

“America’s No. 1 Resort in the Southeast”

—Condé Nast Traveler



*Primland, an Auberge Resorts Collection property,
is your gateway to genuine adventures.*

By Mark Pazdur, Publisher

BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS, VIRGINIA: According to Statista (a global analytics company), there are more than 700,000 hotels and resorts scattered around the globe. When the opportunity presented itself to visit *Condé Nast Traveler’s* No. 1 rated resort in the Southeast, my wife JoAnn and I jumped at the invitation.

Primland, an Auberge Resorts Collection property, resembles what I imagine the great estates created by the Carnegies or Gettys resembled from a bygone era. Clocking in at 12,000 acres, Primland is almost the size of the island

of Bermuda, and even during the busiest of summer weekends, you are likely to see more deer than fellow guests.

“The land was purchased in the 1970s by Didier Primat,” detailed Rajiv Malhotra, general manager. “Although his family and businesses are primarily based in Europe, the rolling topography of the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia reminded him of parts of France. His love of ecology required that, during construction, any tree removed, another tree was to be planted.”

When Mr. Primat passed away, his children continued with his vision to transform Primland into a self-sufficient business for generations to come by transforming its Lodge into an Auberge Resorts Collection property. “Combining stellar golf, a first-rate Lodge and

Interesting side note: Unlike Four Seasons, all Auberge resorts are identified with the name of the specific location, followed by “an Auberge Resorts Collection.” Why? The decision was purposeful to highlight the destination and local culture before the brand name.

“We believe this allows us to highlight our variety of locations and promote the importance of ‘disconnecting to reconnect.’”

— RAJIV MALHOTRA



Each evening, during turndown service, a special surprise is left bedside. During our stay, we received locally pressed olive oil, chef's brisket rub, and lavender linen spray.

the expertise of Auberge was an organic progression to 'make it work,'" said Malhotra. "When I heard that the position of general manager was available, I put both hands up in the air and jumped at the prospect.

"Photography is my hobby, and I feel like I am working in a living Claude Monet painting with *National Geographic* experiences," continued Malhotra. "The scenery changes by the season, and for that matter, by the day. I consider Primland to be one of the most photographic locations on earth. Our marketing slogan, Top of the Mountain, Beneath the Stars, couldn't ring more true."

VARIETY OF CHOICES

Primland offers three distinct accommodations: The Lodge, Pinnacle Cottages, and Tree Houses. The Lodge provides access to Primland's two restaurants (Elements and 19th Pub), gym, spa (my wife highly recommends the Mountain Glow, a hot oil hair, scalp, neck and foot massage), golf shop, kids activity center, and observatory without leaving the facility. The Pinnacle Cottages are about an eight-minute walk away. They feature unobstructed views of the surrounding mountains and ample space. If mobility is an issue, reserve a top-floor cottage to avoid using stairs. Finally, Primland's three tree houses literally embrace one or more giant trees. Whether you stay in the cleverly named Barn Owl, Cooper's Hawk, or Golden Eagle tree house, you will have sweeping views of the majestic Kibler Valley. "The tree houses at Primland are our answer to over-the-water bungalows found at



the Auberge in Bora-Bora," smiled Malhotra. "And, best of all, no passport is required."

A MOUNTAIN HIGH

A more beautiful mountain setting for a golf course is hard to imagine. Attributes include enormous greens accentuated by small bunkers, crosscut mow patterns on the fairways, and a routing that

takes advantage of deep canyon views carved by the Dan River eons ago. Since many flagsticks are shorter than typically found at other U.S. golf courses, don't be deceived by your eyes. At 2,000 to 3,000 feet in elevation, the course played about 5 percent shorter than scorecard yardages.

"If you drive well, you will leave your buddies behind," teased Brian Alley, director of golf and recreation at Primland. "Our prime golf season runs roughly from May through October.

"Off the fairways, our experienced guides have the uncanny ability to know you better than yourself when judging abilities," continued Alley. "Whether you hop on a Polaris RTV [rugged terrain vehicle], clay shoot from our 16 stand course, or fly-fish on private waters, fun will be had by all.

"If your definition of a vacation is shopping on Fifth Avenue in New York City, we aren't likely to be your first choice. But, if you are looking for genuine experiences, knowledgeable staff, and the service standards known around the world by Auberge, Primland fits the bill." ■

For information on seasonal packages, please visit AubergeResorts.com/Primland.



As darkness cloaks the land, marvel at the stars above from Primland Resort's fully-equipped on-site observatory. A one-hour RTV ride offers legit off-roading and not complete until some mud splashes your windshield. Clay shooting provides instant gratification. According to guides, women typically pick up shooting techniques easier. Why? They listen to instructions! The fly fishing setting is as real as it gets. Fast and cold-water temperatures provide strong trout willing to test your abilities.



The stables house 8-10 horses, each with a different personality. Paddleboarding and kayaking on Talbott or Towns lakes feels like you are set in a National Park.