

# The Top 10 Family and Corporate Retreats

By Maryann Hammers

A well-planned outing can  
salve family conflicts.

A round of golf can help seal a deal. Take those simple ideas, apply them over a period of several days in a splendid locale, and you have the *raison d'être* behind a retreat.

Whether our business goal is vetting strategy or planning a buyout, retreats offer the rare opportunity for uninterrupted introspection and analysis, trust-building and bonding. “Given our daily time pressures, it’s difficult to engage in these activities in the usual course of business,” says Susan Battley, a Stony Brook, N.Y., psychologist and consultant who designs and facilitates Fortune 500 management retreats. “That is why tough issues and conflicts can be more successfully resolved offsite than in the executive suite.”

Retreats are equally important when it comes to managing our family affairs. “Think of retreats like family board meetings,” says Doug Mellinger, vice chairman of Foundation Source, which provides administrative services for private foundations. “High-net-worth families need to get together on a regular, structured basis to deal with issues such as earmarking funds for their private foundation, succession planning, estate issues and family partnerships. Like the Kennedys and Rockefellers, families should come together and build the necessary bonds to operate as a group.”

Choosing the right surroundings can determine to a great degree our retreat’s success. Some families will return to the same setting over and over again, perhaps an ancestral home or a favorite resort that has become a well of family history. Others look for a new venue each year to stimulate a fresh outlook and afford opportunities to try new activities. In this feature, we offer a heady mix of both venerable retreat destinations that affluent families have—for good reason—flocked to for generations, and unique environments that can serve to motivate and inspire. We were especially drawn to properties with large, private residential-like accommodations that provide alternatives to traditional meeting spaces, without sacrificing communications capabilities. But common throughout our selections are excellent facilities, well-appointed accommodations and impeccable service.

**HOMESTEAD INN** > Greenwich, Connecticut

*A Victorian mansion offers five-diamond dining and accommodations minutes from Manhattan.*

**H**OMESTEAD INN, a white Victorian mansion set high on a stately, luxuriant property off a residential lane, has long been a New York favorite for corporate getaways. Companies may book the inn's seven uniquely decorated suites and 11 double rooms, land their private jets at nearby

Westchester County Airport and enjoy the contemporary French cuisine of celebrated chef Thomas Henkelmann.

Now that the new Cottage Boardroom is open for business, guests will find that their retreats are even more pleasant and productive than they were before. Decorated in warm citrus colors with



pomegranate accents, the boardroom features a main meeting space that can accommodate 14 to 16 at the board table or 24 at round tables, as well as a breakout area. High-speed cable and wireless Internet, a monitor with DVD player and a projection screen are available.

While recreational amenities are not the highlight of this private, home-style retreat, the inn's staff is eager to meet our desires and can arrange for the rental of cars, helicopters or yachts to allow us the opportunity to explore the surrounding area. (203.869.7500, [www.homesteadinn.com](http://www.homesteadinn.com))

—Michelle Maisto



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420 Field Point Road · Greenwich, CT · 06830 · USA  
T: 203. 869. 7500 · F: 203. 869. 7502  
Theresa & Thomas Henkelmann, Proprietors