffic circle. These folks have been in business since 1948, when the mountain opened with the 3,300 foot North Peak single chair, three trails, two rope tows and the North Peak Lodge. Nowadays, you can enjoy more than 1,500 vertical feet and nine lifts, including three quad chairs (two of which are high-speed), two triple chairs and four surface lifts. The mountain caters to all levels, with 17 easier trails, 32 more difficult trails and 17 most difficult trails. Lift tickets can be purchased during the ski season on the resort's website or 30 minutes prior to lift opening times. Ticket windows close at 4 p.m. A variety of lift tickets and passes is available. Children age four and under ski free. The mountain offers a multitude of ski and snowboarding lessons for children and adults, as well as private lessons and adaptive programs. Want to hit the trails without the kids in toe? The Mother Goose Childcare Center in the Learning Center Facility provides childcare for children ages one to five years.

MOUNT SUNAPEE LODGES

SUNAPEE LODGE

Winter only. Sunapee Lodge, at the top of Lot 1, houses a complimentary bag check, Mountain Outfitters retail store (you can find apparel, ski and snowboard gear here) and a food court that serves breakfast and lunch seven days a week. Typical fare includes hot dogs, hamburgers, salads, wraps, yogurt parfaits and hot soups.

SUMMIT LODGE

Winter only. With its stone fireplace, Summit Lodge, off the Sunapee Express, is everything you envision when you picture a classic New England ski lodge. Stop here for a breakfast sandwich or lunch, or sit by the fireplace to toast your toes. From its wrap-around deck, the lodge offers spectacular views from the 2,700-foot vista — you can see Okemo and Mount Snow. For clumsy skiers with a propensity for veering off the trails and into the woods, like the author, you'll also see Summit Ski Patrol.



ESCAPE



The gondola at Mount Sunapee offers a neat photo opp



SPRUCE LODGE

Winter only. In addition to housing the rental shop, where you can get fitted for boots, skis and poles by the rentals team, Spruce Lodge serves up before or after skiing eats like giant cinnamon rolls, salads, deli sandwiches, soups, hamburgers and hotdogs. Hungry skiers also can enjoy lunch specials like lasagna and eggplant Parmesan. On the second floor you'll find Goosefeathers Pub, complete with draft beers and waited service. The lodge has several big screen TVs, entertainment on weekends and holidays and a wraparound deck.

MOUNT SUNAPEE LODGES

Map of ski trails at Mount Sunapee



TIP

You can save time and money by renting equipment at RentSkis.com, Mount Sunapee's Official Rental Partner.

More outdoor fun

ICE SKATING

Skating enthusiasts can ice skate in Sunapee on the field between Lake Sunapee Bank and the town fire station. There is free use of skates in the warming hut. Open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

WINTER HIKING

The Sunapee-Ragged-Kearsarge Greenway Coalition plans a series of hikes, some of which are along the Greenway Trail, a 75-mile loop of hiking trails in central New Hampshire. The Greenway Trail System circles the Lake Sunapee area and connects Sunapee, Ragged and Kearsarge Mountains. The hikes offer a variety of terrain and conditions and include geocaching, snowshoe and cross-country ski events. Check for scheduled hikes at lake-sunapee-living.com/events.

CROSS COUNTRY SKIING AND SNOW SHOEING

Dexter's Inn's cross-country ski and snowshoe trails wind their way through forests and fields with minimal road crossings. There are approximately 20 kilometers of trails that are groomed and open to both inn guests and the public on weekends, holidays and school vacation days. See page 33.



Photo courtesy: AHPHOTOSUPG



Outdoor gear

Ready to hit the slopes but missing your boots? (Or skis, or poles or a nice warm jacket?) Even if you're just one to loiter in the ski lodge, you'll be impressed with the selection at **Bob Skinner's Ski & Sport Shop** (1411 Route 103, Newbury; bobskinners.com). Skinner's has been serving Mt. Sunapee skiers for almost as long as the ski area has existed. Former U.S. Ski Team racer Frank MacConnell — known as the “man behind the moustache” — has owned and managed the local institution since 1985, and he knows his stuff: He's an America's Best Boot Fitters certified Master Boot Fitter. With its state-of-the-art boot lab, the shop is able to customize all kinds of footwear, and not just for skiers — snowboarders, hikers and other athletes can get personalized attention too. Multi-day rentals are priced on a sliding scale; rentals for children age five and under are free. Need accessories instead? Stop in for name brand goggles, helmets, gloves, scarves, socks, sunglasses and more.



Sunapee Harbor

Vacationers have been visiting Lake Sunapee since the 1800s. Today, **Sunapee Harbor** (1 Lake Ave; sunapeeharborriverway.com) is a quaint spot to enjoy boating, kayaking, shopping, waterfront dining, picnicking, fishing, free music, a historic riverwalk, narrated boat tours, ice cream and more. The ideal time to visit is during the summer, but there's still plenty to do in the wintertime, including taking a leisurely stroll along the lake, grabbing a bite to eat and doing some shopping. The harbor is home to the MV MT Sunapee II (left), and the MV Kearsarge Restaurant Ship (below), which offers beautiful sunset dinner cruises (oftentimes the captain will let the kids take a turn “steering” the boat, and locals will backflip off their boat houses for your enjoyment). Both ships open public cruises and reservations Memorial Day weekend. Visit sunapeecruises.com for seasonal information.



Photo courtesy Nikki Crockett



While you're taking in the scenic harbor, stroll down the meandering brick pathway, which features names, sayings and special memories from locals and visitors alike. Aerosmith fans may want to try to locate Steven Tyler, Joe Perry or Aerosmith's bricks (hint: they're just outside the front door of the seasonal Wild Goose Country Store).



ESCAPE



THE ANCHORAGE



If you're looking for comfort food to help shake the winter chill, head over to **The Anchorage** (71 Main St., anchorageunapee.com) in Sunapee Harbor, where the menu has everything from steamed mussels and shrimp scampi to quesadillas, fries and burgers. There's restaurant seating as well as a full bar in the back. The weekends usually feature live music (sorry, not Aerosmith), and there's even room to dance. Hours are noon to 9 p.m. Tuesday to Thursday, noon to 1 a.m. Friday and Saturday and noon to 9 p.m. Sunday.

Photo courtesy/ Debbie Samaris



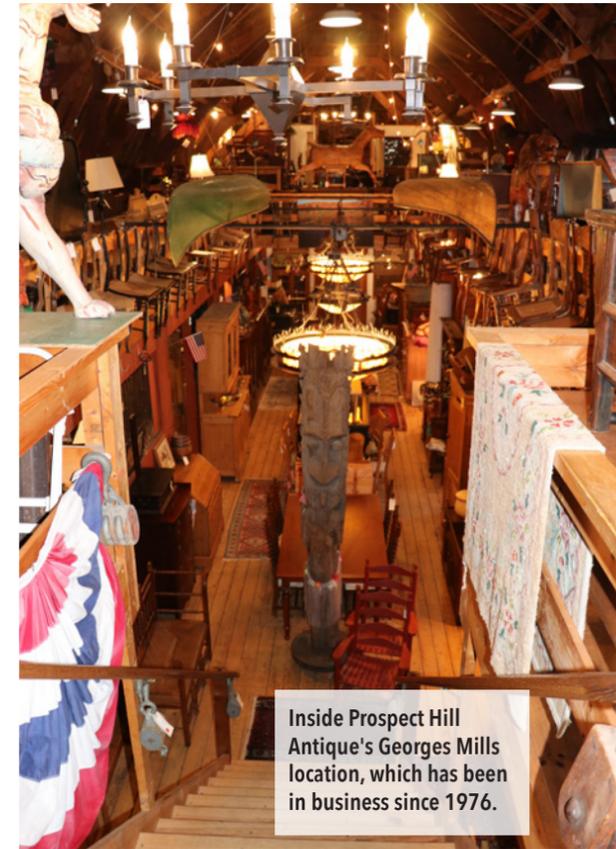
WILDWOOD SMOKEHOUSE



For hearty, stick-to-your-ribs fare, try **Wildwood Smokehouse** (45 Main St., wildwoodsmokehousesunapee.com), a short walk up the harbor hill. Inside you'll find gorgeous, rustic decor and slow smoked barbecue including pulled pork, pulled chicken, ribs, beef brisket, smoked chicken and sandwiches with scratch-made trimmings. The Frito Pie (beef chili served inside a bag of fritos and topped with a custom cheese blend) is so good you might not have room for a local microbrew. The smokehouse offers a full service bar and daily Happy Hour, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Plan to arrive early — the restaurant only seats 24 people.



Shopping



Inside Prospect Hill Antiques's Georges Mills location, which has been in business since 1976.

Prospect Hill Antiques (31 River Road, Georges Mills; prospecthillantiques.com) is an impressive three-story, 12,000 square foot barn full of antique furniture, custom furnishings from New England craftsman, eclectic mid-century household goods, European imports and art. Plan to spend a few hours taking it all in. The collection runs from small to very large, but don't worry, if you fall in love with a piece of furniture you can't fit into your car, the very accommodating owners offer white glove service to New England and beyond. Open 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday through Sunday or by appointment. Tucked back in Sunapee harbor, **Prospect Hill Antiques's** second location is open 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. seven days a week. The store features fine art by local artists, gorgeous home furnishings, a collection of Sunapee-related memorabilia and unique lake-inspired gifts.



Inside Prospect Hill Antiques's Harbor location

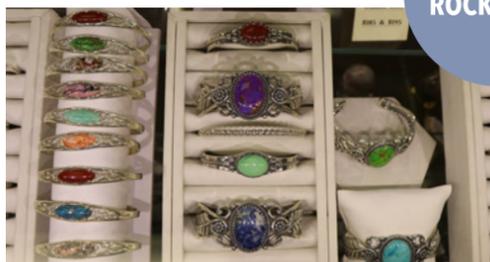
PROSPECT HILL ANTIQUES





SUNAPEE ROCK SHOP

New Hampshire is the Granite State, and **Sunapee Rock Shop** (37 Edgemont Road; americanbeadcollection.com) makes good use of its granite — along with its crystals, stones, fossils and more. Inside you'll find celestial books, organic stone oil candles, artwork, ornaments, jewelry and Sunapee Steamers lamps. This family-owned shop, run by Bill and Pamela Stockers, sells a wide array of bead caps from the American Bead Collection (*see below*). Made of different stones, like quartz, blue lace agate and oolitic chert, the beads symbolize different emotions, elements and causes. The Rock Shop also features jewelry made from stones from different states, including Connecticut.

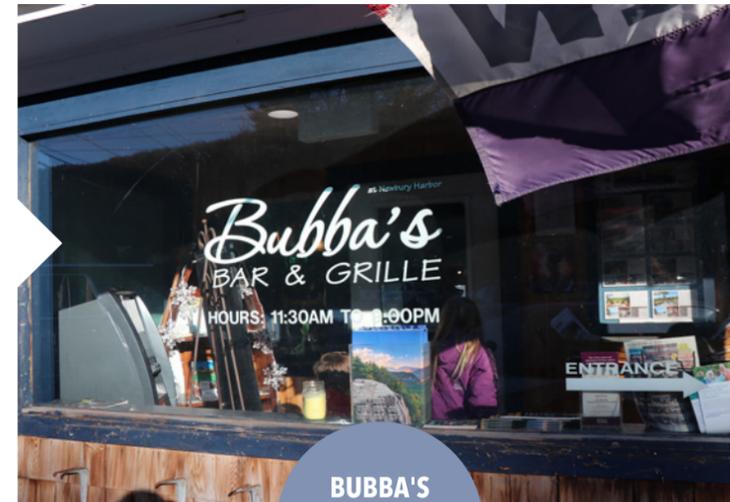


THE AMERICAN BEAD COLLECTION – In 2011, while Pamela battled breast cancer, Bill turned to sculpting and created the “Sunapee Rays of Hope,” an 18,000 pound monolith with 103 vertical and horizontal rays. It stands in the Sunapee Graniteworks yard. While recuperating, Pamela had the idea to make an ornament from granite. The family crafted Bill’s design, “Sunapee Circles of Hope” ornament, created from fine grey granite. As the ornaments sold, the piles of cut-out centers grew. They eventually decided to use them to make beads for bracelets, and Bill made his own hand-forged tools to produce and hand stamp the bead caps. In 2012, The Beads of New Hampshire: Fine Grey Granite were crafted, becoming The American Bead Collection. Bill makes each bead, one by one. *Source: americanbeadcollection.com*



Eating & drinking

Newbury Harbor, at the southern end of Lake Sunapee, is home to **Bubba's Bar and Grille** (976 New Hampshire Route 103, Newbury; bubbabarandgrille.com). Open daily 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m., the restaurant has been going steady since May 2008, when Bubba and his wife Robin opened its doors. This lakeside eatery's menu runs the gamut from seafood chowder and Loon Island Veggie Wrap to Bubba's Bourbon Beef Tenderloin Tips and the The Soo Nipi Wedge salad. There's also a full-service, sit-down bar with plenty of adult beverages in stock. You can enjoy views of the lake from many of the window seats.



BUBBA'S BAR & GRILLE



Suna Restaurant (6 Brook Road; magicfoodsrestaurantgroup.com/suna), describes itself as American cuisine with a twist. It is a fancier deal in town, though there's no dress code. Enjoy House Chips, ahi tuna and lobster mac and cheese, as well as exclusive dishes like “Rubbin Butts Nachos” (house rubbed chips topped with pulled pork, diced onions, jalapeño, cheddar

cheese, BBQ sauce & cole slaw) and smoked gouda tater tots. The dining room is cozy and the bar is spacious — and don't forget to take advantage of the full wine and cocktail menu (in honor of the lake, try the Dirty Oar, featuring Ketel One Vodka, olive brine and blue cheese stuffed olives). Open 3:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday.



ZIGGY'S PIZZA



New Hampshire may not be known for its pizza, but **Ziggy's Pizza** (699 Route 103; ziggys.pizza.com) is nothing to balk at. They serve up specialty pizzas like ranch pizza and macaroni and cheese pizza as well as wings, calzones and Chicago pies, salads, specialty burgers and smokehouse hot dogs. In addition to a sit-down restaurant, there's a large, full-service bar. Open 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday to Thursday and 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

ESCAPE



Lodging

SUNAPEE HARBOR COTTAGES



The loft of cottage #3



Sunapee Harbor Cottages (4 Lake Ave.; sunapeeharborcottages.com) are located right in Sunapee Harbor and only four miles to Sunapee Mountain Ski resort. Cottages feature two floors of cozy sleeping space, a kitchenette, a flat screen TV, free wi-fi and a charming propane fired stove in the living room perfect for curing that winter chill. The view of the lake can be pretty inspiring: Aerosmith's Steven Tyler stayed in cottage #3 for six weeks while writing his book "Does the Noise In My Head Bother You?" (He even autographed the wall.) Rates vary per season.

Located at the base of Mount Sunapee with breathtaking views of Lake Sunapee, **The Lake Inn at Mt. Sunapee** (1349 Route 103, Newbury; lakeinnsunapee.com) has 12 rustic motel rooms that come equipped with king, queen or extra long full beds, heat and seasonal air conditioning, a private full bath, TV, free WiFi, refrigerator and microwave. If your pup likes to vacation with you, there are limited dog-friendly rooms that cost an extra \$15 per dog, per night.



Photo courtesy The Lake Inn



The Blue Goose Inn (24 NH-103B, Newbury; bluegooseinnnh.com) is located at the base of Mount Sunapee Resort. This quaint farmhouse turned bed and breakfast was built in 1904 and has been a cozy place to stay in the Sunapee Region for more than 20 years. If you've spent the day zig-zagging the mountain, the guest gathering room, with its welcoming fireplace, is the perfect spot to relax. Guests start their day in the breakfast room with a hearty country breakfast, prepared by the innkeepers, Ron and Margaret.

Dexter's Inn (258 Stagecoach Road; dextersnh.com) is a picturesque country resort-inn nestled atop a hill with panoramic views of Mount Kearsarge, Mount Sunapee and the surrounding countryside. Just minutes from the Mount Sunapee, the inn also has 20 acres of Dexter's land and hundreds of acres of adjoining conservation land for hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Each guest room has a private bathroom, plus there's a recreation room featuring billiards, ping-pong, air hockey and more; a full-service commercial cross-country ski and snowshoe center; a living room featuring a fireplace and a library; and a large family room complete with a fireplace and tables for games. Children of all ages are welcome at Dexter's Inn; with enough notice, babysitting can even be arranged. Pets are welcome, too, by special advance arrangement. A full hot breakfast is included with each stay. Lunch and dinner options are available.



Photos courtesy Dexter's Inn

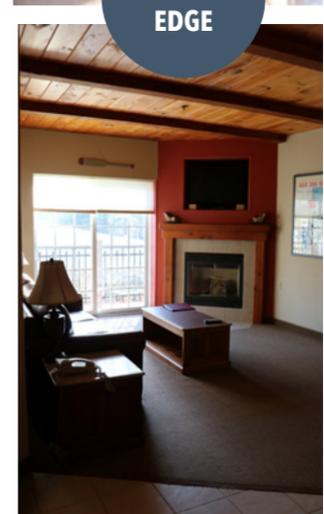
DEXTER'S INN



Mountain Edge Resort & Spa at Sunapee (1380 route 103, Newbury; mountainedgeresort.com) is an Adirondack-style resort. Choose from one- and two-bedroom guest rooms in a hotel-style setting. On-site amenities include a rustic tavern and restaurant, activities concierge, indoor and outdoor heated pools, a well-equipped exercise room and a full-service spa with wellness therapies such as a Mineral Foot Soak and an Emergency Mini Travel Facial. Men who like being pampered, too, will enjoy the Man at the Mountain facial. Reservations are encouraged.



MOUNTAIN EDGE



GETTING TO SUNAPEE

From Norwich, take I-395 N to I-290 E, I-495 N, US-3 N, Everett Turnpike and I-89 N to NH-11 W in New London. Take exit 12 from I-89 N toward New London/Sunapee/NH-103. The trip takes just about three hours.