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Heat Wave

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MUST-STOP BOUTIQUES, INSIDER ITINERARIES, LUXE LODGINGS,
GOURMET PIT STOPS AND THE COOLEST FINDS ALONG THE WAY

Lawyer and investor Zachary Bogue and Yahoo President and CEO Marissa Mayer. OPPOSITE One of the lake's iconic wooden Thunderbird yachts, out for a cruise.



DREW ALTIZER (2)

TAHOE CONFIDENTIAL

Field notes from the historic blue waters where summer homes are mansions and Golden State society comes to play

BY DIANE DORRANS SAEKS





LISA ROMERIN (3), DREW ALITZER (4), FIREWORKS: NORTH LAKE TAHOE VISITORS BUREAU; HOME EXTERIOR: KENDALL WILKINSON DESIGN; PIER: JASON TODD; FIRE LITE: DAVID FENTON

Imagine an entire summer breathing in pine-scented air, spending sun-struck days gazing at the lake's magical, pure blue waters. That's the privilege and pleasure of many California families over the last century as they've escaped San Francisco's summer fog, valley heat and city life for weekends of cloudless boating, hiking, long lunches, boisterous kids and dogs running free, and dressing for cocktails on the dock or the beach. Ah, sunset.

For San Francisco art collector Dolph Andrews and his extended family, summers have always meant Tahoe. "It's the largest alpine lake in the Americas, and we go up there and have a glorious time," says Andrews. His wife Emmy's grandparents built their rambling house on the lake in the early 1900s, and the family has been going there ever since. Generations of children and grandchildren have taken boats out onto the pristine waters, and invited friends to join in the fun.

"Since the '70s, I've loved to stay the weekends with Dolph and Emmy, who are dear and longtime friends," recalls Denise Hale, who traveled to Tahoe with her husband, Prentis, and trunks of chic sportswear and collections of Bulgari and David Webb.

"The traditional style of family estates around the lake is very understated, with elegant staff and fabulous personal service," says Hale. "The Andrewses were the most civilized ever, with everything planned and arranged for the comfort of their guests—but so subtle and low-key. I felt relaxed and so did Prentis, and we never wanted to leave." The couple and the Andrewses and friends would briefly depart on Saturdays for lunch at Diana and Gorham Knowles' residence, a classic camp-style timber house in Meek's Bay with dramatic California art-filled interiors by Michael Taylor.

The Knowleses, leaders of San Francisco society and style in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, headed up each June with their highly coveted Chinese cook and a multitude of staff and seasonal accouterments. Michael Taylor would follow to style, fluff and shape the house for months of parties, lunches and lazy afternoons. At their pine-shaded estate, complete with a dock and sandy beach and numerous alluring watercrafts, everything was luxurious, with

TOP ROW Wooden boats, the most elegant transport. Lazy summer afternoons. Oscar de la Renta. SECOND ROW Fourth of July fireworks. Dede Wilsey. Family-friendly activities. Social gatherings for a typical weekend. THIRD ROW Alexandra Fritz. The runway of the annual Oscar de la Renta Fashion Show to benefit the League to Save Lake Tahoe. Kendall Wilkinson-designed house. The pier. Fire Lite diner.

“We saw a group paddling by in cocktail dresses and figured the boards must not be too tippy if they were going by in dinner attire!”

—JEAN LARETTE

Taylor's signature taupe silk-chenille sofas and chartreuse silk pillows. The coffee table in the living room, a massive chunk of rough-hewn granite from a nearby quarry, was winched into the house over the Douglas firs and then hauled in between the French doors.

There's a lot to enjoy. Lake Tahoe is 22 miles long, 12 miles wide, and has 72 miles of shoreline. And the League to Save Lake Tahoe, founded in 1957, is a powerful group committed to preserving that Eden.

The highlight of the summer season since 1969 has been the League to Save Lake Tahoe fashion show/benefit, the first of which Bill Blass and Saks Fifth Avenue hosted at the Rubicon Beach estate of Mr. and Mrs. John R. Metcalf.

Blass presented his collection barefoot on the beach. At the 1975 show, Saks Fifth Avenue bolted down sheets of plywood to prevent his models from sinking into the sandy shore. Today, there's a dramatic raised runway.

In 1995, designer Oscar de la Renta debuted on the lake. He told a friend that the Lake Tahoe event is his favorite. "All year, I look forward to being in Lake Tahoe," said de la Renta.

In 2003, attendance broke 600. Guests over the years, like Nan Kempner, Marissa Mayer, Alexis and Trevor Traina, Dede Wilsey, Mara Fritz, Jean Larette, Rosemary Baker, and founding families such as the Andrewses dress in white linen, don hats and the latest resort wear. Then, they rush the trunk show tent for first dibs on the newest designs. The upcoming August 3rd show is expected to sell out once more.

Over the years, the benefit has raised more than \$15 million to keep the lake blue. In 2012, Lake Tahoe's waters were the clearest in 10 years, according to UC Davis scientists who study the lake.

Among the League's earliest victories was the defeat of a development plan for a high-speed freeway circling the lake, a bridge over Emerald Bay, additional casino districts, and heavily populated urban centers around the lake. The newly-formed League successfully educated public opinion against the plan and helped guide management of the Tahoe area in a different direction since that time.

"We've always worked to protect the lake from incorrect development, and to bring science

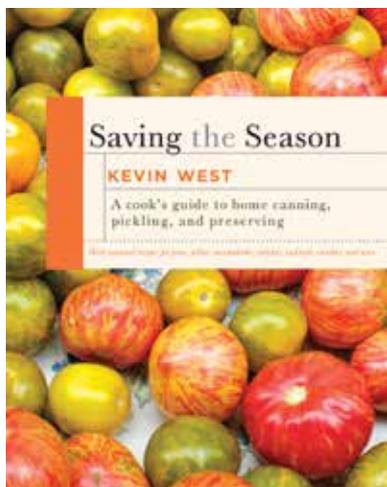
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Bathers by a pool on the shore of Lake Tahoe, photographed by Slim Aarons, 1959.

SLIM AARONS/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

Saving the Season, \$35, Knopf.



JAM SESSIONS

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“Do everything neatly always,” she said before darting off.

I’d nominate that sentence as the single best piece of kitchen advice ever imparted.

Fifteen years passed before I went into a restaurant again, when my friend Akasha Richmond, proprietor of Akasha Restaurant in Culver City, asked me for a lesson on making jam. I was a bit nervous to be there as an instructor rather than a student, and frankly intimidated by the huge pile of Elberta peaches we had for making a restaurant-sized batch of jam. I forgot to consider each fruit individually. I wasn’t neat in all things. And it showed in the jam, which tasted good but had a sloppy, farmhouse look. Disappointed, I suggested to Akasha that we run it through a food mill to improve the appearance.

“No, I like it,” she said. “It’s rustic.”

And that was the third lesson I’ve learned in professional kitchens. The jam that we made didn’t need improving, because there’s no such thing as the perfect Jam. Instead, every jam that is, is yet another aspect of jam in its infinite expressions. •

TAHOE CONFIDENTIAL

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and prudent management and information to benefit the region,” says Bob Damaschino, board president for the last five years. Future goals include reinforcing science-based water monitoring, education, and beach cleanups, pulling weeds and protecting water-

sheds that support native wildlife.

That said, new communities in the Lake Tahoe region are in development, including Martis Camp at Northstar, which includes a Tom Fazio golf course. Top San Francisco designers, Will Wick and Kendall Wilkinson have recently completed interiors for S.F. families who spend holidays there.

“Tahoe has been my retreat since I was a child. It’s a place I take my own children to throughout the year,” says Wilkinson. “The boys can run around, hike, swim and just be energetic boys, away from hectic city life.”

Wilkinson, who fashioned the expansive great room with natural materials such as locally quarried stone, added an urban nod to the furnishings with industrial-style lighting. The family takes in glorious views of the majestic pine trees flanking the property throughout the house.

Interior designer Will Wick also recalls idyllic summers. “I learned to water-ski there,” he recalls. “We’d take out the Chris-Craft. The water is freezing cold, which encouraged my desire to ski well. It was exhilarating. Then we’d go mountain biking on the rugged forest trails and along the Tahoe Rim Trail, the 165-mile paths that forms a loop around Lake Tahoe.”

Silicon Valley luxury travel planner Gwen Books insists, when she summers there, a quick dive from a pier is refreshing. “We love to go hiking and enjoy the cheerful squeaking of scrub jays and endless views of the brilliant blue lake from the peaks,” she says. “There are many hiking trails quite close to the lake.”

Like many Tahoe residents, Books collects classic cars. “My 1969 Mercedes 280SL is my summer-at-Lake-Tahoe convertible, and I appreciate the classic wooden boats that ply the lake in summer,” she says. “In August there is a celebration, featuring vintage Chris-Craft, Gar Wood—truly many are works of art, gleaming mahogany and polished chrome, the only acceptable mode of transport across the lake.”

Books is also fond of Fourth of July celebrations, where “fireworks fill the sky and are mirrored on the lake,” says Books. “It is spectacular.”

Marin County designer Jean Larette drives up to Tahoe (with audiobooks on hand for the three-hour trek). She also tours around on one of the classic “woodies” or zooms across on a speedboat.

“We often find a nice cove to an-

chor, and last year, I attempted to stand and balance on a paddleboard,” says Larette. “We saw a group paddling by in cocktail dresses and figured the boards must not be too tippy if they were going by in dinner attire!”

And for those without a family estate or cumbersome staff, there are always houses by the lake to rent, friends with whom to bunk, and now the four-star Ritz-Carlton, the new luxury hotel with Residence interiors designed by San Francisco designer Jay Jeffers.

“Lake Tahoe continues its tradition of offering healthy living, surrounded by children, cousins, aunts and uncles, grandparents, and golden labs,” says Dede Wilsey. “Time stands still. It’s idyllic. I can’t wait to return.” •

POINT THE WAY

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dining table that seats 16.”

On a tour of the house, Benson walks through an oak bar that’s stocked with candy jars and a popcorn machine for impromptu all-ages gatherings with family friends, and into a home theater. There, a massive sectional sofa has been upholstered in French terry.

“The screen retracts, and the shades lift up so you have a cozy den,” she adds. “That’s how we entertain here, with friends and kids and dogs.”

While she is not a professional interior decorator, she has taken on several home projects for friends and neighbors, most of whom are notable and, this being low-key Malibu and all, would prefer not to be name-checked. At the moment, she’s building a new home on a nearby street with Albino Construction and architect Sandy Young, a beachy-traditional clapboard house which will serve as a footprint for her design philosophy.

She’s also settling into her own empty nest. Her younger son is visiting colleges while her eldest boy enters his junior year at Columbia University in New York.

“When I go to see him, I stay at The Lowell, get a driver, see a show one night and have a few fabulous dinners,” she says. “So of course I love New York—for four days. I couldn’t live there. Out here, I spend my days hiking, playing tennis, surfing, entertaining friends. The light and the sky and the water are so amazing. Honestly, there’s no place I’d rather be.” •