



MOMS ON THE MOVE

Mom Springs Eternal

A Rejuvenating Retreat to Bedford Springs

By Karen Kullgren

Taking the waters means that some a few months ago when you managed to take a 10-minute bath without one of the kids busting in or hollering to ask where you put her socks, a trip to Omni Bedford Springs Resort & Spa just might be what you need. The National Historic Landmark and the eight mineral springs at the resort in Bedford, Pennsylvania have drawn guests, including 11 U.S. presidents since it first opened in 1796 as one of America's first spas. Even before that, the curative powers of the springs were well-known by many East Coast Indian tribes.

The resort is beautiful. It reopened in 2007 after being closed for 20 years and having completed a \$120 million restoration and expansion that earned it a Preservation Honor Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The architecture is Georgian style. The walls are lined with large photos of resort guests

in the 1800s, the women in their long dresses, the men in seersucker suits and straw boater hats, sitting outside listening to an orchestra in the gazebo, playing whist on the porch or just preening. Charming, brides married at the resort used their diamond rings to etch their names in the windows.

There are just 216 luxurious guest rooms and suites, many with porches and rocking chairs and views of Cumberland Valley. And don't get me started on how cloud-wondrous the bed and linens were. It's all designed for relaxation so, even though the rooms also have WiFi and what-not, why not consider leaving your laptop at home?

Spa Sensation

The new jewel of the resort is the 30,000-square-foot Springs

Eternal Spa, with a luxurious range of wraps, scrubs, hydrotherapy and other restorative treatments from the mineral-rich waters of the Eternal Spring. All guests having spa treatments can indulge in the popular Bedford Bath Ritual. It begins with giving yourself the spa's signature Black Walnut-Ginger Body Polish in the Mineral Deluge—fabulous, driving rainwater-like jets above and around you. Then you take an aromatic steam, followed by a cooling rinse in the Mineral

Deluge. Next, you alternate between the jets of the divine Hot Mineral Pool and the Cool Mineral Pool. When you're done, don't forget to hydrate with the spa's botanical Hydrating Aroma Mist.

I was so relaxed after the ritual on my recent visit that my legs were rubbery, barely able to carry me to my chaise lounge in the relaxation room overlooking the private spa garden of herbs and flowers. It's the next stop on guests' pampering journey



Photos by the Omni Bedford Springs.



where you can sip on cool water with slices of cucumber and citrus fruit or hot tea with flowers and munch on the chef's gourmet trail mix. Wrapped in a spa robe, most people alternate between reading and falling asleep in the quiet that is the code of every good spa lounge. I overheard two other moms whispering to each other that they're just not used to really relaxing back home, and how it's taken them a while to give in to the leisurely massages and wraps they're having here. But give in we all have, to magic fingers, to womblike waters, to hope in a bottle. My Eternal Glow Indulgence facial left me feeling, well, glowing and indulged!

Easy Chairs

My friend and I laughed at ourselves as we basically rolled from easy chair to easy chair and nook to nook between breaks of activity over our long weekend: The tavern's high-back leather club chairs while I chow down on the best meatloaf sandwich ever (the onion jam is the magic ingredient, I think, or is it the Lancaster bacon?) and she more daintily tackles a Caprese salad of buffalo mozzarella, tomato and fresh basil; the window seats by the fireplace in the foyer where we perch with afternoon tea; the comfy upholstered chairs in the library where we sink in at night with our books and our throws as protection against the winter chill.

Dining Options

There are several food options on the property, from fine dining to pub fare to a coffee and sandwich shop. The 1796 Room serves up delicious steaks, chops,

Mom Springs Eternal CONTINUED FROM PAGE 59

fish and fowl with modern sophistication paired with a historical décor. We visited the hotel's original kitchen with its huge hearth, kettles and bellows before we ate, though other visitors might be more thrilled with the Crystal Rooms exhibition kitchen. If you'd like to try something creative, you can sign up for a culinary class. Roasting marshmallows for smores over the outdoor fire pit during good weather is replaced by Che Sara Sara's specialty smore cupcakes.

Since its renovation, the resort boasts a new \$1.5 million outdoor aquatic complex, but my favorite is still the heavenly indoor, spring-fed pool. Balconies arch at the second floor with opera boxes at the ends of the stunning black and white marble room. The water is heated and feels soft and luxurious whether you're swimming, exercising or just floating through the day.

Plan to spend at least a couple of hours in downtown Bedford during your visit, but do it after you've checked in to the resort, because you'll get a downtown "passport" offering discounts. Shop for artisan jewelry and creative apparel at Elaine's Wearable Art, choose a gorgeous alpaca sweater at Backstage ALPACA, have a healthy bite at the Green Harvest Company café, choose from more than 100 varieties of loose teas at Everything Tea or sip a latte at HeBrews coffeehouse. Bring home some sinful sweets

Two other moms whispered to each other that they're just not used to really relaxing back home, and how it's taken them a while to give in to the leisurely massages and wraps they're having here.

from Bedford Candles. We didn't make it to the nearby Briar Valley Winery for a tasting, but we have it on our list for the next trip.

My friend and I both walked over the bridge from the resort, crossing the road and Shober's Run Creek below, to the two closest springs. She ventured further afield, expanding on the longer hike she'd taken the previous morning while I luxuriated in sleeping in. (It beat out the Sunrise Hatha Yoga class I'd briefly considered.) She made it to five of the springs.

Depending on the season, there are many outdoor activities and adventures available to guests, from fly fishing to mountain biking or nearby cross-country skiing or historical attractions including the Old Bedford Village living history site, covered bridges and National Museum of the American Coverlet. But don't stay out too long—the resort beckons, the spa sparkles and hard-working moms are pampered like they deserve to be.

Karen Kullgren is contributing editor for Washington Parent, and she is also a freelance writer. Follow her on Twitter.com/gracen-grayareas. Read her blog, "Grace in the Gray Areas: Reflections on Life's Journeys & Joys, Boons & Other Blessings" at karenkullgren.blogspot.com. Contact Karen at karen@washingtonparent.net.

Getting There: Just a 2 ½-hour drive from the D.C. area. OmniBedfordSprings.com

CONTINUED ON PAGE 60