

The Boston Globe

HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE

Night sky lessons from a leading astronomer, and a floating spa on Vancouver Island

Travel news you can use.

By **Kari Bodnarchuk** Globe Correspondent, Updated July 10, 2025, 6:00 a.m.



Hotel Ursa in Orono has launched a new stargazing and walking experience led by a renowned astronomer and planetarium innovator, Shawn Laatsch. JOHN T. MEADER

HERE

Learn about the night sky from a leading astronomer

Head to Maine for a new stargazing and walking experience led by a renowned astronomer and planetarium innovator. Hotel Ursa in Orono has launched a celestial experience with Shawn Laatsch, a pioneer of the world's first 3-D stereoscopic planetarium, president of the International Planetarium Society, and director of the University of Maine Orono's Versant Power Astronomy Center (Orono in central Maine is emerging as a great dark sky region). The stargazing experience runs July 24, Aug. 23, and Sept. 18 when Laatsch will lead visitors on a 1.5-hour walk in Orono's Hirundo Wildlife Refuge, one of the area's darkest landscapes, to search for and discuss constellations, galaxies, and other treasures of the night sky. The experience is part of the hotel's Stargazing Over Hirundo package, which includes two nights' accommodation. Hotel Ursa has 95 rooms across two historic properties on the University of Maine Orono campus. The pet-friendly hotel gets its name from the Ursa Major and Ursa Minor constellations, meaning "Greater Bear" and "Lesser Bear" (fitting for a university with the black bear as its mascot). Package rates start at \$300 based on double occupancy. [207-962-1313](tel:207-962-1313), <https://hotelursa.com/offers>.

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/07/10/lifestyle/night-sky-lessons-floating-spa/?event=event12>