



Offering more than just golf, this seaside retreat delivers the simple pleasures of the finer side of life

BY DOUG WALLACE

Fox Harb'r Fun

There's nothing like a cocktail cruise on an 18-metre yacht at sunset to make you feel welcome; all my cares melting into the waves of the Northumberland Strait. In fact, it feels like the perfect segue from my arrival at Nova Scotia's venerable Fox Harb'r Golf Resort & Spa via private jet. Shoes kicked off, I'm handed a flute of Brut sparkling from the resort's own vineyard.

Founded by Ron Joyce of Tim Hortons fame in 2000, and now carried forward by his son Steven Joyce, Fox Harb'r is a 445-hectare paradise and an exclusive golf haven anchored to 88 luxury townhouse-style suites. A massive convention and event centre opened in 2022. Support comes in the form of dozens of amenities, including a private airstrip and hangar, a deep-water marina, a luxe spa and junior Olympic-sized swimming pool, and a hunting lodge. Yes, this is a lifestyle I could get used to.

"Mr. Joyce coined a phrase we still like to use—that we are 'luxury without pretension,'" says resort president Kevin Toth. "The atmosphere is luxurious while still approachable—high quality, yet still comfortable." He says that half of those



checking in are straight-ahead leisure guests and half are corporate groups who are "adding a leisure component to their trip, incorporating a golf experience or one of our activities within their itineraries."



Fresh Halibut



A one-of-a-kind welcome on the resort yacht

I feel like I've entered a community rather than a golf resort. Guests whizz by waving from their golf carts, people stop to offer directions, kitchen staff ride past me with what looks like a fabulous lunch. It's a busy sort of place, workers maintaining the grounds, half-ton trucks adding to the notion that something big is on the horizon.

That something is a massive redesign of the resort's 100-hectare golf course, which is on its way to doubling in size. Two of the best golf architects in the world—Canadians Tom McBroom and Doug Carrick—are working together to expand the current course, splitting it

into two 18-hole courses: a links course to be ready by May 2025 and a parkland course slated for completion mid-season 2026. Each will include half of the original course.

When you're not out golfing, taking a lesson at the Golf Academy, or devouring decadent seafood from the very capable Fox Harb'r kitchen, there are many

other activities to work in before happy hour. A pontoon boat will take you to visit the herd of seals that congregates just down the shoreline and fishing is easily arranged with the resort's boat captain. Sea kayaking leads to even more seals. The hunting lodge is the hub for a variety of sporty stuff, all of it fun.

The recreation team takes us through the art of archery and axe-throwing, as well as sport shooting. Headphones firmly in place, we take our cues from the guide, who explains the finer points of hitting the various clay pigeons and their launching

points. I manage to conjure up my inner farm boy and miss only one shot.

We return to the lodge the next day to sample more of the kitchen's handiwork, which keeps to the unstuffy theme. "We focus on regional cuisine, which by its very nature is approachable," Toth says, "and we have the best wine list east of Montreal." I concur. And while there is caviar—this is a luxury resort, after all—it's from Acadian sturgeon.

After dessert, we move to the fire pit outside. An attendant appears almost out of nowhere with all the necessary fixings for s'mores. Yes, I can absolutely have dessert twice, thank you. It's just one more simple pleasantry that makes Fox Harb'r one of a kind.



Learning the basics of sport shooting



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-Resort president
Kevin Toth