



SWEET ESCAPE

Situated along northern Wisconsin's stunning lakeshore, new wellness oasis Wild Rice Retreat offers a serene respite from city life.

BY PRIYANKA RAJPUT



In the picturesque town of Bayfield, Wis., by the red rock shores of Lake Superior, an inviting new haven beckons travelers looking to slow down and indulge: Wild Rice Retreat. A scenic drive from Chicago, the wellness and arts resort (named after the former James Beard-nominated Wild Rice Restaurant the space once housed) invites guests to customize their escape: The property's comprehensive wellness offerings include everything from yoga and meditation to forest bathing and personal and guided retreats.

Wild Rice was founded by former real estate developer Heidi Zimmer, who was inspired to create the retreat after traveling the country and noticing a void in Midwestern destinations aimed at quieting the mind, connecting with nature, exploring creatively and supporting well-being. "Resorts offer a vacation experience," explains Zimmer, "while an intentional retreat center focuses more on healing and supporting the mind, body and spirit. ... Everything is taken care of."

Inspired by the picturesque hills and lush forests that envelop the resort, David Salmela—the award-winning Minnesota-based architect who helped create the former restaurant—designed the retreat to evoke a calming essence throughout. Think Scandinavian aesthetics in the 31 cabins, expansive studio spaces and wellness facilities, outdoor trails, and spa amenities like a rain room and sauna—all crafted with naturally sourced materials.

This season, a range of outdoor activities—from kayaking to stand-up paddleboarding to guided boating tours of the nearby Apostle Islands—round out the experience. Explains Zimmer, "Our intent is that guests simply arrive, and we take care of the rest, helping them feel rested, cared for and celebrated." 84860 Old San Road, Bayfield, Wis., wildriceretreat.com



Wild Rice Retreat offers calming accommodations and a wealth of wellness experiences, including morning intention-setting sessions, meditation, chakra balancing, spirit-free mixology programs and more in a low-key location on Wisconsin's north shore.

PHOTOS BY COREY GAFFER