

THE RADAR WEEK ENDER

BY TRAVIS NEIGHBOR WARD



The outdoor pool with infinity edge overlooks Lake Oconee.

MAKE MINE PRADA *The Ritz-Carlton Lodge, Reynolds Plantation just got more stylish with a series of new spa treatments.*

Driving down the multitude of side roads leading from I-20 eastbound in the direction of Lake Oconee, it's hard to believe that anywhere nearby is a Ritz-Carlton property; it's a mere 75 minutes from Atlanta and virtually in the middle of nowhere. Of course, that's the point: There are no mountains to hike and no malls to shop. You're supposed to come to the Lodge here at Reynolds Plantation to relax, which means golfing on five courses, dining at the five restaurants and, in my case, getting pampered at the 26,000-square-foot spa—the only one in Georgia that's received the Mobil Four Star Award.

Aside from being ranked No. 7 on *Travel & Leisure's* June 2005 "Top Hotels for Service in the Continental U.S. and Canada," the 4-year-old Lodge was on *Conde Nast Traveler's* 2006 Gold List of the "World's Best Places to Stay." So, I was not surprised when I recently went with my family to find Ritz signature services combined with the most elegantly comfortable lakeside appointments around.

In many of the guest suites, feather down bedding, Frette bed linens, rich red-and-gold drapery with stag motifs, and skirted tables add plush notes to stately leather wing chairs and walnut armoires. French doors lead from suites to private patios decorated simply with Adirondack

chairs facing the lake in the distance. In the public areas, timber tresses, hardwood floors and vaulted ceilings abound, from the more formal AAA Four Diamond dining room at Georgia's restaurant (the top-notch breakfast buffet is a must) to the luxe Lobby Veranda, which has an open-air porch with rocking chairs, and the Lobby Lounge, where guests munch on hors d'oeuvres while listening to a piano player.

And that's not even mentioning the golf. The Lodge has also been ranked by *Conde Nast Traveler* among its "Top 20 Golf Resorts in the World." It's obvious the moment you arrive and are greeted by dozens of golf bags lined up against the front entrance, as well as a swarm of supremely polite valet attendants. Their sporty counterparts, the caddies hired and trained by Caddie Services Inc. (the same company that provides them for the courses at Pebble Beach and the Augusta National), are somewhere close by—but out of sight.

This is one of the most remarkable things about the Lodge: Unlike other golf resorts, such as Kiawah, where a non-golfer can easily feel engulfed by putting greens and fairways, here you won't spot a single course unless you go out of your way to find it. If you do want to golf, however, you can choose from a handful of courses

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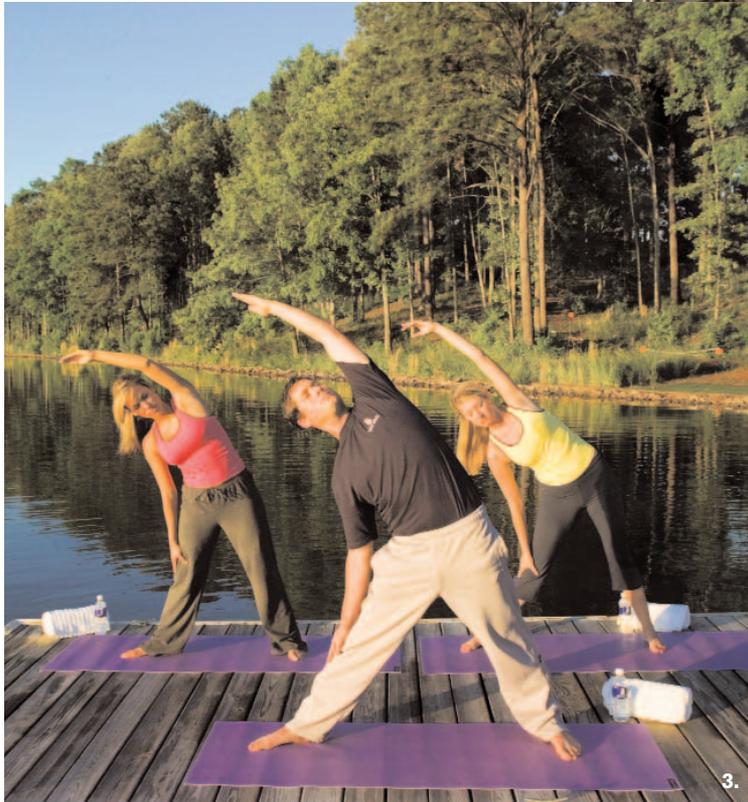


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1. The Spa's indoor lap pool. 2. Interior of Presidential House. 3. Yoga on the dock.

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Prada and Ritz-Carlton products, a hair/nail salon, a café that serves up healthy mixes of salads, granola yogurt parfaits, vegetable wraps and smoothies, and daily wellness classes for adults and kids, such as Yoga on the dock. It also has one of the more stunning indoor lap pools I've seen (don't worry, kids are only allowed from 7:30 to 9 p.m.).

For my treatment, I opt for a 90-minute Prada Replenishing Body Facial (\$275), a multi-stepped procedure that begins with relaxing on a daybed in the intimate ladies' lounge, sipping cold spring water and reading magazines. Once inside the treatment room, I receive an invigorating scrub-down with exfoliating marine crystal salts mixed with lightly scented oil, a stone clay wrap, cool shower and, finally, a euphoric massage with Prada creams. It's worth the initial slight discomfort; afterward, my skin is as soft as a baby's and I am entirely transported.

Later, I discover another remarkable aspect of the Lodge: how successfully it caters in equal parts to couples in search of a romantic getaway and families in search of fun, collective downtime. The Lodge offers a daily RITZ KIDS full- and half-day activities program (ages 5-12) and nighttime babysitters, plus things like campfire storytelling. All guests mingle during the evening s'mores roast overlooking the lake, where Hershey's chocolate bars and graham crackers are neatly arranged in wooden carts near Adirondack chairs and an enormous fire pit. And the private chiminea dinner for two—think cold seafood dinners in bento boxes, Champagne and private marshmallow roasting at your own wood-burning stove—is served right outside the ground-level suites and in range of a baby monitor, a real delight.

Tempted, my husband and I order the chiminea for 9 p.m. and instruct the kids to stay inside and sleep. It seems to work, and we happily gaze at the sky and each other as we nosh on the goodies. But, not long after the Ritz shows off yet another luxe service—an elaborate fireworks display overhead—and we see two small figures emerging through the doors of our suite, ready to enjoy the chiminea, alas, with us. ▣

...CONTINUED all designed by world-famous names—think Bob Cupp, Jack Nicklaus, Tom Fazio and Rees Jones—and one of three TaylorMade Performance Labs in the world, where you can check out your swing on a three-dimensional computer-generated model, then get custom-fitted for the perfect clubs.

Not being a golfer myself, I head instead to the spa, which recently upped its style factor by adding a series of massages and facials that incorporate Prada Beauty products—at presstime, one of only 12 Ritz-Carlton spas in the United States to offer this. It's located in a separate building connected to the Lodge by an outdoor breezeway. Inside, the spa is airy and bright, and includes men's and women's locker rooms with their own steam room and whirlpool. It includes a boutique stocked with

The Ritz-Carlton Lodge, Reynolds Plantation, One Lake Oconee Trail, Greensboro, 706.467.0600, www.ritzcarlton.com. Daily rates for the 22 suites start at \$209 during low season, \$289 during peak season; the six golf cottages start at \$599 during low season, \$859 during peak season; and the 5,400-square-foot Presidential House starts at \$3,000 during low season and \$4,000 during peak season.