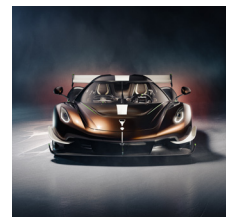
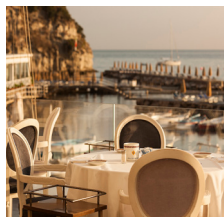


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Stillness and Splendor

THE LODGE AT ST. EDWARD PARK

| BY TRACY ELLEN BEARD

There is a quiet kind of luxury I have come to appreciate—one that does not announce itself with chandeliers or champagne. Instead, it greets you with warm wood, filtered forest light, and meadows that stretch far beneath the towering pines. That is what we found at The Lodge at St. Edward Park, a historic retreat tucked inside the old-growth embrace of Washington's Saint Edward State Park. Here, my husband, Steve, and I found that luxury is measured not in glitter but in grace. It is easy to see why it is one of only three properties in Washington State to earn a coveted Michelin Key, an accolade reserved for truly exceptional stays.

Originally a 1930s-era seminary designed by renowned architect John Graham, the Lodge's architecture caught my eye immediately. The exterior bears all the hallmarks of Romanesque Revival—arched windows, thick masonry, and perfectly balanced symmetry—while inside, Art Deco details quietly reveal themselves in geometric lines, soft lighting, and elegant decorative touches. That blend of grandeur and glamour creates a space that feels both timeless and grounded.

Staying at the Lodge felt like stepping into a beautifully preserved piece of history—but with the comfort and warmth of a modern retreat. Much of the original Romanesque architecture remains, including the soaring ceilings, the cloistered hallways, and the quiet reverence of its original purpose. But now, the rooms are fitted with cloud-soft beds, spa-inspired bathrooms, and expansive windows that let the forest pour in. It is not a museum—it is a sanctuary.

A Michelin-Keyed Masterpiece

The Michelin Key is not handed out lightly, and after our stay, I understood why the Lodge earned one. Its setting alone is extraordinary—nestled within 326 acres of protected parkland, where trails weave through mossy evergreens and wind past sun-dappled clearings. We woke to the sound of the wind moving through the trees, laced up our shoes, and hiked directly from the Lodge into the serenity of Saint Edward State Park. By evening, we were back in time for a delicious farm-to-table dinner without ever leaving the property.

What struck me most was how understated everything felt. The Lodge does not need to impress with glitter—it whispers with intention. The design is Northwest contemporary, featuring handcrafted wood furniture, soft neutral textiles, and fixtures that reflect the building's monastic heritage. Even check-in felt like a meditative pause rather than a process—gracious staff, gentle tones, and no rush. Every detail seemed anchored in place, purposeful and calm.

The Art of Staying In

Though nature surrounds the Lodge, I did not have to step outside to feel inspired. The hallways themselves are galleries lined with original artwork from Pacific Northwest artists. I wandered for a long time admiring everything from abstract paintings to intricate woodwork. The collection is not only exceptional in quality—it is also for sale. Each piece features a scannable barcode that links to additional information about the artist, as well as the price.





There is something magical about art that lives and breathes in the space where you are staying. Every stairwell offered something unexpected—a painting here, a splash of color there. It gave me a deeper connection to the Lodge and the region itself.

Spa Sanctuary: Healing Hands

Down a quiet, softly lit corridor, I found what might be the most serene space on the property: the spa. My 60-minute massage with Jeremy was nothing short of transformative. His hands were both strong and sensitive, and he seemed to know precisely where I carried stress without me saying a word.

The Lodge's spa menu draws inspiration from the natural world, featuring ethically sourced products and holistic treatments. I opted for the signature massage scented with forest botanicals, and by the end, I felt not just relaxed but rejuvenated.

The spa itself is beautifully designed, featuring organic textures and massive windows that frame the outdoor patio while still offering a view of the forest in the distance.

Culinary Craft: Cedar + Elm & The Tonsorium Bar

Dining at Cedar + Elm was another highlight. Chef Luke Kolpin and his team approach food the way artists approach canvas—with careful sourcing, thoughtful composition, and a deep respect for the region. Steve loved the house-made bread with dirty dip. The dip was full of flavor, but my favorite starter was the salmon gravlax, layered with rich tomato water and served with crispy, buttery brioche. The steak frites—koji-cured wagyu bavette was served with dirty hollandaise and chimichurri. The steak was spectacular; it was so good that we ordered the same steak served on a salad the following day. Each bite at dinner was bold and balanced, with a variety of flavors and textures that felt both comforting and refined.

The wine list features some of Washington's best producers, and the cocktail menu showcases decadent forest-inspired infusions. The following afternoon, Steve and I headed to The Tonsorium Bar, located in the building's former barbershop. With wood-paneled walls and vintage barber chairs, it oozes speakeasy charm. The drinks were inventive, the atmosphere relaxed, and we lingered longer than planned, chatting with the bartender.

Moments That Linger

As much as I adored the food, the art, and the massage, it was the quiet, in-between moments that stayed with me. On the third day, we took a slow walk on the Grotto Trail and then followed another trail that led deeper into the woods.

The Lodge does not try to dazzle—it listens. It does not crowd you—it gives you space. The staff's attention feels sincere, not scripted, and their hospitality is rooted in care, not performance. That is what elevates the experience from luxury to something deeper—something lasting.

In today's world of constant motion, The Lodge at St. Edward Park offers stillness that speaks volumes. Whether you are here for the Michelin Key experience, to soak up the peace beneath the trees, or dine on delicious food, you will leave feeling more grounded, more rested, and more complete. ❖



