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Home (not far) away from home

These summer abodes
are just down the road

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GLOBE STAFF

FOXBOROUGH – To most people, a vacation means getting away from it all. But to people like Julie and Tony Burlone, having a good time means barely getting away at all.

The Burlones, who have lived in this town for 29 years, have also vacationed here for the past five years.

Their 36-foot Holiday Rambler camper – complete with microwave, VCR, shower, and queen-sized bed – is ensconced at site No. 707 at the Normandy Farms Family Camping Resort, just 3 miles north of their three-bedroom Cape.

After traveling during the summer to far-flung locales such as Maine and Cape Cod, the Burlones simply grew tired of the expense, the traffic and the packing. And they found all the conveniences and vistas that they were searching for just 10 minutes up the road.

Better yet, they can drop by the main house to shut the windows when it rains, and, more important, do laundry. Their kids stopped moaning, “Are we there yet?”



GLOBE STAFF PHOTO / WENDY MAEDA

Julie and Tony Burlone relax outside their vacation camper parked at the Normandy Farms Family Camping Resort, three miles from their Foxborough home.

And frequent bathroom stops along the way are history.

New Englanders have traditionally been parochial when it comes to vacationing, often choosing nearby communities in which to frolic. Chelsea and Revere were

once seaside resorts for overheated Beacon Hill types, and Newport remains a popular playground for the region's gentry.

It's not unusual for people to be physically an hour or less from home and still

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These summer homes are minutes away

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consider it "going away." But psychologically, as long as "vacation mode" kicks in, where it happens is just a minor detail.

"I know that I'm in my own town, but it's just an altogether different feeling. It's just like a different world," said Julie Burlone, 55, as she sat sipping iced coffee under the screened-in awning attached to the side of the camper.

"The important thing is, I'm not cleaning my house, I'm not running errands," she said. "I'm sitting here having a good time."

Easy access to home

"Plus, you know your environment," added Tony Burlone, 55, who said he used to spend at least \$2,000 each time the family took a two-week vacation out of town. He spends \$2,900 a year to keep the trailer at the park.

"If we need something from the store, we know where it is, and we know how to drive on the streets," he said. "Best of all, we never have to stop to ask for directions."

Janis Daniels Pendergast, office manager at Normandy Farms, a farm-turned-campsite that's been in her family since 1759, said 75 percent of the travelers who stay at the year-round resort live within 30 miles of the 50-acre site, and 10 percent of the guests are from Foxborough and abutting communities.

Although she admits that "close-

to-home getaways" may sound oxymoronic, she has found that many people on vacation are simply looking for a change of scenery, a place to swim, some entertainment and to spend as little money as possible.

"When you come right down to it, as long as you are relaxing, does it really matter where you're doing it?" she said. "You could be in Bali or in your backyard. I mean, after all, a tree is just a tree."

smell of the water, the sun, and I sit out here and I imagine I'm in Maine or Vermont or New Hampshire," said Rabaioli, a retired school principal. "The only difference is, if I forget something, I can just go home and get it."

Many of Rabaioli's lakeside neighbors are families from Franklin and Wrentham whose summer homes began as occasional fishing cottages, but evolved into their pre-

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EDWARD RABAIOLI

Summer home is 3 miles away

Edward Rabaioli's Franklin home is 3 miles from his summer home on Lake Pearl in Wrentham. For 20 years, the five-minute ride ("sometimes 10 with traffic," he said) from congested suburban side street to cottage has made for instantaneous relaxation.

Each June, Rabaioli, 73, and his wife, Emma, 72, lock their main house and pack their car with clothes and food. And before most travelers can say, "Get the map out, honey, I think we're lost," they're in repose at their personal paradise.

"There are hills and greens, the

ferred summer spots.

"This is the working man's vacation," he reasoned. "It's affordable, it's beautiful and you don't have to go making fancy new friends."

For the past 15 years, Suzanne Gall Marsh, a Jamaica Plain resident, has spent her leisure time in a one-bedroom cabin on Peddocks Island in Boston Harbor.

Nearly every weekend in the summer, Marsh loads a backpack and two other bags with food, clothes and water (the island has no running water or electricity) and takes a bus, two trains and two fer-

ries to get to her outer-harbor digs.

It takes Marsh two hours and 15 minutes to go about 25 miles. She knows she could be in Maine or Vermont in that time. But she prefers the solitude and beauty of the harbor islands, even though the city skyline looms and jet fumes from Logan Airport permeate the sea air.

In the middle of everything

"It's rustic, it's back to nature, it's a lifestyle for me," said Marsh, who founded Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands. "And depending on which side of the island you stand on, you can feel you're in the middle of nowhere, even if you are in the middle of everything."

Nantucket native Robert Ray has been making "the annual pilgrimage," as he calls it, from his year-round home in Nantucket to the cottage his father built 5 miles away at Madaket Beach, since 1929.

Ray's cottage allows him a quick, quiet escape from the tourists who take over Nantucket from spring until fall. He packs clothes and food and spends weeks at a time "away from the maddening crowd."

"We go in town a couple of times a week for fresh food and our mail, and then we go back to the cottage and hide for another week," he said.

Ray, 70, knows why people flock to Madaket.

"Everything you'd ever want is here," he said. "Why would anyone go anywhere else?"