

News from Historic Inns of Rockland, Maine – June, 2015

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WHAT DID YOUR HISTORIC INN DO FOR YOU LATELY?

Historic Inns of Rockland serve as model consortium to inn associations

Rockland, ME - In a story appearing in [Maine Biz](#), author Doug Packard coined the term "[Coopetition](#)" to describe how competitors can work together to boost revenues. The Historic Inns of Rockland offer the ideal example of "Coopetition" and the ultimate benefactor is the business community and residents of Rockland, Maine.

The [Historic Inns of Rockland](#) is comprised of three luxury inns that might otherwise see each other as competitors if they weren't so closely aligned through their marketing consortium. For more than sixteen years, this group of luxury inns, all located in Rockland's historic district, have collectively worked together not only to expand their marketing message but to put Rockland on the map, with the last twelve years including an active local, regional and national PR and social media campaign. The outcome? Tourism in Rockland has grown, even in the most economically challenging years.

The three inns serve as a mini chamber of commerce, at one time assisting the local Rockland Chamber and now the [Penobscot Bay Regional Chamber](#) and [Rockland Main Street, Inc.](#) with PR and marketing efforts. Recently, the Historic Inns of Rockland spearheaded the effort to form a new association of inns along the Maine Coast. [Inns Along the Coast](#) was launched in May and serves as a similar model to promote inn-accommodations for those vacationing on the Coast of Maine in Kennebunkport, Rockland and Bar Harbor.

Yet in their case, the Historic Inns of Rockland defy the norm. Trusting in the spirit of cooperative competitiveness, the participating innkeepers spend more of their marketing budgets on the consortium than they do their own individual businesses. Over the tenure of the association, an average of 10-percent of the three inns' combined gross revenues has been invested in putting Rockland on the map first then heads in beds. Collectively more than 14,000 hours of participating innkeepers' time has been devoted to marketing Rockland and the Midcoast Maine region.

Through their efforts more than 155 travel writers, TV producers and website content providers have been hosted at the three inns and created stories about Rockland. This has resulted in coverage from The Today Show to *New York Times*, *NY Daily News*, *Boston Globe*, *Woman's Day*, *Saveur*, *Cooking Light* and *Coastal Living Magazines*. The Food Network's *Throw Down with Bobby Flay*, Discovery Channel's *Dirty Jobs* with Mike Rowe, Samantha Brown and the Travel Channel, Rachael Raye and NBC News have all made trips to Rockland. Why? Because this corner of Maine is on their radar screen via the marketing and media outreach from the Historic Inns of Rockland. With their efforts, Rockland was named among the Coolest Small Towns by *Budget Travel Magazine*, among the Best Adventure Towns by *National Geographic* and one of the top 9 Foodie Towns in the U.S. by TheDailyMeal.com. These are the kinds of national kudos that garner the attention of travelers who might not otherwise visit.

The Historic Inns of Rockland have reached out into the community to develop a network of PR partners, working with restaurants, shops, attractions, museums and more to help entertain and feed the many travel writers coming to the community. This has in turn resulted in coverage for many small businesses that do not have the resources on their own, but are delighted to take part in hosting media. With the help of the PR Partners, Historic Inns of Rockland have created a town with a reputation for being exceedingly media-friendly and all businesses – whether a PR Partner or not – have benefitted.

Additionally, the Historic Inns of Rockland have lead the way for fair practices in licensing independently owned lodging and vacation rentals. Spending hours of time researching the impact on Rockland's economy, Historic Inns of Rockland is working to bring equal licensing and taxation to Air B&B and vacation rental accommodations in Rockland.

More than \$120,000 has been given to non-profit organizations in cash and in-kind donations from the Historic Inns of Rockland in their 16-year legacy. Over the eleven-year tenure of the annual January Pies on Parade Tour the Historic Inns of Rockland have donated more than \$109,000 to the Area Interfaith Outreach Food Pantry and Fuel Assistance Program, making this the largest fundraising effort of the year for the food pantry. Every cent of money raised by the Historic Inns of Rockland's Pies on Parade event is donated to the Food Pantry. Each innkeeper

and business owner spends hundreds of dollars on pie-ingredients and collectively more than 750 hours of time are spent to make this event possible.

For many years the Historic Inns of Rockland donated a portion of each room stay to eco-projects like Project Puffin to support sustainable travel. Hundreds of room nights have been donated as prizes to local and regional non-profit organizations who seek help from the Historic Inns of Rockland since their beginnings. Three years ago, when supply-and-demand drove the price of lobsters to a historic low, the Historic Inns of Rockland created a week-long Lobsterpalooza promotion to encourage visitors and residents alike to consume lobster caught by local fishermen. Lobsterpalooza will return even bigger this year. The donations add up.

The result? The Historic Inns of Rockland have been lauded by the tourism community and the B&B industry. In January, 2013, the organization received the Champion Award from the Professional Association of Innkeepers International for their work in cooperative marketing. In 2011 GrowSmart Maine, an organization chartered to direct future growth in Maine while preserving its resources, worked with the world-renowned Brookings Institution, a respected think tank, to follow up a 2006 Report on Charting Maine's Future. The organization sought out business success stories in Maine and identified Historic Inns of Rockland as THE tourism success story to spotlight in a follow up report that was announced today. According to the report, *"Working together to market the Rockland vacation experience, members of Historic Inns of Rockland, Maine, have put many of their individual marketing priorities aside to cooperatively attract attention to Rockland's premier inns and vacation experiences... This collaborative effort has helped many of the local businesses involved in tourism thrive during the turbulent past few years."* Also quoted in the Grow Smart Report, Kerry Altiero, chef and owner at Rockland's Café Miranda calls the Historic Inns of Rockland's marketing initiative *"brilliant, selfless and absolutely one of the best things that's happened to my business."*

Ask any of the innkeepers in the group and they will tell you they are "cooperatively competitive". They marvel at the fact that they spend more money marketing the organization than they do on their own inns. Frank Isganitis, co-owner of the LimeRock Inn, will tell you "if you'd asked me 11 years ago if I'd spend more money marketing my competitors than my own business, I'd have told you you're nuts!" Yet, the financial support, esprit de corps and the unique set of skills each innkeeper brings to the table is the key to their successful

“coopetition”. One innkeeper is a graphic designer, another is a skilled photographer and yet another is an astute organizer and a fourth is a copy writer. Together they employ the assistance of a recognized PR professional in the B&B industry; something they could never afford to do on their own.

Next time you think about who’s contributed to the community of Rockland, Maine, make sure the Historic Inns of Rockland are on the list. Their contribution to the community has been offered quietly and tenaciously and the results are in the pockets of businesses throughout Midcoast Maine.



Cheryl Michaelsen from the Berry Manor Inn accepts the Champion Award from the Professional Association of Innkeepers International for work done on behalf of the industry.

About Historic Inns of Rockland, ME

Historic Inns of Rockland is comprised of three distinctive inns located in Rockland, Maine’s historic district. Each offering a unique experience and décor from modern urban chic to Victorian or Federal-styled, the three Historic Inns of Rockland offer haute hospitality within easy strolling distance of Rockland’s thriving downtown restaurant, shopping and museum district and waterfront. From luxury to pet and kid-friendly, Historic Inns of Rockland are the ideal home base for exploring all that coastal Maine has to offer. For more information, visit

www.HistoricInnsOfRockland.com or call 207-596-6611 or consult each participating inn's website for more specific pricing and details of this package: Berry Manor Inn (www.BerryManorInn.com), LimeRock Inn (www.LimeRockInn.com), or Granite Inn (www.OldGraniteInn.com).

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Photos available upon request or visit the online photo library at

<http://www.historicinnsOfRockland.com/photos.aspx>.