

WORD OF MOUTH FROM THE SEWALL HOUSE

By Sybil Darrington

Deep in the heart of Maine is the Sewall House, a restorative retreat owned and run by Kundalini Yoga teacher Donna Davidge, who has been teaching Kundalini Yoga in New York City since 1985. Sewall House, teaching principles of service and simplicity, provides a safe, nurturing environment for guests to explore themselves. Guests escape from daily responsibilities and distractions by learning lessons in silence and stillness. Set in Island Falls in Northern Maine, the retreat offers yoga twice daily, space for contemplation, healthy vegetarian meals, massage, and biking, kayaking, and hiking in the surrounding area as well as access to other house facilities such as the sauna and jacuzzi.

Every summer a variety of people come, however one visitor in particular has significantly benefited from the rejuvenating qualities of a long stay at Sewall House.

Case Study: Dr. Marie Howells

"Donna Davidge was conducting a yoga class at a weekend getaway in Connecticut five years ago. The class participants begged her to conduct a second session, at the end of which I purchased one of her tapes and learned that she was opening a retreat in her ancestral home of Maine. For five years the tape collected dust; I occasionally looked at it, remembering Donna and her yoga class.

"The past 18 months have been filled with pressures, problems, challenges, and change, principally due to job restructuring, aging parents, retirement issues, and illness. Seven months ago serious pneumonia developed. By this spring my life force seemed to return, but by June, I still wanted to retreat from the world. I couldn't breathe well, and any physical action tired me easily.

"Having seen doctors over the past months and having taken medications, I was no longer ill, but not physically fit. Donna's retreat in Maine came to mind. It included yoga, meditation, breathing, and physical stretching. I called and asked for a brochure and if there was any availability.

"I knew that learning any skill or new habit required 40 days, so I booked myself into the Sewall House for that amount of time. I arrived pale, my breathing was shallow, and it was an effort to walk a flight of stairs. I was apprehensive about what my body would be able to do.

"On my first day of yoga I was unable to get all of my limbs into Baby Pose. Thankfully, the chef and his mate were also massage therapists. I scheduled a massage between the daily yoga sessions. By the end of the first week I was able to get into most of the poses ... yeah!


"Sewall House has a great library, part of which has been dedicated to Teddy Roosevelt, who came here as a youth. Through exposure to Donna's great grandfather, the landscape of Maine, and rigorous activity, he was able



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to overcome his asthma to go out West and become a Rough Rider—I felt like the new Teddy! I came here barely able to breathe and move. Through exposure to and participation in the richness of the Sewall House philosophy of life, good food, rest, fresh air, exercise twice a day, and breathing, I am returning to Brooklyn with renewed confidence in my body, reaffirmed in my belief that it is a wonderful world we live in. Life is a gift—and so is Sewall House."

Commented Donna Davidge: "To me Marie's transformation was demonstrated by her external radiance after being with us. This in my opinion was a result of yoga, meditation, massages, good food, and her learned ability to relax. Another aspect of Sewall House is seva (selfless service). It was wonderful to watch Marie's heart and spirit unfold as a result of her own actions."

Prices lead in at \$111 per night on a single occupancy basis, which includes two yoga and meditation classes, meals, and a private room. This summer, to enhance the healing experience, massage, herbal wraps, and other services are offered by an excellent massage therapist, Ariel Sheldon, who has been practicing Kundalini Yoga for years. 

For interviews or further information about the Sewall House, call 888-235-2395 or visit the website: www.sewallhouse.com