

Luxe all-inclusives under the radar

By Danielle Braff
 GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Avoid spring breakers and the loud, drunken crowds while still getting an all-inclusive package by staying at a resort that offers it all but stays under the radar.

LAKE AUSTIN RESORT AND SPA, Austin, Texas

Located about 40 minutes outside of downtown Austin but feels like it's a world away. It's surrounded by the protected Balcones Canyonlands Preserve and sits on Lake Austin, which makes the resort super tranquil and relaxing. lakeaustintin.com

Included: Three meals daily, unlimited fitness classes, and activities such as cooking classes, hiking, musical meditation, kayaking, boat cruises, and lectures with the staff dietitian.

Activities: The 25,000-square-foot spa is the mother-ship of the resort. Treatments such as the Gifts of Our Garden (exfoliation, massage, and body wrap using herbs cultivated in the gardens, \$325) are available a la carte. Other popular activities include fitness classes, aqua boot camp, and nutrition classes.

Best for: Spa vacationers, fitness buffs, mother-and-daughter trips, solo travelers, and couples. Children must be 14, year-round.

Price: Minimum of three nights starts at \$1,720 per person plus room tax and a service charge.

FAIR HILLS RESORT Detroit Lakes, Minn.

Families who want to return

to the simpler days highlighted in "Dirty Dancing," where members could have fun with each other (sans all that cheesiness and actual underground dirty dancing), find it at this resort. fairhillsresort.com

Included: Three meals daily and all amenities. In family season (June 20-Aug. 29), also included are daily facilitated activities and lessons in water-skiing, tennis, sailing, golf, and swimming.

Activities: When the resort opens each May, there are scheduled activities throughout the day, many of them focused on keeping the kids smiling. They include everything from fishing to treasure hunts, sandcastle contests, and family campfires. Families can also borrow equipment to play almost any sport imaginable, including croquet and volleyball. Bikes are available too.

Best for: Families with children.

Price: There are many packages, but the most popular is the American Meal Plan, which starts at \$739 per adult for the week and \$311 for children ages 6-12.

VISTA VERDE GUEST RANCH Steamboat Springs, Colo.

This is a traditional winter wonderland. When it's covered in snow, the ranch offers nearly every imaginable activity (even snow-horseback riding), all included in the fee. The ranch allows children 6 and older in the winter season, and in September, there are adult-only weeks. In summer, the ranch transforms into a true dude ranch, plus a pool. vistaverde.com

Included: Meals, beer, wine, activities, a kids' program, and airport transfers.

Activities: Horseback riding

through the snow or trails, sleigh rides, tubing, back country skiing, horsemanship clinics, wine tasting, yoga, photography workshops, and more.

Best for: Anyone looking for an active vacation.

Price: Starts at \$1,185 per adult for three nights. Children 6-12 are \$885.

TWIN FARMS, Barnard, Vt.

This luxury, five-star hideaway is set amid 300 acres of meadows and woodlands in an unspoiled valley 15 minutes north of Woodstock. twinfarms.com

Included: Meals, beverages, cocktails, wine, and full use of any onsite recreation and equipment.

Activities: In the winter, guests enjoy private downhill ski slopes, trails for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, ice-skating and sledding, and all equipment is provided. The property also has a Japanese-style bath house for those who aren't so excited to be cold.

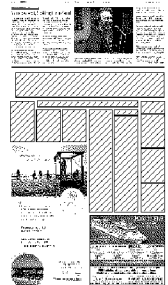
Best for: Active vacationers — or those who just want to relax and pamper themselves in comfort and style.

Price: Starts at \$1,450 per room per night for two people.

RANCH AT ROCK CREEK Philipsburg, Mont.

The ranch offers a slice of the Western life without sacrificing luxury. Everyone who stays here goes glamping in high-end cabins or tents — and wakes up to a not-so-typical day at a ranch: A pool (in summer), lots of time on the ski slopes, and farm-to-table meals. theranchatrockcreek.com

Included: Accommodations, activities, food, wine, spirits, one-on-one instruction, round-



trip airport transportation, and domestic or international phone calls. In winter, guests receive one complimentary downhill ski day at the nearby ski resort Discovery, including transportation, rentals, and a ski concierge.

Activities: Skiing, snowshoeing, ice-skating, horse-drawn sled rides, bowling, and a private movie theater.

Best for: Snow bunnies in the winter and cowboys or cowgirls in the summer.

Price: Starts at \$850 per adult per night. Children under

age 3 are free, 3-12 are \$700, and 13-18 are \$800 per night.

MOHONK MOUNTAIN HOUSE New Paltz, N.Y.

This national historic landmark resort with 259 rooms has been family-owned and operated for more than 145 years. It provides guests with modern amenities in a natural setting. mohonk.com

Included: Meals, most activities, childrens' and teens' programs, midweek golf, tennis, and boating. Horseback riding, rock climbing, and weekend

golf are available for an additional fee.

Activities: Ice-skating, broomball (hockey without skates), cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, snowtubing.

Best for: Everyone from families to honeymooners.

Price: \$299 per person per night plus taxes and optional gratuity based on double occupancy.

Danielle Braff can be reached at danielle_braff@hotmail.com.

From left: Texas treatment at Lake Austin Resort and Spa; Colorado horse transport at Vista Verde Guest Ranch; Montana mountain view at Ranch at Rock Creek; and Vermont fireside at Twin Farms.

