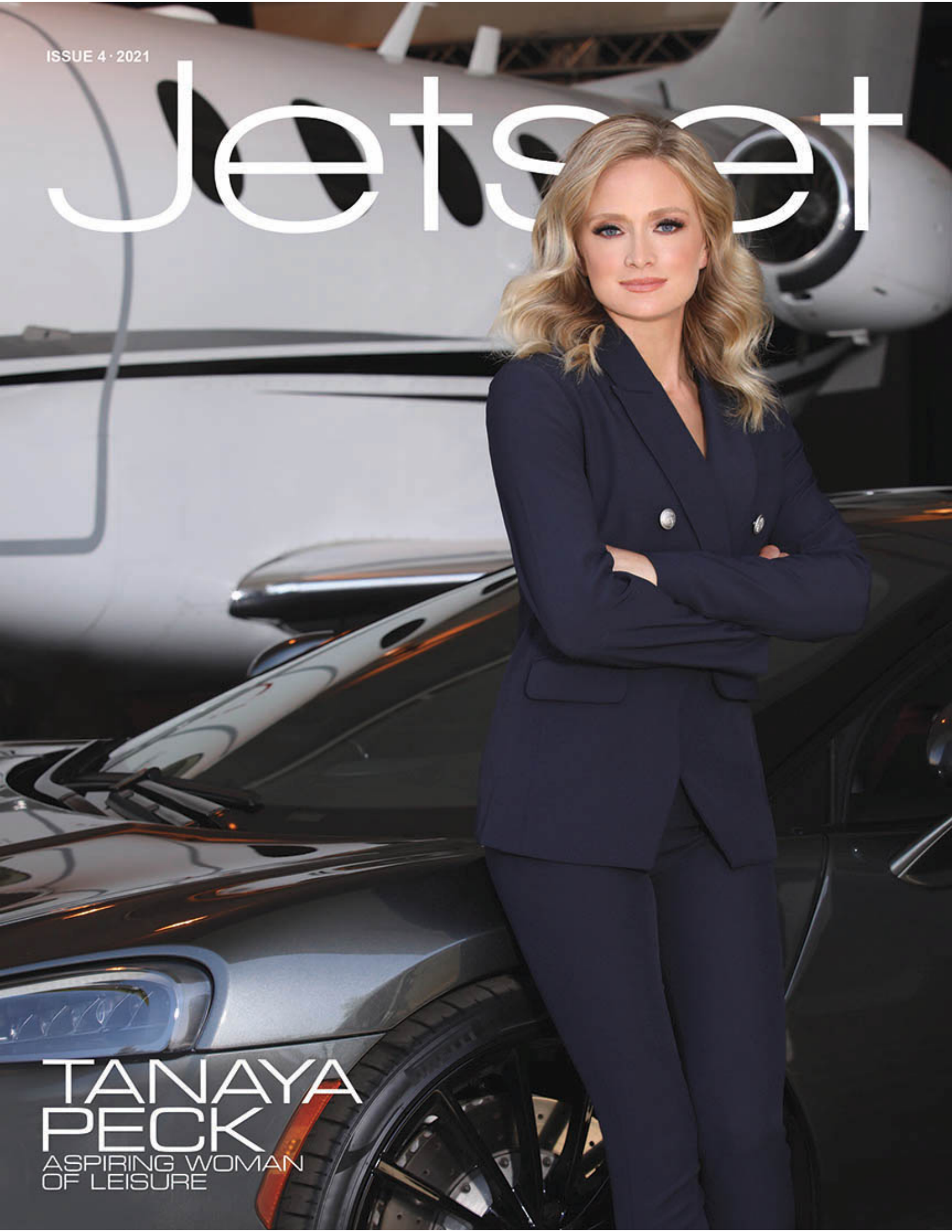
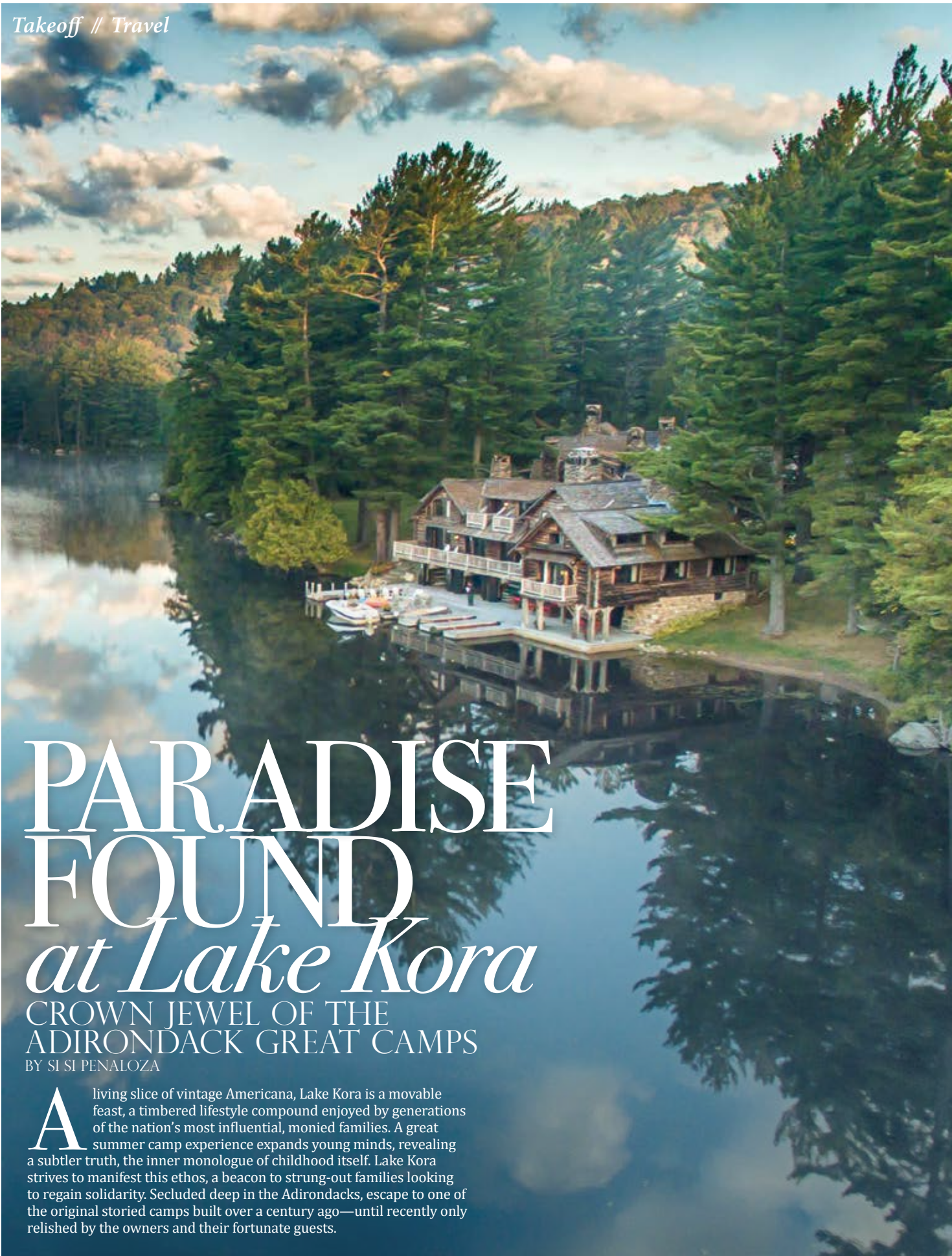


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PARADISE FOUND at Lake Kora

CROWN JEWEL OF THE
ADIRONDACK GREAT CAMPS

BY SI SI PENALOZA

A living slice of vintage Americana, Lake Kora is a movable feast, a timbered lifestyle compound enjoyed by generations of the nation's most influential, monied families. A great summer camp experience expands young minds, revealing a subtler truth, the inner monologue of childhood itself. Lake Kora strives to manifest this ethos, a beacon to strung-out families looking to regain solidarity. Secluded deep in the Adirondacks, escape to one of the original storied camps built over a century ago—until recently only relished by the owners and their fortunate guests.



Traveling from Manhattan via Fly the Whale's gleaming fleet of seaplanes is the most stylish way to arrive, staff standing by with trays of Champagne. Situated on 1,000 private acres encircling a 500-acre lake, Lake Kora is an architectural jewel set in a national treasure. Foresight and fiscal stamina have preserved details that sing with an authenticity Abercrombie could only dream of. I marvel at the log-and-stone campus that meticulously retains the original Vanderbilt era aura. Lake Kora exemplifies how richly landscape and history intertwine, how deeply a sense of place can fire the imagination.

Designed by famed Great Camp architect William West Durant in 1898 for Timothy Woodruff, Lieutenant Governor of New York, Lake Kora is the most intact of all the Great Camps. The second owner was none other than Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt, who purchased the vast property in 1913. The camp is steeped in rather wild social history, beginning with Woodruff, whose tenure was legendary among captains of industry. Let's just say it veered from harrowing—releasing semi-tame bears to roam among the cabins—to eccentric, importing Venetian gondolas to enjoy the lake in consummate style worthy of a Roosevelt. Lake Kora soon became a hub for high society. Eminent families came to party on the Boathouse docks, while Yale and Harvard teams practiced

on the softball diamond. Lake Kora is only open seasonally by exclusive "buyout" reservation, inclusive of meals. 16 guest suites across six separate historic structures accommodates 24 guests.

Ah, the effervescent feeling of leaping off a dock, and paddling canoes on a pristine lake. Lake life vibes and "Adirondack chic" have roared back in vogue as travelers thirst for more meaningful ways to connect. Pack your trusty Sorels and Belstaff waxed jacket for exploring outdoors. The camp's heritage bowling alley, tennis courts, billiards, outdoor roller rink, and balsam trails beckon. Most lake life junkies make a break for the camp's enviable boat collection. Think vintage canoes, kayaks, sailboats, wooden electric boats, and paddleboarding. There is also a sleek motorboat for water skiing and wakeboarding.

After a hamstring-throttling afternoon on waterskis, spoil yourself silly with a soak in the coyly named Ice & Meat House. The former structure where meat was kept cold has been transformed into a two-story wellness building, home to a sprawling sauna and whirlpool. My ravaged shoulders, unaccustomed to the giant slalom water skier workout, shimmer in the sunlight beaming into the whirlpool through the artful bay window. Fringed by deep woods, this is an absolutely spine-tingling way to unwind before dinner. I feel more goddess than wilderness camper; it was clearly time to put down the iPad.



The next morning, I'm off on a hike with Adam Lashinsky, Guest Services Director, through a living Smithsonian diorama of the Adirondacks. His remarkable ability to interpret a frontier of flora and fauna sights and sounds is an absolute rush. You are in the hands of a smashingly intelligent guide; he's gracious, and above all intuitive. After lunch, and getting hands-on with Vanderbilt history in the library, we hop aboard a canoe to cruise to the Island Cabin. On its own private island, this is the ultimate enclave within the compound. Accessed only by boat, an impressive double-sided fireplace steals the show on the main floor. My heart swells at the sheer sight of original stone masonry, saber-tooth butterflies somersaulting in my chest. Two bedrooms upstairs; lake views from every window release feel-good endorphins. As we play beneath the pines, and enjoy a nightcap by a campfire, the day evolves into a heady mix of scholarship and whimsy, epiphany and existentialism, precisely the contrast that gives each moment its gravitas.

Led by Cameron Karger, General Manager, the staff takes great pride in creating bespoke experiences for generations of families. From weddings in the swoon-worthy chapel to alfresco proposal picnics, to cocktails on a sunset cruise—your wish, your whimsy. Lashinsky learns as much as he can about the activity and culinary preferences of an in-coming group to ensure a logistically flawless, emotionally coherent, completely customized stay.



Fresh air and vigorous play sure do spark up an appetite. Cocktail hour each evening before dinner becomes a favored ritual, featuring picture-perfect canapés. The culinary highlight of any family reunion or C Level executive retreat? A Gilded Age Dinner at the stunning 20-foot-long dining table in the Great Hall, customized to your wishlist of star ingredients. With an impressive Relais & Châteaux background, Resident Chef Justin Souza brings a passion for creating farm-to-table seasonal dishes.

As you retire to enchanting log cottages spread along the lake's edge, melt into a realm of elegance, with original furnishings made by Lake Kora craftsmen a century ago. Stirring sensations—waking up to mist rising off the lake at sunrise, falling asleep to the soothing crackle from the fireplace—linger long after you return home. ✂

