SOAK UP THE SUN.

MARVIN WINDOWS AND DOORS
If Lakewood Theater colony is the bathtub-gin martini, this rustic Victorian bungalow is the olive. If you love theater, parties, and lakeside living, 4 Olive Street is priced to get your heart pumping.

The 1,192-square-foot mini-resort on .27 acres features a three-storey Italianate tower, two bedrooms, a full bath, a single-car garage, and views of Lake Wesserunsett. Also conveying is a legend best told over cocktails.

“When I bought 4 Olive, it had been owned by Louise Magoon’s family since 1945,” says seller Eric Pierce, who fell for this cottage after visiting Maine for his 50th high school reunion.

He sensed magic the moment he stepped inside—the fragrance of the past. Without delay he contacted Jenny Oby, author of Lakewood Theatre (Arcadia Publishing, 2017), about the structure also known as “The Dance Hall.”

“The Theater is on the north side of Hayden Brook,” she says. “On the south side of the stream are more cottages, including 4 Olive Street. Prior to the Lakewood Theater colony, this birch grove was owned by Jedediah Hayden in the late 1700s. His son William was a devout spiritualist. In the late 1800s, William built a spiritualist hall. The ghost of this hall is now Lakewood Theater,” she says. “Around 1895, General R.B. Shepherd bought the hall and lake land for the Somerset Traction Company, with [trolley] service from Skowhegan to Lakewood. But there was a condition. For all perpetuity, the spiritualists must be able to have a meeting here one week a year. This meeting continues today.”

As for how Olive Street got its name, “William Hayden’s daughter was named Olive. She was a very devout spiritualist. Olive Street was named for Olive Hayden. Four Olive Street was likely built by one of the Haydens in the late 1800s. His son William was a devout spiritualist.

“Four Olive Street was likely built by one of the Haydens in the late 1800s. I’ve been inside. If you look at the back of the house, you’ll see what looks like old stagecoach doors facing the lake, not the road. You’d have had to drive your horse or car around back to use them. Just above those three doors is just this gigantic open room. It’s
huge. When Eric Pierce took me here, we scratched our heads. What could this have been used for?"

Rum-running? Wild parties? According to Pierce, "The elevated 30-foot by 30-foot dance hall, with its magnificent close-fitted diagonal birch planks, is compellingly unexplainable on its own." If you look closer, "the separate double-wide entry stairs and door that faces the courtyard instead of the road" compound the mystery. If not for a limited-access speakeasy, what else could this possibly have been for? It’s not wired for lights or electricity. In the 1920s, lanterns and candles would have been more fitting in such a place where anonymity was desired by some perhaps…no bright lights to attract unwanted attention or prying eyes."

In the tower, "the top two rooms are bedrooms," Oby says.

Which brings us to a sexy little stream that separates this house from the Lakewood Theater Colony. Pierce, born in Bangor but now a Texas resident, reports Lakewood Theater Colony manager "Herbert Swett was determined to make and keep his theater and surroundings attractive to highbrow clientele in order to attract the best actors and actresses of the time, and to attract the most affluent visitors as well. The Dance Hall is a five-minute walk from the theater, and you have to cross a stream. Local legend has it that on the theater side of the stream, the theater had lots of rules for the actors and staff and housed them in gender separated housing. If you crossed the stream you were no longer under Swett’s ‘jurisdiction’ or the rules of the theater. There is no doubt in my mind that a lot of thirsty and bored actors, actresses, and patrons crossed that stream on a very regular basis to drink, to party, and get a little wild—if nothing else but to cut the boredom of city-dwellers confined to the deep woods of Maine.”

Pierce feels there’s a chance Humphrey Betty White pole dancing in the early days. According to Lakewood Theatre, she and hubby Allen Ludden met at Lakewood while performing together in the 1962 play Critic’s Choice. They honeymooned at the nearby Colony House Inn.
The perfect selections for durability and style. No matter the season, we have you covered.
Bogart dared to cross this stream—to stay at this bungalow possibly.

According to Lakewood Theater’s website, which credits *Bringing Broadway to Maine* by John Oblak as its direct source, “The idea of a resort colony which would draw vacationers to the Lakewood grove originated in 1919. By 1924, theater programs advertised camps with baths for overnight guests and theater patrons.

“In 1925 Lakewood’s increasing sophistication appeared when the management referred to the overnight facilities as ‘bungalows with baths,’ not ‘camps with baths…’ Certain bungalows were retained for the use of the company members.

“During the course of the 1934 season, Mary Philips, then wife of Humphrey Bogart, had spent the early portion of the season at Lakewood while Bogart finished his run in *The Petrified Forest*. When Bogart arrived he went to Herbert Swett to request a private cottage for himself and his wife, but Swett, in all seriousness, suggested that Miss Philips stay in the cottage she had
been sharing with Katherine Kidder, another member of the players, and that Bogart could move in with Sanford Cummings and Keenan Wynn, a suggestion which led Bogart to seek another landlord the next day."

"...though Bogart didn’t have much use for the tame side of life, we don’t have a drop of Prohibition proof that he and Mary actually relocated or partied at 4 Olive. It’s just wild conjecture about Wild Olive. To suggest otherwise would be crossing a different stream. Over there is the stuff that dreams are made of."

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