



From right are Dan and Sue Padrnos and their son, Christopher, who run their family resort, Gull Four Seasons Resort in Nisswa.

# Gull Four Seasons Resort: A classic “mom & pop” spot

Gull Four Seasons Resort boasts a spectacular view from the east shore of Gull Lake and has been catering to families and fishermen since the 1920s. For the last 40 years the Padrnos family has owned this piece of paradise.

Dan and Sue Padrnos and their son, Christopher, own and operate Gull Four Seasons Resort with the mission of providing great vacations. In the spring of 1977, Dan's parents, Dan and Vonny, purchased the former Parkview Resort on Gull Lake and changed the name to Gull Four Seasons Resort. From day one, the goal was to provide their guests with a great vacation experience.

In an era when smaller family resorts are being sold, the Padrnos family is instead committed to reinvesting in their resort to continue to make it successful. Gull Four Seasons has seen many changes over the years. Originally, the resort had 15 cabins and now has expanded to 32 units with cabins, condos and chalets. A game room, tennis court, and indoor and outdoor pools were also added, along with a reunion facility that was built in 2014.

Dan and Sue, with their five children, worked alongside the elder Padrnoses running the resort. Dan recalls telling his kids, “It should look like so much fun working here that everyone will want to own a resort.”

Dan and Sue took over the resort in 2000 with their children, Tony, Christopher, Scott,

Gina and Aaron, and they continued the “taking care of the guests” philosophy. They're thrilled Christopher wants to take over the business and carry on this family-run resort tradition. “It's a wonderful and rewarding way of life,” Dan and Sue said.

An aspect of the resort that hasn't changed over the past 40 years is the focus on families. The Padrnoses said they enjoy meeting new families that come to the resort and look forward to seeing the many guests that come back year after year.

A busy summer day found a happy group from Lake City scrapbooking in the reunion facility. Jeri and Jeff Prigge discovered the resort 16 years ago. Jeri's parents, Ginger Marien and her late husband, Dave, joined them the next year.

“Jeri was here first and we all hoarded in on it,” Marien said.

The extended family has been coming here every year since then, and includes the Mariens' four children along with their families. The entourage is made up of 10 grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren and their friends. One of their daughters was married at the resort in 2014.

“It's so family-oriented. Our little ones can ride their bikes safely,” Marien said. “And we like the feeling of a family-run place.”

“There's something to do for every age, from 0 to 90,” said Jeri Prigge, whose mother-in-law came last summer at age 89.

The Padrnoses take pride in what their resort offers and Christopher said those amenities are one of the reasons for the resort's success. In addition to the pools, the resort has a swimming beach with paddleboards, kayaks and canoes and includes the traditional family resort amenities, such as shuffleboard and a playground.

“Fishing and boating are what set the Gull Lake experience apart from what they can get on other lakes,” Dan said. “We keep our guests on the water; we take care of their boats with boat lifts to rent and gas available.”

Hanging around the resort you'll hear fishing tips, a story or two and plenty of history.

On July 12, 2015, a windstorm swept across the Brainerd Lakes Area. The resort suffered substantial damage and was closed for two weeks.

“Without the support of our family and the Nisswa community we would not have been able to reopen so quickly,” Sue said.

The following winter the 5-bedroom cabin was rebuilt and two 2-bedroom cabins were replaced.

“Right now, we're very aggressive on upgrading and maintaining our resort,” Dan said. “We want to continue to make this the nicest family resort it can be, and share this beautiful piece of paradise for years to come.”