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## Mystery Shopper Report

## Deacon Escarpment Cabins & Camping

### 1 GENERAL INFORMATION

**Client:** Ontario Highlands Tourism Organization  
**Location:** Deacon Escarpment  
**Address:** 12560 HWY 60  
Golden Lake, ON Canada  
K0J 1X0

**Date:** Sunday, July 29, 2018  
**Arrive Time:** 1:00 PM  
**Depart Time:** 12:00 PM

### 2 VISIT OVERVIEW

Segment	Points Awarded	Maximum Points	Percentage
3. Environment (Interior, Exterior & Digital)	54	59	92 %
4. Service Delivery Process	36	43	84 %
5. Regional Tourism Product/Service Knowledge	41	46	89 %
6. Employee Attitudes and Presentation	36	36	100 %
7. Summary	30	30	100 %
<b>Total Rating</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>92 %</b>

### 3 ENVIRONMENT (INTERIOR, EXTERIOR & DIGITAL)

Question	Answer	Points Awarded	Maximum Points	%
3.1 Was the Inn easy to locate (sufficient and visible roadside directional signs etc.)?	YES The Inn was easy to locate. There was no advance road signage but there was one roadside sign once we reached the location.	2	3	67 %
3.2 Was the exterior of the building clean and in good repair (including lighting, walkways, parking areas etc.)?	YES The exterior area was clean and in good repair. There wasn't a reception building, however there was a large gravel parking area that was in good repair. It had one large overhead light.	3	3	100 %
3.3 Were the lobby and public areas clean and in good repair? (including furnishings, windows etc)	N/A There was no reception building and no interior public areas.	3	3	100 %
3.4 Was your room clean, well maintained and comfortable?	YES Our cabin was clean, well maintained and in good repair. The cabin was just finished a few months ago and everything was in brand new condition. One window in the bedroom had come off its hinge. The owner had mentioned this was to be fixed asap. The cabin has been cleaned, the floors, windows and all fixtures in the washroom and kitchen were clean and in good repair.	3	3	100 %
3.5 Was the Inn accessible and marked? (strollers, wheelchairs, service animals etc)	NO The Inn is not accessible as it is a remote location. The Cabin is only accessible by 4-wheel drive vehicle or a hike up a large hill. To enter the cabin requires climbing a short staircase. All terrain surrounding the cabin is rugged and natural.	0	3	0 %
3.6 Was staff easily identifiable? (Uniforms, name tags etc)	YES The staff member was easily identifiable. We met him in a designated parking lot and he approached us in his 4-wheel drive vehicle to shuttle us to our cabin. He was not wearing a specific uniform.	2.5	3	83 %
3.7 Were you able to easily locate information about this Inn on the internet and was that information up to date?	YES I was able to easily locate information about this Inn on the internet. As soon as I keyed in "Deacon Escarpment" in the google engine, the entire first page was related to this Inn. The information is very up to date. The availability dates are updated on a daily basis which is very helpful in planning the trip. It was a very easy search. Any of the results on the search page would have lead you to the information necessary.	3	3	100 %
3.8 Were the web directions accurate and easy to follow?	YES Web directions were accurate and easy to follow. The web site uses an interactive google map option which is very user friendly. The map appears on the bottom of the home page as well as under the "Contact & FAQs" tab.	3	3	100 %
3.9 Was contact information prominently displayed and accessible within the website?	YES The contact information was prominently displayed and accessible within the website. The home page consists of the email address along with the phone number. On that same page is the "Contact & FAQs" tab which consists of the address, and phone number once again, along with an email button.	3	3	100 %
3.10 Was the information on the website current, detailed and useful?	YES The information on the website was current, detailed and useful. We were wondering whether bedding was included in our cabin. That information was only a few clicks away in the FAQ's section. Everything that is included in the cabin is prominently listed. There are a lot of customer reviews on the site. A photo gallery of each of the areas is available to get the full experience. The site provides a "planning your trip" section which comes in very handy when trying to figure out what to bring. All in all the site was well laid out and had all the detailed information that we could imagine guests would need.	3	3	100 %

### 3 ENVIRONMENT (INTERIOR, EXTERIOR & DIGITAL)

3.11 When you accessed the mobile site from your phone, did it function properly and did you find it user-friendly? Did it contain sufficient and accurate information?	YES When I accessed the website from my phone it functioned properly and it was user-friendly. All information is laid out in an organized and user-friendly fashion. I was able to download the trail map and the legend easily. When searching specific cabins for availability the mobile site immediately lead me to the Airbnb website.	5	5	100 %
3.12 Did this property have a presence on Trip Advisor, Google Reviews, Yelp or other online review sites?	YES This property does have a presence on Trip Advisor. Two of the three cabins are listed on Trip Advisor but I could not find the "Sarah Leslie" cabin. I was not able to find any google reviews on Deacon Escarpment Cabins after spending 10 minutes looking for some. I can see the address listed on google maps but not the location name with associated reviews. There are also facebook reviews which can be obtained from the first page of the google search engine. Finally, reviews were able to be seen on the "Air BNB.ca site.	5	5	100 %
3.13 Was the property's online reputation generally positive?	YES The property's online reputation was VERY positive. As a matter of fact, every review I found on all the review sites pointed to top ratings. The Facebook ratings were all 5 star. Many of them mentioned the hosts as being welcoming and helpful. Trip Advisor reviews mentioned the beauty of the property and the welcoming nature of the hosts. There was only one rating on Trip Advisor for one of the cabins. These sites were updated in April of 2018. Facebook had 6 reviews. Trip Advisor showed 2 of the cabins as being the top two in the 5 best Ontario Highlands Vacation rentals. <a href="https://www.tripadvisor.com/VacationRentals-g2166730-Reviews-zfs8-Ontario_s_Highlands_Ontario-Ontario_s_Highlands_Cabin_Rentals.html">https://www.tripadvisor.com/VacationRentals-g2166730-Reviews-zfs8-Ontario_s_Highlands_Ontario-Ontario_s_Highlands_Cabin_Rentals.html</a>	10	10	100 %
3.14 How seamless was your experience across the booking process?	YES The booking experience was seamless. The booking experience was done through Air BnB. I needed to set up an Air BnB account before I could book the cabin. Once I did that, everything up to payment was very intuitive and user friendly.	6	6	100 %
3.15 Was the information on the website representative of the actual experience?	YES The information on the website was representative of the experience. The website promises a remote, private experience in nature. We did not see another person the entire time we were there. We hiked the trails, which were exactly as described and took canoes out on the private lake. The experience was as promised on the website. One thing we'd like to note, and it is minor, is the bedding package was not what we had expected. The picture on the website shows a cozy bed all made up with comfy blankets, lots of matching pillows and a welcome box. Although the beds were made and the beds were comfortable, it was very utilitarian and not at all "deluxe".	2.5	3	83 %
<b>Total Points</b>		54	59	92 %

#### Additional Comments

- 3.16 We contacted the host with a few questions. A response within 48 hours was promised by the site. They got back to us within the hour and satisfactorily answered all of our questions. Upon meeting the host he was very personable and demonstrated a love of his property and a desire for us to love it too. He was welcoming, open and accommodating. The hosts also emailed us prior to our visit to inform us that certain GPS units sometimes lead guests to a location 1.5 km away. This was helpful.

## 4 SERVICE DELIVERY PROCESS

Staff #1 Name: Zach  
 Description: Young male, light brown hair.  
 Staff Members Position: Owner

Staff #2 Name:  
 Description:  
 Staff Members Position:

Question	Answer	Points Awarded	Maximum Points	%
4.1 Were you greeted or acknowledged in a timely and pleasant manner?	<b>YES</b> We were greeted in a timely and pleasant manner. Upon arriving we were uncertain where to go as there is no reception area at the parking lot. There is however a sign asking you to phone a specific number if you have a reservation. We phoned the number and the staff member answered the phone on the first ring. He was at the cabin getting it ready for our arrival. He asked us to drive up to the second parking lot and gave us directions and a land marker to watch for. He told us he'd be about 20 minutes and suggested we pick some wild raspberries while we waited.	7	7	100 %
4.2 Did the staff member ask any questions to verify your needs?	<b>NO</b> The staff member asked many questions to verify our needs. While driving us in to our cabin and showing us around he asked if we'd be using the hiking trails and indicated on the trial map the location of our cabin and the various hiking trails. In addition he asked if we'd like to canoe and proceeded to give us information on where the canoes are kept, along with all safety equipment. He asked if we fish and offered to bring us fishing rods for our stay.	5	5	100 %
4.3 Was staff able to assist you or did they seek assistance for you?	If unable to, <b>YES</b> The staff member was able to assist us with all of our questions. We asked about terrain, ease of hikes, length of hikes, poison ivy and ticks in the area. He was knowledgeable and helpful. In addition he provided us information on local activities and restaurants including Bonnechere Caves and directed us to the flyers in the drawers of the cabin.	5	5	100 %
4.4 Did staff make any recommendations to you?	<b>YES</b> The staff member made recommendations to us. He recommended Bonnechere Caves, Renfrew ATV Club and Valley Adventure Tours. In addition he recommended Sands on Golden Lake restaurant. The cabin was also stocked with brochures for Renfrew ATV Club, Valley Adventure Tours, Madawaska River Rentals, Sands Restaurant, Bonnechere Caves, The Cottage Cup Restaurant, Wilno Tavern, Golden Lake Chinese and Sands on Golden Lake Restaurant.	7	7	100 %
4.5 Were you asked if you required any further information or assistance?	<b>YES</b> We were asked if we needed any further information or assistance. Prior to leaving us in our cabin the staff member asked if there was anything else we needed and made sure we knew how to reach him if necessary.	5	5	100 %
4.6 Were you sincerely thanked by any staff member?	<b>YES</b> We were sincerely thanked by the staff member. He was pleased to have us in his cabin and to share his beautiful land. He thanked us for coming and wished us a wonderful stay.	7	7	100 %
4.7 Were you invited to return to this Inn or the area?	<b>NO</b> We were not invited to return to the Inn or the area.	0	7	0 %
<b>Total Points</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>84 %</b>

### Additional Comments:

4.8 The owner/staff member was open, welcoming and friendly. He had asked if we'd be willing to do the short walk out to our car the next day as he and his family were going on vacation. We agreed. It was very muddy on the approach to the cabin and once we arrived he offered to leave us his ATV so we could drive ourselves back to our car. We declined

but were very impressed that he made the offer.

**5 REGIONAL TOURISM PRODUCT/SERVICE KNOWLEDGE**

Question	Answer	Points Awarded	Maximum Points	%
5.1 At any time during your visit did a staff member recommend or discuss any regional destinations, products or services?	<b>YES</b> The staff member discussed many regional destinations with us. He suggested the Bonnechere Caves, Renfrew ATV Club, Valley Adventure Tours, Madawaska River Rentals and local restaurants including Sands on Golden Lake. We prompted him to do this In all fairness he was busy telling us about the cabin, the surrounding property and the activities prior to our prompting. He was sensitive to taking up too much of our time.	35	40	88 %
5.2 Did a staff member direct you to any region-specific tourism resources?	<b>YES</b> The staff member directed us to region-specific tourism resources. He indicated flyers for Renfrew ATV Club, Valley Adventure Tours, Madawaska River Rentals, Sands Restaurant and Bonnechere Caves. In addition the cabin contained a binder which included a list and description of local attractions and restaurants including Bonnechere Caves, Champlain Trail Museum, Algonquin Cultural Centre, and restaurants such as The Cottage Cup, Wilno Tavern, Golden Lake Chinese and Sands on Golden Lake.	2	2	100 %
5.3 Did a staff member provide accurate directions to any specific regional destinations?	<b>YES</b> The staff member provided accurate directions to regional destinations including Bonnechere Caves and Sands on Golden Lake Restaurant.	2	2	100 %
5.4 Did staff demonstrate passion about the region?	<b>YES</b> The staff member demonstrated a passion for the region. He clearly loves the outdoors and the community and enjoys sharing it with his guests. He told us about how the deer come around by the hundreds during the winter and how his children enjoy the area.	2	2	100 %
<b>Total Points</b>		<b>41</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>89 %</b>

**Additional Comments:**

- 5.5 The staff member was knowledgeable about the area and made many suggestions. He clearly loves the area upon which he has chosen to build his business and shows a great passion for all it has to offer.

## 6 EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES AND PRESENTATION

Question	Answer	Points Awarded	Maximum Points	%
6.1 Did staff maintain eye contact and smile when speaking with you or other guests?	YES The staff member maintained eye contact and smiled when speaking with us. He was personable and respectful during our interactions.	6	6	100 %
6.2 During your visit, did all staff refrain from using their cell phones/texting when interacting with guests?	YES Staff refrained from using their cell phones when interacting with guests. At no time did we see the staff member check or use a cell phone.	6	6	100 %
6.3 Did staff remain friendly, engaging and upbeat when interacting with or in view of guests?	YES The staff member remained friendly, engaging and upbeat when interacting with or in view of guests. He seemed happy to have us in his cabin and was interested in offering us a variety of activities to make our stay even more enjoyable.	6	6	100 %
6.4 Did staff remain attentive and respectful?	YES The staff member remained attentive and respectful at all times. He was very interested in how he could enhance our experience and asked many questions to determine our needs. This included offering to drive some fishing rods back up to us from the base and leaving his ATV there for us to drive ourselves out.	6	6	100 %
6.5 Was staff appropriately groomed and tidy?	YES The staff member was appropriately groomed and tidy. He was wearing hiking boots and clothing which is exactly what one would expect from this experience.	6	6	100 %
6.6 Was staff proactive in providing options and assistance?	YES The staff member was proactive in providing options and assistance. He asked many questions to determine our needs and provided information accordingly.	6	6	100 %
<b>Total Points</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100 %</b>

### Additional Comments:

- 6.7 The staff member was engaged and eager to please. He was in no rush to leave us until he had determined we had everything we needed and he had answered all of our questions. He had a clear passion for his business and was happy to share it with us.

## 7 SUMMARY

Question	Answer	Points Awarded	Maximum Points	%	
7.1	How likely is it that you would return to this Inn?	It is very likely that we would return to this Inn. It would be lovely to see and experience in all four seasons.	10	10	100 %
7.2	How likely is it that you would recommend this restaurant to friends or family?	We would be very likely to recommend this Inn to friends and family. It is a unique experience and we know a few people who would enjoy it very much.	10	10	100 %
7.3	Do you feel that you received the expected experience and value?	<b>YES</b> We feel we received the expected experience and value. The cabin is clean, perfectly situation for a remote, private get-away and well stocked with everything you need.	10	10	100 %
		<b>Total Points</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100 %</b>

### What did you find most memorable or unique about this Inn?

- 7.4 The thing we found most memorable about this Inn was the rustic and remote feel to it. We were promised an experience where we'd be out in the woods and totally on our own and that is what we received!

### What did you enjoy the least about this Inn?

- 7.5 The thing we enjoyed least about the Inn would have been the bedding package. Although the bedding was perfectly functional it was not representative of the expectations set based on the website.

### Were there any moments where you were wowed as a guest? Any unexpected moments where you were pleasantly surprised?

- 7.6 There were a couple of moments when we were wowed as a guest. The first moment was when we saw the cabin in the woods was completely solar powered and "off the grid". The owner had indicated to us that he and his wife (along with some help at times) had built all three of their cabins themselves. Impressive! The second "Wow" moment was while canoeing on the private lake. This is a stunningly beautiful spot and experience.

### Do you have any suggestions that would improve your overall experience at this inn?

- 7.7 Suggestions to improve the overall experience at the Inn -
1. Include a welcome note. There was a Smores Kit on the counter which we assumed was a welcome gift for us but we did wonder if perhaps it had been left by the previous guests.
  2. Provide a small bag of local coffee and filters.
  3. Provide more than two wine glasses in this particular cabin as the cabin could accommodate more than two adults.

### Additional Comments:

- 7.8 We were so happy with our experience. Little things like being left bug repellent a flash light, a first aid kit and a Smores kit were really nice touches. The location was amazing, the canoeing and hiking were stunning.