

# Glamping Out

BY TARA VOCINO FOR THE SUN CHRONICLE

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Lowell residents Joe Silva, his wife Helen and daughter Shana, along with dog Corky, set up a patio with lights, rugs and flat-screen TV outside their RV at Normandy Farms Campground in Foxboro. Shana also took advantage of the campground's free WiFi. (Staff photo by Mike George)

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The great outdoors is fine for some, but other campers are discovering there's no need to be away from the comforts of home

**FOXBORO** — For some, there is no better experience than being deep in the woods surrounded by nothing but wilderness, living off the land, cooking meals over a campfire and sleeping on the ground in a tent.

For others, there's glamping — glamorous camping, according to [urbandictionary.com](http://urbandictionary.com) — a new way to commune with nature without actually having to rough it.

While not yet defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a Google search of the word turns up 65,000 hits for this trend, and among Web sites dedicated to it, [goglamping.net](http://goglamping.net), a site from the United Kingdom, emerges. The site seeks to connect possible campers with glamorous locations and accommodations in the great outdoors.

At a time when numbers of people camping with recreational vehicles and tents are down at national parks across the country, glamping offers a taste of the outdoors without biting off more than a casual camper could chew.

Consider this for an outdoor experience: The Treebones Resort located on California's Big Sur coast offers luxury yurts that include with ocean views, queen-sized beds, French doors

that open up to a hardwood deck and polished wooden floors. And it might go without saying, but heat, lighting and towels are included.



Maria Moore of Hubbardston uses the campground's free WiFi service at her campsite on Sept. 4. (Staff photo by Mike George)  
It's a long way from the tent or pop-up trailer.

Locally, Normandy Farms Campground in Foxboro offers campers and glampers alike a glamorous experience.

The 100-acre campground and family resort features activities, including a fishing pond, playgrounds, and a variety of sports courts, diamonds and fields; three outdoor and one indoor heated swimming pools with a sauna and three jacuzzis; an 18-hole disk golf course; dog park; fitness center; self-serve laundry facilities; an air-conditioned recreation lodge with an arcade, air-conditioned public bathrooms with granite countertops, concierge service and free WiFi throughout the park.

It also offers the option to camp out in cabins or yurts, with cable televisions, beds, heating and air conditioning, for those who don't own an RV or would rather not use a tent.

"People travel to Normandy Farms as opposed to it being a stop point just to get to the tourist attraction," said Kristine Daniels of Foxboro, marketing director whose family owns the resort. "We created a destination with amenities so people stay and enjoy everything."

This year the approximately 400-campsite campground has had 12,000 reservations, which translates into about 40,000 annual guests. Daniels said 60 percent of campers are from Massachusetts with others from various parts of New England, Canada, and as far as New Zealand.

The amenities that traditional wilderness camping just doesn't have brings many people back.

"It's changed only for the better," said Dan Harris of Taunton, whose family has been visiting Normandy Farms for 15 years with their travel trailer. "They added playgrounds and the dog park, which took years to build, but when they do something, they do it right."

Harris' wife Cheryl said, "It's fairly well-packed. There's so much going on. Every year, they add something. We meet quite a few people from Rhode Island, but people really don't

know that it's in our own backyard. They don't realize until they get here what it's like."

Camping's only issue may lie in being able to keep up with customer demand and logistics.



Swimmers use the campground's indoor pool and Jacuzzi. (Staff photo by Tom Maguire)  
"Glamping's certainly been a challenge for our infrastructure. We've had to upgrade electrical equipment and accommodate RVs with a plasma screen TV and washer/dryer, because the RVs have become quite elaborate. We've really been trying to stay ahead of the trend," Daniels said.

And the feeling of being in the wilderness without the comforts of technology is something that campers have readily given up. According to Daniels, the WiFi capabilities of the campground attract camping families and couples who are constantly online.

"People expect to get online to continue working from here or keeping in touch with families and friends. The internet has helped in terms of marketing, and in the business and information center, we have computers that guests are welcome to use with high-speed internet," she said.

Camper Lisa Johanesen of New Jersey visited the campground for the first time a few years ago and fell in love with it.

"It makes you feel like you don't want to go home. I wish we could be up here all summer," said Johanesen.

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