

LORI'S PICKS



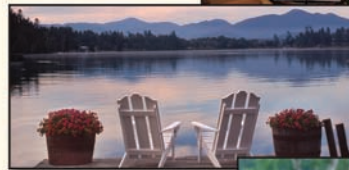
Mirror Lake Inn Resort & Spa

Mirror Lake Drive • Lake Placid, NY 12946

518-523-2544 • mirrorlakeinn.com

Mirror Lake Inn Resort & Spa is situated on a breathtaking 7 acre lakefront property in Lake Placid. The resort was first built as a private home in 1883 and later opened to guests in 1924. Current owners Edwin and Lisa Weibrecht purchased the resort in 1976. Many improvements have been made, but they've managed to retain the old world feel with mahogany accents and antique windows throughout. As I arrived, I was greeted by a very friendly staff who handed me not only the room keys, but their signature chocolate chip cookies. The lobby had a happy feel in the air with families, friends, and couples of all ages enjoying afternoon tea which is served daily.

The suite was a well appointed relaxing escape. I was not sure what I wanted to indulge in first... I debated whether to take a soak in the oversized marble bath tub, dive into the fluffy plush bed, or plug in my laptop in the sitting room! The cool breeze and sounds of the waves made my decision for me, and I made my way to the balcony where I had a perfect lake view. I knew I would enjoy the other amenities in the evening. While breathing in the fresh air, I began to explore the many activities that the resort had to offer, as I awaited a spa treatment later that afternoon. I was interested in learning that the resort is the only lodging property in Lake Placid that offers a full-time concierge guide service. There are a variety of activities that are planned or customized. Family wilderness canoe trips, sunset kayak tours, hiking and more. There are many year round activities, including winter adventures and events. After relaxing from the car ride I prepared to make my way to the spa. I was advised at my check in to try to arrive for my treatment about 30 minutes early, and enjoy the sanctuary. Good advice! I felt like I was in another world in this beautiful marble and mahogany retreat, which included a fireplace, Jacuzzi, steam room, showers, and toiletries. I was given a private locker, and a plush terry cloth robe and slippers as I waited.



My spa treatment was the Signature Water Massage. It was perhaps the most unique, if not the best spa experience I have ever had. The ultra relaxing experience started with a body balancing Dry Float Soft Pack System. It was warm and comforting. After my muscles were relaxed, the therapist came and finished the session with a full body massage. I had even made a comment to her that the treatment felt as soothing and peaceful as being in the womb! The experience was incredible, and a treatment I would definitely recommend.

I decided on dinner at one of the property's three restaurants. The View Restaurant is AAA Four Diamond Award recipient, serving world class cuisine created by award winning Executive Chef Paul Sorgule and his culinary team.

Seated by candlelight at the window, we began the experience with an attentive and knowledgeable server. The window view was magnificent, with beautifully manicured gardens, the dusk sky hitting the water, and a back drop of mountains. The menu was so inviting with many innovative and fresh ingredients, I wanted to try a bite of everything! I decided on the chef's feature which was a grilled ancho-chili rubbed veal chop served over sweet corn mashed potatoes and finished with a roasted red pepper coulis. It was absolutely wonderful. The generous chop was seasoned and seared to perfection, with each bite melting in my mouth. The red pepper coulis was a balanced twist to the dish, and the sweet corn mashed potatoes were pure comfort. The menu is exquisite with something to offer any palate. The View serves breakfast and dinner daily. Chef Sorgule also oversees Tatse, which is a European style bar and bistro that serves fusion specialties featuring local ingredients. For more casual dining, The Cottage is a cozy neighborhood type bar. Seating is also available outdoors on the waterfront deck and focuses on interesting twists to old pub fare favorites.

I definitely plan on going back to Mirror Lake Inn & Spa. It has so much to offer. A great place for family, friends, romance and even corporate functions. All in all it's a magical environment with a variety of things to do year round!

LORI'S PICKS



The Crooked Lake House

2339 State Route 43 • Averill Park, NY • 518 674-3894 •
www.thecrookedlakehouse.com

The Crooked Lake House is a wonderfully unique old place that is steeped in history, and can boast of a very colorful past. Under the proprietorship of Paul Vincent, it is a great place to enjoy a fine meal in fabulous surroundings, have a function in their beautiful ballroom, or maybe relax, mellow out and listen to an evening of blues music in their rathskeller. You might want to try one of their Stammtisch dinners that are held once a month. They are themed meals with several courses. Everyone sits around a large table in their Great Room, and indulges on a feast together. It sounds like something new and different, and a fun way to meet folks. The Crooked Lake House exudes charm, and rich history everywhere you look.

In 1780, The Crooked Lake House was a stagecoach stop on the then Albany-Boston Post Road. In 1840 the original building was destroyed in a fire. It was rebuilt at the turn of the century on its original foundation, and turned into a small Victorian hotel. In fact, it was one of Teddy Roosevelt's favorite places to stay. The 1920's brought yet again another transformation to The Crooked Lake House, as it went through another remodel, and was done in a traditional Adirondack look. During prohibition, the rathskeller was used for poker games and nefarious activities. In the 1930's The Crooked Lake House was used for a very different purpose. The magnificent Art Deco ballroom was a favorite of the Big Band circuit. Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, and the Dorsey Brothers were all regular featured performers. NBC broadcasted the live Saturday night performances in the ballroom from 1941-1943. Sadly, after its illustrious past, The Crooked Lake House closed in 1976, and sat empty until 1990. It was purchased in 1990, and a major renovation began to restore The Crooked Lake House to her former majesty. In 2006 Paul Vincent purchased the property, and through more pain staking work, is doing a remarkable job on this gem.

The entry of The Crooked Lake House has a tin ceiling, soft gold wallpaper, and a very inviting seating vignette. The dining room is expansive with a massive stone fireplace surrounded by leather chairs, perfect for enjoying a drink and conversation on a chilly evening. There is a bar area to the far left of the fireplace.

The ceiling is wood beamed, and the walls are dark wood and stone. The dining room has antiques throughout; including many antique clocks that are for sale by a local clockmaker. We had a marvelous seat where we could look out on Crooked Lake, and take in the lovely summer evening.

We started our meal with spring salads and Maryland crab cakes. The spring salads consisted of mesclun greens, Belgian endive, radish, cucumber and cherry tomatoes. We had it served with the house vinaigrette, and thoroughly enjoyed every bite. The salads were refreshing and delightful, not to mention healthy. The crab cakes were made with jumbo lump Maryland blue crab, pan seared and served atop fresh shredded cabbage and carrots, and then drizzled with sweet red pepper coulis. They were sweet, flavorful, and very fresh—a perfect choice.

For an entrée, I ordered the pomegranate salmon. It was rubbed with soy sauce, seared to an ideal crispiness, and then dressed with sweet-tangy pomegranate molasses. The salmon was served with garlic mashed potatoes, and sautéed yellow and green zucchini. This dish was beautifully prepared and brimming with flavor. My salmon was cooked to perfection, the garlic mashed were superb, and the zucchini delicious. My companion ordered the seafood scampi—a true symphony of flavors! It was chock-full of jumbo tiger shrimp, crabmeat and sea scallops, which were sautéed gently in a butter garlic sauce with a hint of vermouth and Pernod, and served over linguine.

We decided to indulge in some dessert, and share a piece of the chocolate mocha cake—a dense, rich chocolate cake, with a mocha brandy frosting. You guessed it—it was worth every calorie. Our decaffeinated coffee was robust, and satisfying.

On this particular evening the Crooked Lake House was hosting a wedding reception. I peaked in the ballroom... soft yellow walls, white tables and chairs... it was exquisite. I would like to go back when I could take in a bit more. Right now proprietor Paul Vincent is working on reopening the hotel rooms. This is quite a labor of love.

I definitely recommend that you try The Crooked Lake House. If you live in the Capital District, it is closer than what you might think. It took us only 20-25 minutes to get there from Clifton Park (and what a pretty drive). Our food was great, the ambiance is splendid, and what a view. Our evening was a total delight.



LORI'S PICKS



Cate's Italian Garden Restaurant and Bar

4952 Main Street • Bolton Landing, NY • 518 644-2041

If you have ever strolled down Main St. in Bolton Landing, on a summer's day, you could not help but notice all the people dining el fresco at Cate's. I decided I had to find out just why this place is always bustling with people. Was this just a hot tourist spot, or the real deal?

We dined at Cate's on a stellar summer evening, and decided that we would dine outside, and do some people watching. Bolton Landing is a truly lovely town with many quaint shops and restaurants, and from what we gathered they were enjoying a brisk summer season. There were lots of folks taking in all that Bolton Landing has to offer.

As we looked through the menu we were brought a basket of warm assorted Italian breads, and infused olive oil. It was oh so good. For an appetizer we went with a special of the evening, shrimp tempura, with a sweet and sour Thai dipping sauce. The shrimp were lightly fried, fresh, plentiful, and a total treat. The sweet and sour sauce had a nice little kick to it. We had no trouble polishing off the shrimp in short order. Our entrees came with a garden salad, which I substituted (extra charge) for their field green salad. My companion had the garden salad which was a mixed green salad with a house Italian dressing—simple and delicious. My field green salad was out of this world.

Mixed greens, candied walnuts, Maytag blue cheese, and dried cranberries, drizzled with a maple walnut vinaigrette. The combination of the sweet candied walnuts with the pungent blue cheese and cranberries was a perfect way to begin my meal.

Cate's has a very comprehensive menu, with all kinds of dishes to choose from. My companion ordered one of his all time favorites, zuppa di pesce. It was absolutely loaded with clams, mussels, and shrimp. The tomato sauce was a fragrant, authentic Italian sauce. His zuppa di pesce did not disappoint. It was awesome! Although I am not usually a fan of restaurant lasagna, I decided to put Cate's to the true test and try it out. I am happy to report that Cate's lasagna was the real thing. Homemade pasta, a mix of beef and Italian sausage, a sprinkling of red and green peppers and mushrooms, and the piece de resistance was a sweet, light, totally phenomenal sauce. We were both more than pleased with our meals.

Our food was so outstanding that we decided to share some dessert. We thought the key lime pie might be perfect on a warm summer night. It was an ideal way to end a superb meal. It was refreshing, and divine.

It is easy to see why Cate's is such a popular destination. The food, service, and ambiance are all wonderful, and the prices are fair. I understand their pizza is some of the very best anywhere. If you have never had the pleasure of dining at Cate's, you owe it to yourself!

Porreca's Restaurant

2897 Lake shore Drive • Lake George, NY • 518 668-5259 • www.nordicks.com/restaurant.asp

Porreca's Restaurant is located at Nordick's Motel in Lake George. The restaurant is a separate entity from the motel, and is run by Chef Nicholas Porreca, a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America. Chef Nicholas has quite an impressive resume. He worked at Restaurant Relais de Chateau in Chalais, France under Chef Jean- Louis Bouvier. After his work in France he worked, for eight years, in some of New York City's finest restaurants, including Daniel and Le Cirque.

When Porreca's took over the space from the previous restaurant, they did a complete remodel. The restaurant is very open and airy. The dining room does have an Adirondack flavor, with light knotty pine walls and ceiling, but also has a contemporary feel to it.

We were first brought a basket of homemade foccacia, and home churned butter. Oh wow, was it delicious. For an appetizer, I ordered a field green salad, and my companion had the mozzarella and tomato salad. From presentation to taste, both salads were a hit.

For our dinners we both decided on pasta dishes. My gnocchi were made with ricotta, and had a nice light consistency—they were a real treat. The sausage fennel ragu had a wonderful rich taste, and was the perfect finishing touch. My companion's pappardelle Bolognese was a phenomenal dish, of thick hand cut pasta topped with a tomato meat sauce. The dish could have been right out of my nonna's kitchen.

All of the desserts are homemade on premises. There were many exceptional looking selections to choose from. I liked the sounds of the Italian vanilla panna cotta, but ultimately went with the lemon tart with an almond butter crust and mascarpone whipped cream. What an authentic Italian dessert. It was just fabulous. I took all my fine time enjoying this amazing confection. My companion ordered the strawberry rhubarb pie, and could not stop commenting about just how scrumptious it was. Our rich cups of coffee were just the thing to accompany these two sinful desserts.

Porreca's Restaurant offers authentic Italian cuisine, attentive service, and fair prices. We had a lovely evening at Porreca's. They are also open for breakfast, and we plan to check that out as well. Another fine addition to Lori's Picks!



LORI'S PICKS



East Cove Restaurant

Route 9L and Beach Road • Lake George, NY • 518 668-5265 • www.eastcove.com

The East Cove Restaurant has been a favorite eatery for locals, as well as tourists for some forty years. After having a stupendous dinner there recently, it is easy to see why. It is not about the ambiance, although it is pleasant, and very clean. The service was terrific, but the story at the East Cove Restaurant is their great food.

After a long day of fun in the sun, in Lake George, my companion and I decided upon dinner at East Cove. The moment we entered, we knew this was a truly Adirondack restaurant. From the knotty pine walls to the wood beamed ceiling, we were surrounded by distinctly Adirondack touches. The bar area is right in front of you as you enter the restaurant, and is separate from the dining rooms. We were seated in their main dining room. It had a definite nautical theme, from the ship's wheel light fixtures to the fishing nets. The atmosphere was all very relaxing, and ideal for the entire family.

Right after being seated we were brought a basket of warm rolls, whipped butter, and a bowl of homemade cole slaw. I love homemade cole slaw and thought it was a great touch. I devoured all of it. I am not sure if my companion even got to taste it. The menu is extensive with many wonderful offerings. It is truly a restaurant that has something for everyone. After agonizing over so many tempting selections, we both decided on veal dishes for our entrees. My companion went for the veal Marsala (a special that evening), while I chose the Wiener schnitzel. We had heard that the portions are quite large so we decided to share the mushroom caps royale as an appetizer. The mushroom caps were prepared with a Maryland crabmeat stuffing, and were moist, delicate, and delicious. We were definitely off to a good start.

Our dinners came with a choice of soup or garden salad. We both opted for the salad, with creamy parmesan peppercorn dressing. The dressing was tasty, and the salads very refreshing after a long, hot day. Our dinners were brought shortly after we finished our salads. Each one looked incredible, and the portions were tremendous. My Wiener schnitzel was mouth-watering. Two large medallions of veal, lightly breaded and sautéed in lemon butter. The veal was so tender and flavorful, I don't know when I have enjoyed Wiener schnitzel more. My meal came with a side. I opted for the mashed sweet potatoes, and they were fabulous. My companion could not stop raving about his veal Marsala. Sautéed veal medallions, layered with portobella mushrooms, and asiago in a Marsala wine demi-glaze. It was served with a side of pasta prepared with melted aged provolone cheese. The dish was outstanding, from the taste to the presentation.

Again, the desert menu was extensive as well. No doubt something to please everyone. I love homemade rice pudding. To me it is comfort food at its best. So needless to say, that was my choice, and it was a total delight. It was what a good rice pudding should be, and I enjoyed it thoroughly. My companion went for the chocolate truffle cake. Dark chocolate fudge frosting between layers of a dark chocolate cake, with a nut accent –chocolate decadence at its best! Our coffee was aromatic, and the perfect complement to our outstanding desserts.

Our trip to the East cove was a total success! Our service was prompt and courteous, the prices were very fair, and the food was plentiful. East Cove has a children's menu, and an early eaters discount daily from 5:00-6:30 and Sundays 2:00-6:00. They even have a Sunday champagne brunch starting at 11:00 AM. If you appreciate first-rate food, and do not want to sacrifice quantity for quality the East Cove is for you. It is open year round. Check it out for your self – you'll be glad you did.

EXCELLENT CASUAL DINING IN A WARM ADIRONDACK LOG ATMOSPHERE.



ROUTE 9L AND BEACH ROAD • LAKE GEORGE, NY 12845
(518) 668-5265 • WWW.EASTCOVE.COM