

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



CHECK-IN

SEATTLE’S AIRPORT HIDEAWAY

Each of Cedarbrook Lodge’s guest-only communal living rooms has a gas fireplace, vaulted ceiling, original art work, and big sofas and chairs.

SEATTLE — Cedarbrook Lodge overlooks 18 acres of natural wetlands, dogwood trees, a small pond, perfectly groomed lawns, and flower gardens that sprout almost year-round — hardly the place you would picture in an airport setting. This little oasis lies just five minutes down the road from Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SeaTac) and a block from International Boulevard, a strip with airport parking lots and its share of gritty, worn-out motels.

My husband discovered the lodge during a work trip and it’s now our go-to Seattle hotel. It’s the kind of place where visitors take photos of the décor — the tables in the lobby are made from massive reclaimed silver maple logs — the hotel restaurant’s chef once beat Bobby Flay in a showdown on the Food Network, and locals come to stay.

“We live 10 minutes down the road,” a woman said to me as we lounged in the spa, pre-treatment. “We’re here for our 22nd anniversary — it’s a great getaway, but close to home.”

Washington Mutual, the former savings and loan bank, built the property as a conference center before it went belly up in 2008. The property changed hands several times and eventually became this 167-room lodge that still has killer meeting spaces. (If you ever need to hold an event next to SeaTac, the Summit Auditorium at Cedarbrook has ergonomic Herman Miller Aeron chairs for up to 120 people, and the latest, greatest Dolby surround sound and high-def projection equipment. Other onsite meeting spaces hold anywhere from 10 to 200 guests.)

Most people, like us, go to Cedarbrook to chill out pre or post flight. You don’t need to stay here to enjoy the restaurant or spa — grab the lodge’s free shuttle from SeaTac and spend your layover here.

The Spa offers more than a dozen treatments. (I highly

BY KARI BODNARCHUK
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT



Complimentary snacks in the communal living rooms include bowls of gourmet malted milk balls.

recommend the Petrified Wood and Stone Massage, while my “anniversary” spa-mate swears by the Alaskan Glacial Mud Wrap.) It also has its own Bath Salt Blending Bar, where you can create your own mix of bath salts to take home. Or ask one of the staff to create a blend for your stay (complimentary for guests) — the lavender, cedarwood, and chamomile blend works wonders for relaxing.

One of the hotel’s coolest features: It has cozy, communal living rooms located in its secure guest-only wings. Each 500-square-foot room has a gas fireplace, vaulted ceiling, floor-to-ceiling windows, bookshelves (leave a book or help yourself to one), and cool artwork. I often work here after the kids go to bed, so I don’t wake them. You can sink into a big lounge chair or sofa and read a book, get online, watch TV, or play a board game. Our kids detoured here at every chance: Each living room has complimentary (and individually packaged) ice cream,

string cheese, yogurt, and bottled water in a fridge, individual bags of Tim’s Cascade Style potato chips, and bowls of gourmet malted milk balls.

If you’re more motivated than we typically are, you can burn off these treats or maintain your workout routine in the hotel’s 24-hour fitness center, which has treadmills, stationary bikes, elliptical machines, and weight machines, along with free weights and balance balls. If you’re traveling with kids and the weather cooperates, head outside for badminton, bean bag toss, bocce, ladder ball, and other lawn games.

Try to swing a meal at the onsite Copperleaf Restaurant, which is run by chef Roy Breiman (the chef who beat Bobby Flay in a showdown two years ago). Chef Breiman has worked in restaurants from San Francisco to France, and even designed and opened the 48-room boutique hotel Opus on Martha’s Vineyard. His diverse menu draws heavily on flavors and products from the Pacific Northwest — duck, scallops, lamb, beef, sirloin, and sablefish to name a few, plus fresh rolls baked in nearby Kent with local-made butter.

It’s easy to get lost in all the comfort and hotel perks, but don’t forget to get yourself over to the airport in time. Although if you do miss your flight, you can order a pillow from the pillow library, book another spa treatment, and cozy up to the bowl of malt balls in the living room and watch a movie.

CEDARBROOK LODGE 18525 36th Avenue South, Seattle (locals refer to the area as Seattle Southside); 206-901-9268, www.cedarbrooklodge.com. Rates start at \$179. The property has pet-friendly rooms (complete with dog bed, bowls, and treats) and an outdoor area for furry travelers; \$50 pet fee.

Kari Bodnarchuk can be reached at travelwriter@karib.us.

HERE

VISIT MAINE’S SUGARHOUSES

Traditions loom large in Maine: On March 25, locals celebrate the 35th anniversary of Maine Maple Sunday, the unofficial start of spring, when Maine’s maple producers welcome visitors for demonstrations, sugarbush tours, and samplings. More than 90 farms participate statewide. Some offer tractor or horse-drawn wagon rides and a chance to visit barn animals, while others have food, live music, and family-friendly activities. Virtually all offer tours of their syrup-making process. This year, check out Hilltop Boilers in Newfield, which just opened its new sugarhouse and will host the Axe Women Loggers of Maine, who will demonstrate axe throwing, log chip-ping, and sawing. www.mainemapleproducers.com.

SEE SPRING FLOWERS IN MARLBOROUGH

Winter may be lingering, but you can get a glimpse of spring in Marlborough next weekend. The 21st Annual Paradise City Arts Festival features a special “Flower Power!” exhibit that showcases colorful flower-themed works, including paintings, photographs, jewelry, glass, ceramics, metal, wood, fiber arts, and furniture. The three-day festival, March 23-25, takes place at the Royal Plaza Trade Center and showcases work by 175 artists. It also features live music every afternoon in the Sculpture Café — from swing and Motown renditions to sizzling New Orleans-style jazz — and on-going demonstrations by master pot-ter Tim Scull from Connecticut, who’s



known for his enormous pots and plat- ters. Admission: adults \$14, 65 and older \$12, 12 and under free, three-day pass \$16. Plenty of free parking. 800-511-9725, www.festivals.paradisecityarts.com.



THERE

WHERE TO ‘CAMP’ IN COMFORT

Find out where you can connect with nature — overnight — without rough- ing it. A new travel site, called Glamp- ing Hub, lists 25,000 accommodations around the world that include yurts, teepees, cabins, caves, safari tents, ig- loos, pods, tiny houses, and Airstream trailers, among others. Regardless of style, each one offers hotel-quality comfort, a unique experience, and closeness to nature, according to Glamping Hub. Stay in anything from a caravan-style cabin on an organic farm in Tuscany (\$43 per night) to a pet-friendly yurt in a Canadian park (\$108 per night) or a rain forest tree- house with a swimming pool in Aus- tralia (\$413 per night). The website of- fers a description of each property and lists amenities (number of beds, pet policy, and WiFi, for instance), onsite facilities (bikes for use, swimming pool, and barbecue grill), nearby activ- ities, cancellation policy, and reviews. 415-800-3004, www.glampin-ghub.com.

NEW TOURS FOR SOLO PARENTS

Intrepid Travel has launched six new

tours geared to solo parents and their children that take travelers to adven- turous spots around the world. The small-group tours cater to single par- ents (or parents traveling without a spouse) and their kids, with a maxi- mum of 16 people per trip. Go white- water rafting, horseback riding, and hiking through jungles in Costa Rica, visit India’s iconic Taj Mahal, ride a camel and then cruise down the Nile in Egypt, and explore beaches and deserts in Morocco. Or explore ancient ruins and an elephant nature park in Thailand, or enjoy a cycling tour of Hanoi and a boat tour around Viet- nam’s Halong Bay. Prices: \$555 (8 days Morocco) to \$3,185 (15 days Costa Ri- ca), includes land tour, led by local leaders, but no flights. No single sup- plement fees, and children 17 and younger receive a 10 percent discount. www.intrepidtravel.com.

EVERYWHERE

A WALLET-SIZE LUGGAGE TRACKER

Attach a ReboundTAG to your checked luggage and increase the odds that you’ll see your bag again, if it gets lost en route to your destination. This clever credit card-size tag contains multi- ple built-in tracking technologies, in- cluding a radio frequency identifica- tion (RFID) microchip, a near field communication (NFC) microchip, a quick-response (QR) code, and a good old-fashioned ID number printed on the back. That means, it works in any airport worldwide. Register your tag on ReboundTAG.com, add a descrip- tion of your checked luggage (you can change this at any time), and hit the road. If your bag goes missing, report



it on the website and you will get SMS and e-mail updates when it’s found. Since the tags use radio frequency mi- crochips, they don’t need to be re- charged — a big bonus. \$29.95 per tag, includes a one-year membership that covers you for unlimited flights and usage; pay \$4.99 per year thereafter. www.reboundtag.com.

KEEP YOUR DEVICES REFUELED

Take a long road trip and your coveted plugs will soon be taken to recharge devices. Bring the RapidX 5 car charger and you get five USB ports for charging devices. Thanks to the clever design, you can charge three devices in the back seat — perfect if you’re traveling with kids. The fast-charging device has a 5-foot-long cable with a 12V plug on one end for plugging into your car, and a three-port USB hub on the other end that reaches into the back seat (it comes with a removable clip, so you can secure it in place). The RapidX’s five USB ports charge up to 2.4 amps per port, or 10.8 amps over- all. Keep an eye out for a 7-port model coming out this summer. \$24.49. www.rapidx.io.

KARI BODNARCHUK