

mosaic

MORGAN STANLEY

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thoughts that count*

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More**

CHOICE
CHARITIES

**Holiday
Foods to Please
Every Palate**

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BETTER LIGHT BULBS,
CRISPER HOME AUDIO,
and
BIGGER RED WINES





TRAVEL

THE URGE TO SPLURGE

Maybe you've been quarantined for months and want to have a little fun at a celebrated destination. This memorable, bucket-list Vermont resort offers a virtually human-free stay, from check-in to food delivery. What makes it so special?

BY JANCEE DUNN

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win Farms, the ultra-luxurious, 20-room, adults-only Relais & Châteaux property in Barnard, Vermont, regularly appears on lists of the top-ranked hotels in the world. Spread across 300 acres of flower-strewn meadow and leafy forest, it's the former private retreat of Nobel Prize-winning author Sinclair Lewis and his journalist wife, Dorothy Thompson. Not only is it an easy weekend drive from cities like Boston and New York, it now offers a considered, COVID-wary way to be safe and have fun at the same time. With rooms starting at \$1,650 a night, it's a definite splurge—although the price includes everything, from lavish meals to wine to all activities. (And there's no tipping.) If you've been socially distancing for months, there is no more restorative place to safely celebrate a special occasion.

The Rooms

Each of the guest rooms and cottages is done in a different style, from Tuscan to Moroccan. All are decorated with museum-quality artwork; nearly every room has an enormous wood-burning fireplace stocked with a mountain of logs, and a deep soaking tub surrounded by windows that look out onto the woods. There is a complimentary array of coffee, beer, wine, soda, juices, and snacks (many house-made, from sweet curry roasted nuts to wild ginger fruit and

seed mix).

Among the many thoughtful touches are same-day laundry service and unlimited phone calls worldwide (both gratis). Several goodies for tucking into your luggage include a Stave wooden jigsaw puzzle (handmade in nearby Norwich and notoriously intricate), and exclusive Out of the Woods toiletries. Every night at turndown, a handmade confection, such as *fleur de sel* caramels, appears by your Anichini-swathed featherbed.

The Food

The cuisine at Twin Farms is world renowned for good reason. Unique multicourse meals are designed daily, according to the season, by award-winning chef Nathan Rich (who is aware of guests' preferences, thanks to a form filled out in advance).

Breakfast is delivered to your room via picnic basket and announced by a discreet knock—ours arrived precisely when we requested it. Don't miss the daily marvels from pastry chef Christopher Wilson, who trained at the Inn at Little Washington, from a crisp croissant (the best I've had outside France) to a meltingly tender *kouign-amann*, the intricate, labor-intensive Breton pastry. Lunch can be served in the room, packed into a box to take on one of the many activities, or eaten picnic-style in a secluded grove on the grounds.

The Treehouse cottage (opposite page) and (from left to right, below) a view of the resort in fall, a chocolate waffer with raspberry gelato, and one of two bathrooms at the Chalet cottage.

Every afternoon at cocktail hour, yet another picnic basket is placed by the door with cheese, crackers, a bottle of Lassalle Champagne on ice, and housemade potato chips (one day we had Vidalia onion; the next, sage).

Dinner is finessed from just-plucked local ingredients, such as a velvety caramelized onion soup with local clothbound cheddar; Vermont heritage pork tenderloin with morel mushrooms, wild asparagus, celery-root puree, and pork jus; and a *crème fraîche* custard with poached rhubarb and an almond tuile. Each course is thoughtfully paired with wine from Twin Farms' 15,000-bottle cellar. (If you're a beer lover, ask if they have Heady Topper, the mythic double India pale ale made, in very limited supplies, in Vermont.)

The Activities

There's plenty to do no matter which season you go—all of it pure pleasure. In winter, Twin Farms boasts its own ski slope with six groomed trails exclusively for guests (a Sherpa snowmobile can speed you back up the hill after each run). Go on a snowshoe hike or ice skating (every amenity is taken care of, from equipment to foot-warmers to L.L. Bean boots). In fall, fly-fish on the Copper Pond, also exclusively for guests (the boathouse is stocked with everything you need). In summer, try croquet on the velvety green lawn, perfect your serve on the tennis court,

or take a spin on Twin Farms' new e-assist bikes through the rolling hills, every view a picture postcard. When you return, cross the quaint covered bridge on the property and head to the onsite Twiggs Pub, which has a pool table, a retro-looking jukebox, and a bartender who can make any cocktail you dream up.

The Nearby Attractions

One of the prettiest villages in the country, Woodstock is a 10-minute drive. Among the many shops is F.H. Gillingham & Sons, a classic family-run general store established in 1886.

Hike nearby Mount Tom, then visit Sugarbush Farm, which offers tastings of its famous cheeses. Or head to the nearby town of Quechee, home to the Simon Pearce glass-blowing factory. A half-hour drive away, in the ridiculously picturesque town of Norwich, is the immaculate headquarters of King Arthur Baking Company, a combination bakery, on-site café, and store. Watch bakers prepare breads and pastries, eat lunch, take a baking class, or shop for cookie sheets and baking tools.

But there's no judgment if you want to stay firmly put at Twin Farms. Most people find it nearly impossible to leave the utter seclusion of this enchanted place and the feeling that every single detail is taken care of. In an uncertain world, that's pretty priceless.

