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PHOTOS | TREE HOUSE RIDGE, LLC

## Tranquility in a Treehouse

If you didn't have a treehouse as a child, it was probably something you fantasized about. A magical place tucked away in the limbs of an old oak, a private nook that was your personal retreat – who wouldn't want that?

One Michigan family has turned the treehouse dreams of our youth into a business. Tree House Ridge is building stylish luxury treehouses for rent in the tranquil woods of Thompsonville in Northern Michigan, each equipped with all the amenities of home.

Father-and-son duo Fred and Jess Knoll and their wives, Patty and Ashlee, were looking into rental property ideas when they became inspired by the show *Treehouse Masters*. This sparked the concept of building something unique available to rent, and the idea of rental treehouses was born.

Their tagline, "Be at home in the trees," speaks to the blend of wilderness and comfort they've managed to create. All the comforts of home are provided in every treehouse. Each

is fully stocked with silverware, dishes, soap, shampoo, and conditioner. They also come with a dishwasher, refrigerator, washer and dryer, and a gas wood stove and are furnished with a couch and recliner, television, and Blu-ray player. Guests enjoy a balcony overlooking the picturesque forest, complete with outdoor seating and a fireplace. It is cozy no matter the season, with built-in heated floors and air conditioning. Plus, they're handicap accessible. "It's nicer than my home, truly," Ashlee laughs. The treehouses are ideal for those who love nature but don't want the full immersion in the wilderness that camping involves.

One of the treehouses is already complete and available for rent, another should be ready as we go to print. Ten treehouses will be available in all, each with the same framework but unique touches. All are being designed and constructed solely by the Knolls, an impressive feat for such a small team. For those interested, rates vary slightly based on season and day of the week but



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are provided in every  
treehouse.

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average about \$300 a night. A minimum 2-night-stay is required during the summer season, but not during the rest of the year.

The allure of Tree House Ridge as a getaway location is the overwhelming sense of peace, the quiet of nature, and the youthful feel of being in the trees. Worries wash away as the background noises of traffic and chatter dissolve into nothing but the chirping of birds. People draw inspiration from the breathtaking views of nature, and stepping onto the property feels like you're the only one there for miles.

When not reveling in the beauty of the outdoors, there are plenty of things to do in Thompsonville. Some spend all their time boating, hiking, canoeing, and fishing on the Betsie or Manistee Rivers. In the winter, visitors enjoy skiing and snowshoeing. In fall, there are apple orchards and more hikes. The property is about a half-hour drive from tourist destinations Traverse City, Cadillac, and Frankfort, where wine tours and great shops are available. Nearby resort Crystal Mountain offers skiing, snowboarding, ice skating, and even a sports zone for kids. For those who simply want to enjoy the comfort of the treehouse, it's stocked with movies and games.

What does the future look like for Tree House Ridge? There's much to look forward to. Installing Wi-Fi and developing the rest of the houses are the Knolls's main priorities, but the team has more dreams than they can keep up with. Within the next five years, they hope to build a playground area and a pool for guests to enjoy. They've also mentioned the possibility of outdoor showers to achieve a very personal feeling with the surrounding nature.

Renting a treehouse offers a novel and memorable experience that just can't be matched by staying in a typical hotel or Airbnb. 

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