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Feast!

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Cloud 9 - Mountain View Grand Resort and Spa

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I arrive at dusk, and the Mountain View Grand Resort and Spa is lit up like a yellow sapphire. Amid stunning New Hampshire peaks, white clapboard farms and snow-covered valleys, I feel a bit like Maria from "The Sound of Music" —I want to sing and dance. Skaters glide across frozen ponds, a horse-drawn carriage clip-clops past.

The resort began life in 1865 as a boarding house for travelers heading to Canada, and the charm of yesteryear is still apparent in the lobby's crackling fireplaces, billiard room and book-lined library. I hear a movie is starting in the Screening Room, so I grab a glass of Australian Chardonnay and settle in to one of the theater's La-Z-Boys.

Post chick flick, I recline in a suite stocked with gold-and-yellow-flowered comforters, plush carpets, arched doorways and floor-to-ceiling windows. Even the bathroom is pure luxury, with fluffy Egyptian towels with matching robes, French-milled soaps and herbal-infused shampoos.

The next morning, I stay in my robe and head for the spa. It's perched on the top floor with windows in every treatment suite. Snow swirls outside, obscuring the view of Mount Cleveland.

I lower myself into a 252-jet Chroma Tub, the first in the United States. This German-made tub's jets actually lift my body. I'm floating in colors that immerse the room in hues of purple, pink, blue and yellow. After a massage with dry oils and warm volcanic tribal stones, I can barely walk to my next treatment, the spa's signature caviar facial. Fish eggs on the face? Absolutely! They're protein rich with powerful antioxidants.

The Mountain View Spa is an undiscovered jewel in the heart of the White Mountains. It hosted dignitaries, presidents, celebrities and writers in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and now it's open to the rest of us. And if you're a bride, the Mountain View Grand was recently featured in Bride Magazine as one of the 116 great places for receptions.

Stay for the weekend and take advantage of the Two-Day Spa Package (\$384), which includes breakfast, a facial and a massage.

Glide right out the resort's front door on complimentary cross-country skis.

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