

8 MOUNTAIN GETAWAYS • SCENIC AUTUMN DRIVES

BlueRidge COUNTRY

Exploring the Mountains of the South

FALL *In Love*

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Roaring Fires, Ski Slopes: Discover Cabin Getaways for Winter

Mountain Lake, Pembroke, Va.

From Mountain Lake Hotel's Blueberry Ridge luxury cabins, you can almost see the end of the world. In the early spring before the oaks leaf out, you can monitor the season's march up the mountainside.

Blueberry Ridge cabins are so secluded many hotel visitors don't know they exist, yet cabin guests have only a 10-minute saunter to the hotel dining room, pool and recreational facilities.

Each of the nine board-and-batten cabins features a cathedral ceiling and sweeping views of the forest or pastoral valley below Salt Pond Mountain. The wood-burning fireplace is stocked with seasoned wood. Despite the rustic setting, cabins are surprisingly elegant. Each unit is equipped with burl-top tables, remote control dimmer lights and original artwork inspired by and created at Mountain Lake by regional artists.

You won't find a television in these cabins – you have to step over to the woodland conference center for that – but each lodge is stocked with a deck of cards and eight board games. Mountain Lake's maze of trails radiates out for miles from the cabins. To explore the vistas and hollows, you might want to rent a mountain bike at the lodge. Or you can take a sedate horse and carriage ride along a hemlock-draped path above the lake.

Guests have free use of the resort's canoes, kayaks, paddleboats and rowboats. Boats with electric trolling motors rent for a nominal fee. Fishing for the lake's bass and rainbow trout can land you a free night's stay, if you reel in the right fish. Lawn games at the hotel include horseshoes, croquet, bocce, badminton, volleyball, tennis and oversized lawn chess and checkers.

Guests who want to roam further afield may make reservations for canoeing the mild rapids of the New River in Pembroke



MOUNTAIN LAKE. In winter, lodge and cabins are a cozy retreat.

For information: 1-800-346-3334, www.mountainlakehotel.com.

—Su Clauson-Wicker

Boyd Mountain Log Cabins, Maggie Valley, N.C.

As I quickly learned last winter, there's no fear of cabin fever when it comes to a stay at Boyd Mountain Log Cabins. From the unique accommodations to convenient things to see and do on-property and nearby, this is a great getaway in the winter – or any other season.

Dan and Betsy Boyd own and operate Boyd Mountain Log Cabins in western North Carolina as a labor of love – a love that obviously includes history, log cabins, the outdoors and much more.

"We bought the land back in 1972, when it was mostly pasture," Dan told me upon arrival as we strolled grounds that now include gardens, stocked fishing ponds, cows in meadows and a very popular Fraser fir Christmas tree farm. "It was originally my grandfather's property and he might recognize the style of some of the cabins, but that's about it."

The six historic log cabins – which are all 150 to 200 years old and were relocated to Boyd Mountain – are certainly the main draw of this 130-acre paradise. Each cabin features a modern kitchen (including a dishwasher), heat and air conditioning, a

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IN THE N.C. MOUNTAINS: Boyd Mountain Cabins are on the same property as a Christmas tree farm.

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fireplace, washer and dryer, cable TV and VCR, telephone, one or more porches with rocking chairs, a BBQ grill and pure mountain spring water (from the top of Boyd Mountain) for the kitchen and bathrooms. The cabins are spaced around the property, offering privacy and pretty views.

We stayed in the two-story Long Branch Cabin, which Dan and Betsy restored and brought to Boyd Mountain from Whittier back in 1995. Highlights include a stunning stacked rock fireplace, plus a downstairs bedroom and two more upstairs. The front porch overlooks a fishing pond, while the side deck faces a ridge filled with hundreds of Christmas trees.

Dan showed me some of the other cabins they've restored and moved over the years. Along with Long Branch, my personal favorites included the two-story Cosby Cabin (from Cosby, Tenn.); the Millstone Cabin (from Asheville, N.C.) and the Shelton Laurel Cabin, which came from Madison County's Shelton Laurel community and once served as the Boyds' guest house.

Mid-November to mid-December offer an ideal time to visit, thanks to a choose 'n' cut Christmas tree program that features top Fraser firs ranging in size from five to 18 feet. Also be sure to ask about how kids can stay and ski free during ski season (excluding holidays) through a deal with nearby Cataloochee Ski Area.

For information: 828/926-1575, www.boydmountain.com.

—Lynn Seldon

Boyd Mountain Log Cabins Christmas Tree Farm

Experience an unforgettable Winter Vacation. Create memories with family by staying in one of our six log cabins and selecting your own Christmas Tree on 130 beautifully landscaped acres.

- Fireplaces
- Skiing Close by
- Sledding on property

In the
Smoky Mountains



www.boydmountain.com

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