

# TRAVEL+ LEISURE

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## Bunker Hill Farms Used to Be Invite-only and Mostly for Celebrities — Now You Can Book Your Stay

On 450 acres, with a private lake and a spa in a retired grain silo, Bunker Hill Farms in McHenry County, Illinois, is now open to the public.

By **Jennifer Billock** | Published on August 8, 2023



PHOTO: COURTESY OF BUNKER HILL FARMS

I was almost 40 the first time I rode an ATV. Mind you, I said “ride,” not “drive,” choosing instead to hand the reins to my husband. By the time we were flying down a dirt road flanked by towering pines and leafy trees, I was hooked. I spread my arms out wide, leaned back, and savored the crisp morning air whooshing past my body. It was a chilly spring day, and this ATV ride was my introduction to [Bunker Hill Farms](#), an ultra-luxe (and formerly invite-only to mostly celebrity guests) lodge in Woodstock, Illinois, that is now officially open for general bookings. The caveat: the property can only be booked by one group at a time.

“Until recently, we decided to maintain an aspect of exclusivity by staying off of traditional media platforms, keeping it invite-only,” says Mike Domek, Bunker Hill’s founder. (You may recognize his name; he also founded TicketsNow.com, which was acquired by TicketMaster for \$265 million in the early 2000s.) “But after seeing how positively we are able to support our community, we want to expand our charitable impact as much as possible.”

When you book a stay at Bunker Hill, you get the whole 450-acre property to yourself – including all-inclusive usage of four lodging options, a private chef, a spa, an entire golf course, a private lake with a small beach, a shooting range, and those ATVs. You can also take a hot air balloon ride, have a personal trainer–lead fitness classes, hike, bike, paddleboard, and more. And those trees we rode through on the ATV? They were all meticulously planted, along with the 20,000 other trees on the property.

The main lodge has the feel of a large cabin sitting next to a lake, decked out with everything you could want for a luxe vacation. Think: a professional kitchen, a massive deck with a jacuzzi, and an entertainment lounge with a pool table, arcade games, a fully stocked bar, and more. This part of Bunker Hill has four rooms (two with king-size beds, one with a queen, and one with two queens). You and your guests can also split sleeping arrangements among six king suites in the nearby posh cottage, two more in the loft of a barn (which doubles as the indoor events space), and a suite in a silo next to the cottage.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF BUNKER HILL FARMS

No matter where you stay on-site, though, you're doing something good for the community just by booking there. Bunker Hill Farms' owners give every penny of profit to charity, which means you can deduct your stay as a charitable donation.

"Our goal is to support other charities who are benefiting the community in which we reside and have a social impact on our fellow neighbors," Domek says. "We work with more than 100 local charities. Some we have reached out to and others have come recommended by guests or partners."

You'll recognize a lot of those charities, like Red Cross, United Way, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and the Rotary Foundation. At the end of the year, any extra income from the property is granted to local nonprofits that need it.

Your entire stay at Bunker Hill will be curated, just as ours was, so you'll get the chance to do pretty much anything you want to do. It's that level of service that makes the property stand out.

"There is nothing like Bunker Hill," Domek says. "We give our guests special one-on-one attention that no other resort can offer. Privacy, customization, exclusivity, luxury. We make you feel at home."

We didn't use every amenity during our visit, but aside from the ATVs, I went hiking through the forest and past the shooting range while my husband got a massage. Once I saw where he was getting that massage — at the top of the old grain silo looking down through a glass floor into an intricate garden — I knew we were going to need to come back so I could experience it myself.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF BUNKER HILL FARMS

After my hike, I chatted up the private chef as he prepared a massive lunch for us at the cottage. Even the food was luxurious, a spread of sorghum and tomato pilaf; roasted carrots; grilled asparagus on a bed of mascarpone; chickpea and cauliflower salad; a side salad with fresh berries and radishes; steak; grilled chicken; and more. It was too chilly to sit on the screened-in porch to eat, so we enjoyed our meal at the oversized dining room table.

Bunker Hill is about an hour outside Chicago and only rented to one group at a time, so you and your family and friends can have an uninterrupted stay in the rolling hills of northeastern Illinois. Packages for one-day, overnight, and weekend experiences range from \$1,200 to \$3,000 per person, and you can book at [bhfarms.com](http://bhfarms.com).