

YANKEE BEST NEW ENGLAND

VACATIONS

Trip Ideas *and* Inspiration



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MAINE: Weekend Away



TRISTAN SPINSKI

BOOTHBAY HARBOR

Come see how this Midcoast outpost has a “Maine-ness” all its own.

OMG, I’m surrounded by five different fireworks shows, my daughter texted last Fourth of July. She was on the waterside slope below the octagonal blockhouse at **Fort Edgecomb**, juggling her phone and a milkshake, just up the road from Boothbay Harbor, Maine.

Lara didn’t exactly want me to divulge this snippet of intel. But expecting a travel editor to keep a little-known prime vantage point under wraps is like asking a diva to pipe down. Plus, I love the symbolism of

those colorful explosions, emanating not just from Boothbay Harbor but its sibling communities (and probably some personal arsenals), in this region of tidal rivers, briny coves, and boat-dense harbors.

Understandably, many visitors swoop down Route 27, hit the rotary, and head straight to New England’s largest botanical garden or to Boothbay Harbor, one of Maine’s liveliest seaside towns, then make their departure before darkest night. But plenty of the

MAINE: Weekend Away

Boothbay Peninsula's pyrotechnics are the quiet sort that lie just before or beyond where you thought you belonged.

How fortunate Lara and I were to spend two summers' worth of non-working hours poking around the peninsula, following tips and our instincts. She interned at the 300-acre **Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens**, and I visited so often I felt a kinship with the five resident trolls. Danish artist Thomas Dambo continues to add to the global Trollmap of colossal creatures he and his team and volunteers have sculpted from reclaimed and natural materials, but the largest collection in one place is here, where their message about sustainability resonates deeply.

During rare evenings when the gardens stay open only for members, we loved having picnic suppers with monarchs aflutter, golden light on their floral feast. The cost of uncrowded enchantment is only a bit more than regular admission, and membership buoys the botanical treasure's growth and research ... and allows you to return again and again.

Seize the opportunity because, within a tiny radius of the gardens, there's an out-of-the-way country store where you won't have to wait in a long line for one of the Midcoast's best lobster rolls (**Trevett Country Store**). There's a land trust preserve with lightly trod trails and boulder-top benches that won't let you catch your breath: The view steals it away (**Porter Preserve**). There's a funky stand with the best fried fish you've ever had and the perpetual promise of "Free Beer Tomorrow" (**Bet's Fish Fry**).

If that doesn't keep you around for a few days, maybe the secluded beach on East Boothbay's **Ocean Point** will. Or a first-rate bakery "disguised" as an old-timey general store (**East Boothbay General Store**). Or tickets for dinner and a show where performers are your servers, and what productions lack in glitz they make up for in heart (**Carousel Music Theater**). It's so in keeping with the earnestness to how things

operate here, a way of life that's protected by locals and transplants alike.

Boothbay Harbor holds surprises, too. Not surprising: Parking's a challenge downtown at the height of summer (try near the library). Everything is walkable once you land a spot. There are galleries, shops, and restaurants to easily fill the better part of a day.

Stroll across Boothbay Harbor's **trademark 1901 footbridge**, renovated in 2023, and pause to picture not only the vacationers who made this walk when the bridge was new, but also the shipbuilders who toiled here before them. The settlers who tried to get a toehold as early as 1630. The indigenous fishing community that was like, *Not so fast*.

Tidal Transit, right by the footbridge, will rent you a kayak. The piers are lined with ticket booths, where you can purchase passage aboard a **Boothbay Sailing** schooner, a puffin- or whale-watching cruise, a fishing charter, a sightseeing vessel, even a boat bound for a clambake on Cabbage Island. The ease of taking to the water keeps this tourist-filled summer spot from ever feeling like a trap. Keeps Boothbay Harbor true to its maritime identity. —*Kim Knox Beckius*

BOOTHBAY HARBOR HIGHLIGHTS

- **Trevett Country Store**, 207-633-1140
- **Bet's Fish Fry**, 21 Common Dr.
- **East Boothbay General Store**, ebgs.us
- **Blanchard's Creamery**, blanchardscreamery.com
- **Harborside 1901 Bar & Grill**, harborside1901.com
- **Topside Inn**, topsideinn.com
- **Bluebird Ocean Point Inn**, bluebirdhotels.com
- **Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens**, mainegardens.org
- **Porter Preserve**, bbrlt.org
- **Carousel Music Theater**, carouselmusictheater.org
- **Tidal Transit Kayak**, kayakboothbay.com
- **Boothbay Sailing**, boothbaysailing.com

Excerpted from the July/August 2024 issue of *Yankee*.

MAINE: Editors' Picks

Eat & Drink

BEER GARDEN

Odd Alewives, Waldoboro

Scattered with patio tables, firepits, and lovely flower gardens, the half-acre spread behind Sarah and John McNeil's gorgeously renovated 1820s barn is a superb spot for a pastoral happy hour. The McNeils stopped brewing their own beer this off-season to focus on a wider menu of Maine suds and their to-die-for wood-fired pizzas. Toppings are grown on-site or sourced nearby—try the pickle pie, with sour-mustard pickles from nearby Morse's Sauerkraut, or the early-summer seasonal pizza with smoked alewives in a rich cream sauce. oddalewives.com

BISTRO

Water Street Kitchen & Bar, Wiscasset

Fresh seafood and pasta are the specialties at this Mediterranean-leaning restaurant overlooking the Sheepscot River. Chef-owner Ed Colburn's signature paella de Mariscos is worth the 45-minute wait. In the meantime, sip the white-bean soup and share the Brussels sprouts and truffle fries. On a stormy day, the cozy lounge, with its fireplace and tin-sided bar, competes with tables on the year-round glassed-in porch. waterstreetmaine.com

BRUNCH

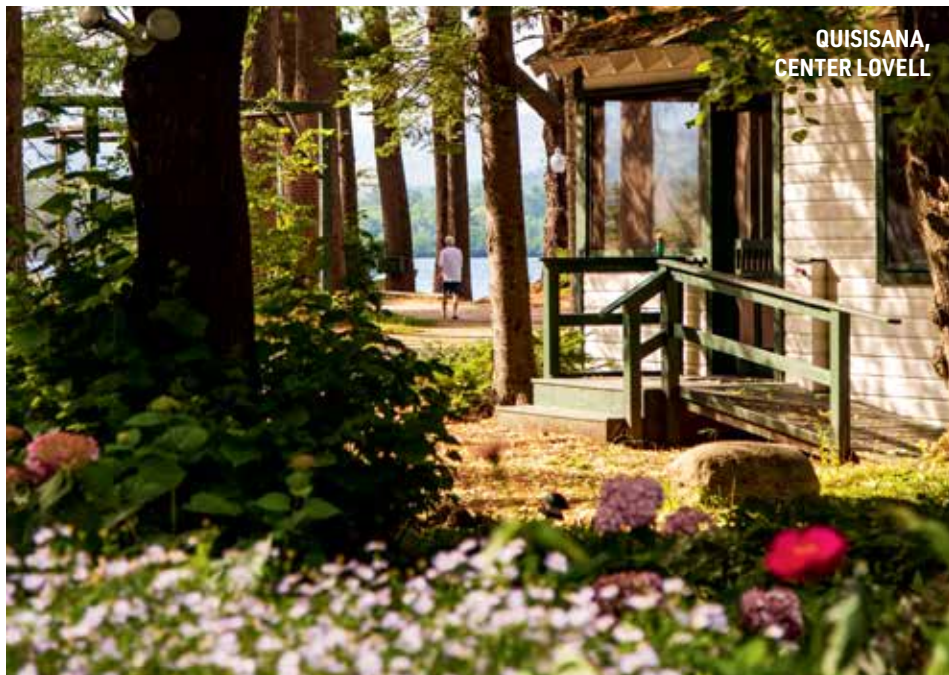
Ocotillo, Portland

Melanie and Pliny Reynolds first turned Portlanders on to the sublime simplicity of Texas-style breakfast tacos at their Tex-Mex barbecue joint, Terlingua. At their new breakfast-lunch-and-dinner stop, Ocotillo, tacos share a menu with decadent Benedicts, huevos done proper, and some stiff brunch cocktails. The Southwest-mod dining room is loud and lively; the ramada-covered patio an oasis. ocotillo.me

COCKTAIL BAR

Papi, Portland

Inspired by the cantinas of Old San Juan, lively Papi feels as if it's anchored the Old Port longer than its two years, in part because the baroque interior—with its distressed walls, bodega candles, and lush hanging greenery—feels so lived in. Cofounder LyAnna Sanabria has earned industry raves for her maximalist, Latin-inflected cocktails, such as the Tamarindo Lindo: Ojo de



QUISISANA,
CENTER LOVELL

RICHELLE SZYPULSKI

Tigre mezcal, tamarind, sumac, strawberry, and black pepper. *¡Ay qué rico!* papiportland.com

COFFEE SHOP

Bintliff's Corner Brew, Gardiner

Owner Roger Bintliff restored a portion of downtown Gardiner's 19th-century Dingley Block, and the warm, welcoming vibe of his hardware store turned coffeehouse owes a lot to the pumpkin-pine plank flooring, weathered original brick, shelves full of antiques, and dried flowers hanging from exposed beams. Linger over loads of creative specialty drinks (try the habanero mocha latte) and a full brunch menu to boot. bintliffs.com

FRENCH RESTAURANT

Chez Rosa, Kennebunkport

It's French fare with Maine flair, prepared inside a bright, airy barn tucked off Dock Square. Expect both reimagined classics such as fish Wellington and traditional ones like steak frites and Maine lobster vol-au-vent. The menu invites crafting a meal from appetizers, fromage, and charcuterie; consider pairing cheese fondue with a bistro salad. A decidedly French wine list meets a mostly Maine beer list. chezrosabistro.com

MAINE MEAL

The Dolphin Marina and Restaurant, Harpswell

It's worth the leisurely drive down the Harpswell

Peninsula and out to the tip of Basin Point to this oceanfront restaurant located on land owned by the Saxton family since the early 1900s. Go for the ultra-fresh seafood, especially the rave-worthy fish chowder or lobster stew, each served with a blueberry muffin. While feasting, savor panoramic views over island-sprinkled Casco Bay. thedolphin.me

OYSTER BAR

North Beacon Oyster, Rockland

Intimate, approachable, and the rare raw bar where the turf on the menu also shines, chef-owner Mike Mastronardi's North Beacon takes advantage of the local catch and harvest. Try the lobster sliders and New England cioppino—but know that Mastronardi also makes a mean steak frites and the Midcoast's best, gooiest cheeseburger. northbeaconoyster.com

Stay

ALL-INCLUSIVE RESORT

Quisisana, Center Lovell

Year after year, families return to this pines-sheltered, cottage-style resort edging western Maine's Kezar Lake for a getaway like no other. Guests of all ages bond over porch parties, hearty meals, and a slew of water and land activities,

MAINE: Editors' Picks

but they come for the daily performances. Staff members—most recruited from top performing arts schools and venues—morph into stars, exchanging uniforms for costumes to perform Broadway musicals, chamber concerts, piano recitals, and opera. quisisanaresort.com

ALL-SEASON ACADIA HOTEL

[The Pathmaker Hotel, Bar Harbor](#)

There's no beating the location of this new 46-room boutique-ish property, a short stroll from Bar Harbor's Village Green, Main Street shops, and low-tide trail to Bar Island. The Ethan Allen—furnished rooms couldn't feel fresher, and underground parking is a boon during the congested summer season. (Rates are a steal the rest of the year, when most Bar Harbor lodging goes dark.) pathmakerbarharbor.com

BEACH HOTEL

[The Nevada, York](#)

Watch the sun rise out of the Atlantic through plate-glass windows at the curvaceous, L-shaped, aqua-trimmed Nevada. Henry de la Pena built this hotel facing Long Sands Beach to resemble the flybridge of the USS *Nevada*, on which he served during World War II. Today this reimagined hotel retains its 1950s vibe but welcomes guests with beachy Art Deco style, contemporary amenities, and Lulu's tiki bar, plus a commitment to sustainability. thenevadahotel.com

BOUTIQUE HOTEL

[Rockport Harbor Hotel, Rockport](#)

With views over a well-protected harbor on one side and toward the Camden Hills on the other, this dog-friendly new hotel blends in with its long-standing brick neighbors. Twenty-one spacious studios and suites pamper guests with indulgent bedding, spa-inspired bathrooms, kitchenettes, fireplaces, and private balconies. Meanwhile, the cozy Oak Room restaurant earns nods for its wood-fired pizzas. rockportharborhotel.com

SEASIDE COTTAGES

[The Dunes on the Waterfront, Ogunquit](#)

Sea-salted memories are guaranteed when you stay in this idyllic waterfront colony with picket fences and seashell paths. Reopened in 2024, these adorable, newly kitted-out white cottages are spread amid shady green lawns, colorful gardens, a heated pool, and a firepit. Paddle, row, or ride the shuttle boat to the namesake dunes. Or crack open complimentary sparkling rosé and

snacks, then settle into an ocean-facing porch chair. dunesonthewaterfront.com

SUMMER RETREAT

[Otyokwa, Bremen](#)

Up to 25 guests can share Otyokwa's five lovingly-if-minimally restored sleeping cabins, built as a boys camp in the 1930s and lining a half mile of silent shoreline on Pemaquid Pond. Every rustic detail—from the rec hall's old-school record player to the striped wool throws on the bunks—oozes tasteful Vacationland nostalgia. Bigger groups can spill into a farmhouse and two gorgeous houseboats. otyokwamaine.com

WELLNESS STAY

[The Longfellow, Portland](#)

The Longfellow embraces health for people and the planet. That starts with limiting single-use plastics whenever possible. Rooms are certified as ideal for restful slumber: Heavenly bedding, a clock with meditations and sound baths, and blackout curtains help achieve this. Enhance your stay with a massage or time in a meditation lounging chair or the hot-cold infrared sauna. Then indulge in delicious, wellness-forward food and drinks in the inviting lounge and café. longfellowhotel.com

Shop & Play

ACADIA TOUR

[Island Time Ebike Rentals, Southwest Harbor](#)

Six years since the National Park Service OKed pedal-assist rides wherever bikes are allowed, about half of all cyclists on Acadia National Park's carriage roads are riding e-bikes. Island Time got in on the trend early. Its guides know MDI trivia cold, and the leisurely four-hour tours take in views of the Bubbles and other landmarks along the way. And the hills? No sweat. islandtimeebike.com

ART GALLERY

[Karma, Thomaston](#)

For a contemporary-art gallery based in New York and L.A., a seasonal outpost in a sleepy Midcoast village seems surprising. But Thomaston's former St. James Catholic Church feels made for it. Credit the vaulted ceilings, the light pouring through the rose window, and a years-long renovation undertaken by painter Ann Craven after she bought the place in 2016. Last summer's group

show included heavy hitters like Katherine Bradford and Alex Katz. karmakarma.org

CULTURAL SITE

[Tekakapimek Contact Station, Patten](#)

In the Indigenous Penobscot language, *tekakapimek* (pronounced *deh gah gah bee mook*) means "as far as one can see." It's a fitting name for Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument's new visitor center atop Lookout Mountain, which is set amid the traditional homeland of Maine's Wabanaki tribes. Exhibits and displays at this green-built architectural stunner share the region's history and heritage and introduce its mountains and waterways from the Wabanaki perspective. nps.gov/kaww

MOUNTAIN GOLF COURSE

[Sugarloaf Golf Course, Carrabassett Valley](#)

Designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr., Sugarloaf's parkland-style 18-hole course takes advantage of its natural mountain topography and woodland setting. Narrow fairways, elevated greens, massive bunkers, dense forests, and the gurgling Carrabassett River challenge golfers. The eye-popping 11th hole, nicknamed "Precipice," plays over the river, dropping 128 feet from tee to green. Unsurprisingly, the dreamy mountain views, especially in autumn, make it hard to keep your eye on the ball. sugarloaf.com/sugarloaf-golf-club

NEW PRESERVE

[Anna M. Tondreau Preserve, Harpswell](#)

What the Tondreau Preserve lacks in size, the 57-acre tract makes up for with terrain. Its 1.4-mile trail system crosses wetlands, climbs a gnarly ridge, skirts mossy boulders and crumbling stone fences, and reaches two isolated coves that are havens for wading birds and waterfowl. It's a jewel among the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust's 20 public-access preserves. hhlmaine.org/anna-m-tondreau-preserve

RAINY-DAY HIDEOUT

[Another Round, Portland](#)

The rare family-friendly hangout on Portland's Congress Street has good espresso drinks, a tap list of local brews, and a library of more than 200 board games, from classics (Clue! Scrabble!) to retro oddities (Crocodile Dentist?) to esoteric indie offerings (Catan! Wingspan!). Find a new fave, and you can buy it to take home. anotherroundmaine.com

MASSACHUSETTS: Weekend Away



GALE FORCE BIKES

ELIZABETH CECIL

PROVINCETOWN

Spring comes early to this famous Cape Cod town.

Though Provincetown, Massachusetts, is known as a summer place, spring may be its finest time. In the absence of the July rush that defines this seaside town, you will find an accessible and—dare we say—quiet Cape community. Not everything is open, but enough is. That means a last-minute Saturday-night table at a place like the **Lobster Pot** is an option, as is strolling long, isolated stretches of sand at some of the best

beaches in the country. Art galleries have emerged from their winter slumber. Even the parking is free.

Long before the more northern towns have seen a single crocus, Provincetown is awash in blossoms and greening lawns. It's ride-your-bike, sit-out-on-the-deck, smell-fresh-cut-grass, order-an-iced-coffee weather. And in the first weeks of April, that all sounds pretty good.

FRIDAY

Come early and get grounded in your surroundings by, well, getting off the ground. Situated on the curled “hand” of the arm-shaped Cape Cod, Provincetown is best viewed from atop the **Pilgrim Monument & Provincetown Museum**. The property's signature building is the tallest allowable structure in the area and features a network of 60 ramps and 116 stairs that gets visitors more than 200 feet closer to the sky. (Make time for the museum, too, where items such as a giant finback whale jawbone, a century-old fire pumper, and Wampanoag artifacts flesh out the region's history.)

Even in early spring, Provincetown has lodging options, nearly all offering deep discounts at this time of year. For instance, at nearly half off summer prices, you can drop anchor at the **Lands End Inn**: From its hilltop on the edge of town, this shingle-style 18-room mansion has long welcomed guests who want to be near both downtown and the Cape Cod National Seashore. The inn's many decks and lookouts offer views of the sea, two lighthouses, and, on a clear day, whales feeding offshore.

With your bags unpacked, it's time to explore a town made for both walking and bicycling. Opened in 2000, **Gale Force Bikes** sits on the edge of Provincetown's lone remaining piece of farmland and offers a little bit of everything: rentals, tune-ups, gear, even made-to-order sandwiches. End the day with the short journey to **Race Point Beach** to watch an over-the-ocean sunset that might just top anything you'll see in the Northeast.

MASSACHUSETTS: Weekend Away

SATURDAY

The Lands End Inn serves a generous continental breakfast, but for something that packs more of a morning punch, head over to **Liz's Café, Anybody's Bar**, for big omelets, bigger Benedicts, and slabs of French toast served with pure maple syrup.

You'll never find consensus on the most beautiful section of the **Cape Cod National Seashore**, which spans nearly 40 miles of untouched coastline from Chatham to Provincetown, but a strong case can be made for the 3,000-acre Province Lands, a dune-filled reserve that has long been the muse for artists.

You can explore the terrain on your own—by pedaling the nearly six-mile **Province Lands Bike Trail** or walking the 2.4-mile **Dune Shack Trail**, for example—but the most entertaining and complete portrait of the landscape comes via **Art's Dune Tours**. What began in 1946, when Provincetown native Art Costa fired up his Ford Woody to offer tours of the Outer Beach, has become a bucket-list adventure.

Back in town, grab lunch at **Far Land Provisions**, an upscale grocery whose homemade sandwiches sport locally inspired names (Hatches Harbor, Pilgrim Lake, Head of the Meadow) and are a challenge to finish.

Now it's time to stroll Commercial Street. Provincetown's creative bona fides were birthed in 1899, when painter Charles Hawthorne opened his Cape Cod School of Art. Generations of artists followed in search of the spirit Hawthorne inspired, as well as the region's famous light. You'll find no better deep dive into this continuing story than at the **Provincetown Art Association and Museum**. Established in 1914, PAAM is one of the country's great small art museums. High-ceilinged galleries feature a rotating lineup of more than 3,000 works, including the second-largest collection of Edward and Josephine Hopper artwork in the world.

Even as Provincetown's fishing scene has quieted over the decades, its relationship to the sea remains vibrant.

Fishing charters and whale-watch boats make their berths at MacMillan Wharf, which is also home to **Shark Center Provincetown**, with exhibits, videos, and displays that detail local research on great white sharks.

The discoveries are a little less defined at **Marine Specialties**, which has to be in the running for the most unusual gift shop in New England. Opened in 1961, when Bob Patrick and Elizabeth "Ghee" Livingstone Patrick turned their successful marine catalog into a store, the shop's evolution over the past six decades has tracked the changing flavor of its hometown. You can still pick up rope, anchors, knives, and other gear, but the inventory also includes leather jackets, feather boas, and vintage prom dresses.

Come dinnertime, the seafood options at **Tin Pan Alley** include the Taste of Cape Cod (fish and chips, clam chowder, and lobster roll), but if you want to go full tourist, look for the **Lobster Pot's** famous neon sign. The seafood menu here is gargantuan, as is the legacy of this on-the-harbor eatery, which launched the restaurant career of Anthony Bourdain in 1972.

SUNDAY

After a hot mug and a pastry at **Joe Coffee**, you're ready to tackle one more local favorite: walking the **Causeway**. Nestled just below the Lands End Inn, this mile-long boulder walk is subject to the tide and weather. Time it right, though, and it's one of the Cape's most spectacular strolls, evoking a sense that you're almost walking on the water.

Then there's the payoff: an isolated beach, unrivaled views of the harbor and Cape Cod Bay, and a pleasant trek to Long Point Light Station. Don't head home just yet. Take off your shoes and feel the sand beneath your feet. Spring has finally sprung. —*Ian Aldrich*

Excerpted from the March/April 2022 issue of *Yankee*.

MASSACHUSETTS: Editors' Picks

Eat & Drink

BURGER

The Bistro Box, Great Barrington

Run by two graduates of the Culinary Institute of America, this cheerful, seasonal window-service spot nestled beneath towering pines is no ordinary burger joint. Foodies come from miles away to dig into the signature Box Burger crowned with tomato-bacon jam, sharp cheddar, and garlic aioli, along with sides of Parmesan-truffle fries and crispy veggie spring rolls. Indulgent shakes and sundaes feature artisan ice cream from Hadley's Maple Valley Creamery. Watch for creative daily specials, and come early on weekends and sunny days to beat the crowds. thebistrobox.rocks

CLAM SHACK

Straight Wharf Fish, Nantucket

After a nationally publicized two-year legal fight with prominent billionaires who own wharf houses nearby, this stylish, laid-back clam shack finally opened last summer. The food is simple but fantastic (no surprise—it's overseen by Gabriel Frasca, chef-owner of the renowned Straight Wharf Restaurant next door). Pair the clam roll with pickled lettuce and tartar sauce with hand-cut onion rings and a crisp organic white wine from Crete. Harbor views and a warm white-oak interior make the scene more chic than shack. straightwharffish.com

CREATIVE COCKTAILS

Steel & Wire, Worcester

Named for and adorned with photos that honor Worcester's rich industrial history, this intimate space blends the warm welcome of a neighborhood bar with the inventive cocktail program of a hip lounge. Talented mixologists will pour you anything from a classic martini to a thoroughly modern Fiery Passion (with jalapeño tequila, Aperol, passion fruit, and lime). Enjoy your sips while nibbling on hummus and charcuterie or—if it's trivia night—testing your wits against those of your fellow patrons. steelandwirebar.com

FARM DINNERS

Chatham Bars Inn Farm, Brewster

Farm-to-table cuisine has been a Chatham Bars Inn hallmark since the resort's inception ... in 1914. These days, New England's ultimate dining-at-the-farm experience takes place 20



HERITAGE MUSEUMS & GARDENS,
SANDWICH

COURTESY OF HERITAGE MUSEUMS & GARDENS

minutes north, in the fields where the resort cultivates its own bounty of vibrant, peak-flavored produce. Seated at communal tables, sharing a Wednesday evening's four-course feast, you'll feel nourished by both the earth that feeds you and the festive company of your new friends. chathambarsinn.com

OPEN KITCHEN

Heirloom Lodge, West Stockbridge

Counter seats overlooking the action are a hot ticket at this newcomer, and that's not solely because chef-owner Matt Straus was a theater kid at Skidmore. The renowned sommelier, chef, and restaurateur who founded San Francisco's Heirloom Café has new "props" to play with at his first East Coast venture: namely, ultra-fresh local ingredients, assembled with the eye of a sculptor who chisels away the unnecessary. Even rotisserie chicken for two feels like a revelation in a space that is somehow totally 1797 and totally today. heirloomlodge.com

PIES

Petsi Pies, Somerville

It's hard to choose a favorite from this venerable bakery, which is beloved for both sweet and savory creations. But you can't go wrong with a slice of apple crumb or, available in autumn, sweet potato-pecan. Or feed the whole family with the hearty bacon-leek-Gruyère pie. Founded in 2003

by talented baker Renee "Petsi" McLeod, this sunny spot near Porter Square is now helmed by Jill Remby, who carries on McLeod's tradition of excellence in decadence. petsipies.com

ROMANTIC RESTAURANT

The Red Inn, Provincetown

One of the most enchanting spots on the Outer Cape to celebrate a special occasion, this rambling 1805 house in Provincetown's peaceful West End presents a seasonally changing menu of exquisite contemporary New England fare, with an emphasis on seafood. The lobster salad and local diver scallops with a citrus beurre blanc are among the stars. For brunch, book a table on the covered deck overlooking Provincetown Harbor. There are also eight overnight accommodations with sleek furnishings. theredinn.com

Stay

BOUTIQUE HOTEL

The Coach House, Salem

A "Witch you were here" sign welcomes you to Instagrammable privacy at this upscale property. You'll find history in the bones of the house, with luxury in details such as chandeliers, decorative fireplaces, and Frette sheets and linens. The 11 rooms and suites include a concierge service—a

MASSACHUSETTS: Editors' Picks

must with self-check-in (aka no front desk). It's an easy walk to Pioneer Village and Forest River Park (an ideal spot from which to watch the moon rise). coachhousesalem.com

ISLAND RETREAT

[The Edgartown Collection, Martha's Vineyard](#)

Comprising five stylishly updated historic inns, this 69-room boutique property offers walkable access to the many enticing restaurants and boutiques of Edgartown, on the east side of Martha's Vineyard. Inviting amenities abound, including sunny porches and patios, waffle robes, and Lather bath products; a thoughtfully curated breakfast and afternoon snacks also come with your stay. theedgartowncollection.com

REFRESHED LODGING

[The Trail in Adams, Adams](#)

This semi-urban retreat was reopened in 2023 by Yina Moore, founder and director of the nearby Adams Theater. She kept the bold colors and playful patterns of the former Topia Inn while modernizing the common spaces. You'll appreciate the emphasis on "green living," too, with easy access to a rail trail, on-site EV charger, independently ventilated rooms, and organic linens, towels, and toiletries. thetrailinadams.com

Shop & Play

ART GALLERY

[Salmon Falls Gallery, Shelburne Falls](#)

Master glass artist Josh Simpson, the proprietor of this airy gallery overlooking the Deerfield River, has earned international acclaim for his dazzling "Megaplanet" glass orbs, which are displayed at the Corning Museum of Glass and other illustrious institutions. Here you can browse his pieces, including many smaller and more affordable items like tumblers, vases, and pendants. But you'll also find gorgeous works by more than 90 artists, including leather wallets, fiber wall art, and hand-forged jewelry. salmonfallsgallery.com

AUTHOR'S HOME

[Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House, Concord](#)

When you tour the house where Louisa May Alcott both penned and set her seminal novel, *Little Women*, you'll feel as though the author and her sisters might pop back through the turquoise front door at any moment. The collection of family possessions is remarkably intact, as is the spirit

that has propelled her semi-autobiographical story through time and around the world. You'll also be entering a structure that housed father-and-son militiamen and that has witnessed history since 1650. How lucky we are Louisa's dad ignored neighborly advice to tear it down. louisamayalcott.org

FAMILY ATTRACTION

[Heritage Museums & Gardens, Sandwich](#)

The top draws at this eclectic cultural campus are its nationally significant collections—ranging from American folk art to vintage automobiles—and its 100 acres of lovingly tended gardens. Stroll among seasonal blooms like hydrangeas and rhododendrons, or take in contemporary outdoor sculpture along winding paths. Guests can round out their visit with refreshments from the on-site Lilly's Café, or detour to The Adventure Park (separate admission required) for high-flying fun in the form of roughly 80 treetop challenges featuring ropes courses, ladders, and ziplines through the forest canopy. heritagemuseumsandgardens.org

FAMILY-FRIENDLY MUSEUM

[EcoTarium, Worcester](#)

Celebrating its 200th anniversary in 2025, the EcoTarium (originally called the Worcester Lyceum of Natural History) is a fun-filled destination for families with school-age kids. You'll find live animal exhibits, interactive science experiments, a planetarium, and outdoor play areas designed to connect children with nature. A 12-minute open-air train ride is a multigenerational favorite. ecotarium.org

FLEA MARKET

[Brimfield Antique Flea Market, Brimfield](#)

Everyone from the most ardent collector to the occasional bargain hunter flocks to this thrice-annual mega rummage sale that's been going strong since 1959. Thousands of dealers sprawl along a mile of U.S. Route 20, and treasures of all kinds await: Depression glass, vintage signs, patchwork quilts, elegant Shaker tables, plus myriad collectibles, from the trendy to esoteric. Check the website for dates. brimfieldantiquefleamarket.com

HISTORIC SITE

[Lowell National Historical Park, Lowell](#)

Thanks to its auspicious setting on the Merrimack River, Lowell became the nation's earliest planned textile factory town and, by the mid-

19th century, its preeminent industrial center. Composed of several refurbished and unaltered buildings, this 142-acre park interprets the city's rise, subsequent decline, and ongoing revitalization. Highlights include the Boott Cotton Mills Museum, the Pawtucket Dam and Gatehouse, a park devoted to native son Jack Kerouac, guided boat tours, and vintage trolley rides. nps.gov/lowe

ISLAND RIDES

[NanTukTuk, Nantucket](#)

This clever pedicab service was started in 2023 by Michael Gormley, an enterprising young man from New Hampshire who lived in Sri Lanka for 10 months. The ubiquitous tuk-tuks there, and the fact that his grandmother couldn't negotiate the cobblestones of downtown Nantucket, gave Gormley the idea to start the company. He's expanded his pickup territory and added more bright-red tricycle cabs to his fleet. It's huge not to deal with Nantucket parking (and the name is very fun to say). nantuktuk.org

MUSEUM GIFT SHOP

[Ox & Yoke Mercantile, Sturbridge](#)

For timeless kitchen items like iron trivets, redware pottery, and hand-formed tin bakeware, shop the Ox & Yoke Mercantile at Old Sturbridge Village, where those Village-made crafts are beautifully displayed for sale, alongside an array of on-theme gifts. Need a 19th-century-style dress? They've got you. You can visit this destination shop without purchasing admission to the museum, or hit up the online store to have handcrafted items shipped to you or to loved ones near and far. Every purchase helps sustain this living-history museum and its myriad educational programs. osv.org; shop.osv.org

NEW PERFORMANCE VENUE

[Doris Duke Theatre at Jacob's Pillow, Becket](#)

Dance enthusiasts will greet this new performance space with open arms, as the 220-acre campus of Jacob's Pillow has felt the absence of the original theater, lost to fire in 2020. Twice as big, with seating for up to 230 people, the design balances technological innovation with connecting the "magic box" to the land: It can be completely darkened for video and live streams, or fully opened to the outdoors. Undoubtedly, it will impact the future of dance around the world. jacobs-pillow.org

BOSTON: Editors' Picks



BIRCH

Eat & Drink

AFFORDABLE SEAFOOD

[Yankee Lobster Co., Boston](#)

Located at the far eastern end of Northern Avenue, this Seaport District standby does quality seafood at reasonable-for-Boston prices: Fish sandwiches, fish and chips, and fried clam strips come in at \$20 or less, and the abundant fisherman's platter, heaped with enough fried seafood to feed two, is about \$40. It helps that the restaurant fronts a wholesale operation that moves thousands of pounds of fresh lobster on any given day. [yankeelobstercompany.com](#)

BAGELS

[Bagelsaurus, Cambridge](#)

Greater Boston has seen a bagel renaissance these past few years, with a number of excellent spots graduating from pop-ups to full-fledged brick-and-mortar operations (Exodus Bagels in Roslindale and Brick Street Bagels in the South End, to name two). But Bagelsaurus still rules them all, thanks to bagels blessed with tender-but-chewy interiors, crackling exteriors, and just-right coatings—delicious on their own or as the foundation for an astoundingly good breakfast sandwich. [bagelsaurus.com](#)

BAKERY

[Colette, Boston](#)

Baguettes, croissants, éclairs, macarons, quiches—there isn't a single thing at this South End bakery-café that fails to delight us. Of particular note are the canelés and the classic flan Parisien, brimming with custardy goodness, and the brioche filled with chocolate-hazelnut praline. Additional locations in Medford and Melrose. [colettebakery.com](#)

BRUNCH

[Bar Vlaha, Brookline](#)

Prime-time dinner reservations can be tough to get at Bar Vlaha, whose superlative Greek cuisine has seen it consistently lauded as one of Boston's best restaurants. Brunch, on the other hand, is a more relaxed affair—and it's just as terrific. Standouts include *saganaki*, fried sheep's milk cheese in a Metaxa brandy sauce with pistachios and a bit of jam or seasonal fruit; *tsourekis*, a Greek take on French toast with fantastically creamy maple yogurt; and the tangy, spicy egg-lover's dream known as *shakshouka*. [barvlaha.com](#)

COFFEE SHOP

[Ogawa Coffee, Boston](#)

If the work-from-home trend has thinned out the crowd of coffee drinkers in downtown Boston,

you'd never know it at this buzzing spot near Downtown Crossing. The only U.S. outpost of a three-quarter-century-old Japanese coffee company, Ogawa is most notable for its skill in coaxing maximum flavor out of its beans without adding acidity or bitterness, as its popularity proves. [ogawacoffeeusa.com](#)

FARM-TO-TABLE DINING

[Field & Vine, Somerville](#)

The vibes at this seasonal-dining haven are downright Edenic: twinkling lights, abundant greenery, and a friendly mix of neighborhood regulars and visiting foodies. Savor the wood-fired seafood, the cheddar-scallion cornbread with miso butter, and any of the imaginative peak-produce salads (think: beets and berries, or peaches and purslane). [fieldandvinesomerville.com](#)

ITALIAN RESTAURANT

[SRV, Boston](#)

Nine-year-old SRV always captivates us. How can a restaurant be this consistently great for so long? The menu is deeply Italian with a special focus on Venetian cuisine, yet it also surprises (think: pasta stuffed with beets and poppy seeds, a classic in Northern Italy but rare here). Plus, they have two outdoor patios for summer dining. With new chef de cuisine Jacey Vaccaro at the helm, we can't wait to see what comes next. [srvboston.com](#)

LUNCH

[Sofra Bakery & Café, Allston and Cambridge](#)

We have long loved Sofra's contemporary spins on traditional dishes from Turkey, Lebanon, and Greece. But almost as soon as the original Cambridge location opened in 2008, it outgrew its small space. With its much larger second café now open in Allston, Sofra offers spacious comfort in which to enjoy classics like spinach falafel with beet tzatziki, lamb shawarma, and heirloom tomato galettes with feta. Don't skip dessert: The sesame-cashew bars and chocolate earthquake cookies are signature treats. [sofrabakery.com](#)

Stay

AFFORDABLE OVERNIGHT

[Hotel 1868, Cambridge](#)

To find a quality stay priced consistently under \$300 per night—even on peak summer weekends—head to Cambridge's Porter Square, situated within easy reach of adjacent Harvard and Davis

BOSTON: Editors' Picks

squares and their abundant restaurants, shops, and theaters. Located across the street from a subway stop, this chic 50-room hotel offers a gym, business facilities, concierge service, and modestly sized but generously comfy rooms. [hotel1868.com](#)

BOUTIQUE HOTEL

The Newbury Boston, Boston

Rebranded and completely reimagined in 2021, The Newbury continues the luxe heritage of its original incarnation as the nation's very first Ritz-Carlton hotel, circa 1927. Its refined rooftop Italian restaurant, Contessa, keeps foodie guests fully sated, while its more lounge-y street-side bar offers a perfect place to linger. With in-room tea service and your very own fireplace "butler," you can't help but feel you've landed someplace truly special. If at all possible, splurge for a park-side room: The sweeping views of the Public Garden are worth it. [thenewburyboston.com](#)

HOTEL LOBBY

Four Seasons Hotel Boston, Boston

Superstar designer Ken Fulk refreshed the common areas of this downtown stalwart to highlight its location across from the Public Garden, with an ethereal Maxfield Parrish-esque mural behind the front desk and a series of lobby "living rooms" inspired by grand country houses. Guests and visitors alike can dine in style at the Fulk-envisioned Coterie, a sleek bar-café with botanical-inspired cocktails and both French and New England classics. [fourseasons.com/boston](#)

Shop & Play

BAKERS' MECCA

Elmendorf Baking Supplies, Cambridge

The modest scale of this storefront belies its outsize appeal for carb lovers: a full-service café, kitchen supplies ranging from French whisks to proofing baskets to sanding sugars and sprinkles, a range of baking books, and knowledgeable staffers to answer any question. They even mill flour here from local grains, using it in the café's pastries and also bagging up the good stuff for shoppers to take home and turn into the best bread they've ever made. [elmendorfbaking.com](#)

HIDDEN-GEM MUSEUM

Nichols House Museum, Boston

If you've ever longed to peek behind the facade of a stately Beacon Hill townhouse, now's your

chance. The Nichols House Museum beautifully preserves the former residence of Rose Standish Nichols, a landscape architect and writer—and niece of legendary sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens—who lived here from 1885 until her death in 1960. Inside the rooms, you'll find period furniture, Flemish tapestries, pieces by Saint-Gaudens, and mementos that tell the story of Nichols's life as she moved through Boston's literary, political, and artistic circles. [nicholshousemuseum.org](#)

NEW FAMILY ATTRACTION

Museum of Ice Cream, Boston

The city's latest entry in the "immersive experiences" category, this candy-colored ode to America's favorite dessert invites visitors into a fantasy world that encompasses a ball pit filled with oversize ice cream sprinkles (sadly, nonedible), a simulated airplane flight on the "Creamliner," interactive ice cream trivia, and a tasting lab where the samples include lobster ice cream (buttery and creamy, but not overtly lobster-y). [museumoficecream.com](#)

SMALL ART MUSEUM

McMullen Museum of Art, Brighton

In 2021, Fidelity vice chairman and Boston College alum Peter Lynch donated \$20 million worth of his personal art collection to this BC-owned institution on Commonwealth Avenue. The gift included works by such heavy hitters as Sargent, Cassatt, Picasso, and Homer, now on display on the museum's first floor. Upstairs, special exhibits on topics such as illuminated manuscripts from the Middle Ages and Renaissance, the Irish Arts and Crafts movement, and the Cuban avant-garde are curated as expertly as in much larger museums, but on a more intimate scale. [mcmullenmuseum.bc.edu](#)

MOVIE THEATER

Coolidge Corner Theatre, Brookline

How rare it is to find a 1933 Art Deco movie palace selling out on any given night of the week—and rarer still that it should show a dizzying range of new releases, retrospectives, midnight screenings, documentaries, and films shot in 70mm (and serve up a mean tub of popcorn with real butter, to boot). With its long-awaited expansion finally completed, the Coolidge has added classes and seminars to the mix. Simply put, it's a national treasure for Bostonians to call their own. [coolidge.org](#)

NATURE ESCAPE

Boston Nature Center & Wildlife Sanctuary, Mattapan

Sixty-seven acres in all, these woods, meadows, and wetlands offer blessed relief from urban life without the need to venture beyond city limits. Equally diverting are the various educational programs, spanning birding excursions and foraging walks to poetry workshops and crafting classes. (Where else can you make your own candles and herbal oils using plants harvested on-site?) Meanwhile, a mile-long universal-access trail welcomes nature lovers of all abilities. [massaudubon.org](#)

NEW ENGLAND STYLE FIX (MEN'S)

Sault New England, Boston

It's not just the merchandise that makes this store so appealing—it's the merchandising. In his South End shop (there's a second location in Portsmouth, New Hampshire), owner Philip Saul evokes a world of oxfords and flannels, regattas, and striped silk ties with vintage New England-style home accessories and locally made leather wallets. Sault's ever-growing lines for women and kids are worth a look, too. [saultne.com](#)

NEW ENGLAND STYLE FIX (WOMEN'S)

La Ligne, Boston

Among La Ligne's founders is Boston native Meredith Melling, which may be why there's more than a little New England style in this NYC-based clothing line. In La Ligne's recently opened boutique on Newbury Street, modern takes on nautical stripes appear in many colors and fabrics, monogramming is encouraged, and cardigans get a star turn. But for all its nods to the classics, this is decidedly fashion-forward clothing, with silhouettes that tuck and swing in all the right places. Bonus: Many popular pieces come in sizes from XXS to 3X. [lalinenyc.com](#)

SECRET FASHION STASH

Designers Circus, Allston

The Filene's Basement era of deep discounts on designer fashion may be sadly over, but this nondescript shop in Allston Village is doing its best to fill the void. Owner Kathleen O'Neill had her own clothing line for decades and now sells clothing by about 80 independent designers from around the world for at least half off retail. Styles range from earthy to cutting-edge, and with a bit of digging, you'll always find something that suits you—and that no one else has. [designerscircus.biz](#)

NEW HAMPSHIRE: Weekend Away



MICHAEL D. WILSON

LAKE WINNIPESAUKEE

New Hampshire's classic summer getaway shines just as bright when the leaves turn.

In 1763, New Hampshire Governor John Wentworth built a summer home on the shores of a lake whose name—in one translation from the Abenaki—means “Smile of the Great Spirit.” That home was in the village of Wolfeboro, which on that basis claims the title of “The Oldest Summer Resort in America.” But it never had to be summer for Lake Winnepesaukee to be a destination. Try it during New England’s fall foliage season, when all the local businesses are still bustling, and the vast lake and its surrounding mountains—the Belknap, Squam, Sandwich, and Ossipee ranges—are never more beautiful.

We’ll start in Wolfeboro, where Mitt Romney keeps a second home. Main Street runs the length of the waterfront, and if you stay at the **Pickering House Inn** on Main, you’ll find yourself in the newly—and immaculately—restored Federal home of Daniel Pickering, one of the town’s leading citizens in the 1800s. It offers gourmet breakfasts, sunny rooms that blend the historic and the contemporary, and a wraparound porch overlooking lush gardens, the campus of Brewster Academy, and Wolfeboro Bay. A 10-minute stroll down Main brings us to **Lydia’s Café**, where the French toast comes heaped with tiny

NEW HAMPSHIRE: Weekend Away

wild blueberries, sandwiched with cream cheese, and dolloped with whipped cream. Right next door is **Made on Earth**, a fair trade–certified boutique where natural-fiber women’s clothing is complemented by herb teas, scented smoke bundles, fine jewelry, and shelves of books on Eastern spirituality.

Through mid-October, the 205-foot **M/S Mount Washington** plies the lake daily between Wolfeboro, on the east shore—and past some of Winnepesaukee’s 300-plus islands—to Laconia’s Weirs Beach on the west. “The Weirs” once hosted a dance hall where the likes of Duke Ellington and Count Basie played; today its boardwalk hums with shops, restaurants, a tavern, a penny arcade, and the bump-bump of bumper cars.

If a proper car is handy, drive into Laconia for lunch at **Trillium Farm to Table**, a bright café that partners with local organic farms in its offerings. Wine, craft beers, and hard cider are available, but for a different take on a nonalcoholic fruit drink, try a cantaloupe shrub.

Your car will also prove handy for the 77-mile loop of roads around the lake and linking its towns. To the north of Laconia lies Meredith, where the **League of N.H. Craftsmen** keeps a shop stocked with unique handwrought items made with as much artistry as craft. At the heart of the town lies **Mill Falls**, with its 40-foot waterfall and an elegant array of shops, restaurants, and lakeside lodgings. Keep going north on Route 25 to the **Moulton Farm** stand: sustainable agriculture, a corn maze and pumpkin patch, and apple cider doughnuts as light as croissants.

Center Harbor, at the lake’s north end, was a favorite haunt of poet and abolitionist John Greenleaf Whittier. It was also the site of America’s first intercollegiate sporting event: the Harvard-Yale regatta of 1852. Winnepesaukee is surrounded by excellent restaurants, but **Canoe** is my choice today—say yes to the lobster mac and cheese, or the sweet-and-sour calamari—and is as lakeside as the *Mount Washington*. The Sutton family estate once dominated Center Harbor, and today the Suttons’ refurbished Victorian mansion,

Sutton House B&B, is a homey inn beautified by a Lisa Nelthropp mural of town history.

We begin to round back to Wolfeboro through Moultonborough, where the **Old Country Store & Museum** dates back to 1781. Its floor space and shelves are jam-packed with vintage and contemporary items recalling that name-it-we-got-it ethos of, well, old country stores. Then turn down Route 109 toward a jewel hidden high in the Ossipee Mountains: **Castle in the Clouds**, which began as Lucknow, a 6,300-acre estate and mansion—no, castle—built in 1913 by shoe magnate Thomas Plant. The builder eventually ran out of luck and went broke, but his restored home provides a window into the human spirit, a taste of a bygone opulence, and magnificent views south over the lake and north to the Sandwich Range.

Maybe you prefer to go on foot to where bald eagles soar. Drive through Wolfeboro down to Alton Bay, the lake’s southern tip. Go four miles up Route 11 to the trailhead for **Mount Major**. A moderate, hour-and-fifteen hike will reward you with a vista no less stunning than Mr. Plant’s. You’ll know how he felt, because you might want to stay forever. —Richard Adams Carey

LAKE WINNIPESAUKEE HIGHLIGHTS

- **Canoe**, canoecenterharbor.com
- **Laconia Local Eatery**, laconialocaleatery.com
- **Lydia’s Café**, Facebook
- **Moulton Farm**, moultonfarm.com
- **Trillium Farm to Table**, trilliumnh.com
- **Ames Farm Inn**, amesfarminn.com
- **The Inn at Mill Falls**, millfalls.com/stay
- **Pickering House Inn**, pickeringhousewolfeboro.com
- **Sutton House B&B**, sutton-house.com
- **Wolfeboro Inn**, wolfeboroinn.com
- **Castle in the Clouds**, castleintheclouds.org
- **Mount Washington Cruises**, cruisenh.com

Excerpted from the September/October 2023 issue of *Yankee*.

NEW HAMPSHIRE: Editors' Picks

Eat & Drink

CRAFT BREWERY

[Blasty Bough Brewing Company, Epsom](#)

Set in a cozy restored farmhouse, this sustainability-focused nanobrewery turns out complex, inventive ales such as the cardamom- and-vanilla-spiced Högmåne Scottish ale and The Welcome Table, a heady Belgian-style golden strong ale. After filling up on a Korean-spice-rubbed brisket sandwich or a hummus-and-veggie plate, head upstairs to enjoy the music of some of the region's leading folk acts in the intimate listening room. Although Blasty Bough's setting is pastoral, it's less than a 20-minute drive from Concord. [blastybough.com](#)

FARM-TO-TABLE DINING

[The Hungry Diner, Walpole](#)

The sprawling field beside this festive farmer-owned restaurant is filled with tables, a swing set, and various outdoors games, giving the feel of a family picnic. The kitchen sources most of its ingredients, including beef, pork, and poultry, from its nearby sustainably operated farm (which also offers cozy accommodations in a 1774 country inn). Dig into thoughtfully prepared comfort food like mac and cheese with fried chicken and jalapeños, and sample a flight of beer from the impressive list of 16 on tap. [hungrydinerwalpole.com](#)

ICE CREAM SANDWICHES

[The Sandwich Creamery, North Sandwich](#)

Located 20 minutes from Lake Winnepesaukee's north shore, this beloved family dairy sells decadent ice cream sandwiches out of a self-serve general store across from a small patch of greenery with picnic tables and a playground. The novel flavors rotate but might include the Moose (peanut butter cookies with chocolate ice cream) and the Lemon Blue (lemon cookies with blueberry ice cream). Also on offer here: ice cream pints, cheeses and other gourmet snacks, prepared foods, and colorful crafts. [Facebook](#)

JAPANESE RESTAURANT

[Nichinan, Portsmouth](#)

Savor artfully prepared modern Japanese fare in this sophisticated, softly lit oasis named for Portsmouth's sister city on Japan's southernmost island. The 50-seat space is tucked inside the plush Hotel Thaxter, fashioned out of an 1860



CRANBERRY MEADOW FARM INN,
PETERBOROUGH

JUMPING ROCKS PHOTOGRAPHY

church. Standout dishes include the fatty tuna sushi with kumquat and pickled cucumber, and chilled soba noodles with king crab. Be sure to peruse Nichinan's impressive craft cocktail list. [nichinanrestaurant.com](#)

LOBSTER ROLLS

[The Little Red Schoolhouse, Campton](#)

You might not expect to find the state's most delicious lobster rolls in the foothills of the White Mountains, 100 miles from the nearest lobster buoy. But this seasonal (late May-mid-October) counter-service spot set in a historic schoolhouse serves up succulent rolls, hot-buttered or lightly tossed in mayo, along with burgers, fried seafood, and addictively good garlic fries. There's a nice selection of local beers and ice cream, and seating is at picnic tables or in a double-decker screened-in porch with panoramic views of the mountains and the Pemigewasset River. [littleredschoolhousenh.com](#)

PIZZA

[Zizza Authentic Pizzeria, Milford](#)

We know just how much of a hot-button issue pizza can be, but Zizza inspires us to all just get along. The names are fun (say hello to the meat lover's Zizza Mizza), while the preset combos

are deliciously creative (fried eggplant, ricotta, Parmesan, and fresh basil? Yes, please!). And if you've still got a hankering for something extra, do yourself the favor of taking home a few of the house-made cannoli. [zizzapizza.com](#)

SPECIAL-OCCASION DINING

[Stages at One Washington, Dover](#)

Chef Evan Hennessey has earned a slew of accolades for his sublimely inventive multicourse feasts, served on exquisite earthenware in a rustic-chic third-floor space in downtown Dover's historic Washington Street Mills complex overlooking the Cocheco River. The "progressive New England" tasting menu changes frequently to take advantage of what's fresh and available nearby, with recent dishes including hazelnut and miso hummus with goose-leg confit and pickled mussels, and roasted lobster soup with preserved pear, puffed quinoa, and dry kimchi. Lighter bites and curated sips are served in the intimate and informal Living Room lounge. [stages-dining.com](#)

VINEYARD

[Zorvino Vineyards, Sandown](#)

When Jim and Cheryl Zanello bought their 80-acre Sandown retirement property in 2000, they planted a few grapevines to dress up the land.

NEW HAMPSHIRE: Editors' Picks

Then they kept planting. In the decades since, Zorvino Vineyards has become an acclaimed destination that's only furthered the Northeast's growing winemaking cred. Among the flavors born here are the Marquette, a barrel-aged red that pops with fruit flavor, and La Crescent, an easy-drinking white that will cool down any hot summer day. [zorvino.com](#)

Stay

COUNTRY INN

[The Lyme Inn, Lyme](#)

Operated as a stagecoach tavern in the early 1800s, this venerable four-story hotel stands out for its sophisticated rooms and suites, many of them overlooking the handsome Lyme Common. Romantic restaurant Ariana's serves creative, contemporary, regionally sourced fare in a post-and-beam-style space with a stone fireplace. If you're seeking an attractive base for exploring the campus of Dartmouth College and the surrounding Upper Connecticut River Valley, look no further. [thelymeinn.com](#)

FAMILY RETREAT

[Sundeck Cottages, Gilford](#)

In 1980, a young Carl Johnson began a summer ritual of vacationing with his grandparents at "Sun Deck" Cottages, a lakeside resort on Lake Winnepesaukee. Today, Carl and his family do the hosting as the owners of this seasonal retreat of simple but charming private cottages—plus apartment units and a lakefront house rental—that have welcomed parents and kids for more than 70 years. The big lake is just steps away, so bring your kayak or paddleboard, and most definitely bring your swimming gear. For additional summer diversions, Weirs Beach is a short drive away. [sundeckcottages.com](#)

LUXURY B&B

[Cranberry Meadow Farm Inn, Peterborough](#)

Chef-owner Carolyn Hough harvests most of the ingredients for guests' breakfasts from her garden and nearby farms. Come fall, homemade yogurt and granola might be followed by caramel-glazed apple hand pies and freshly laid eggs topped with Swiss chard pesto. Any calories gained can be burned on trails that begin right from the 83 acres surrounding this exquisitely nurturing inn. Hike to Cranberry Meadow Pond, then on to the summit of Pack Monadnock. [cranberrymeadowfarminn.com](#)

Shop & Play

ANTIQUES STORE

[Just L, Littleton](#)

A cornerstone of this historic downtown shopping district on the edge of the White Mountains, Lance Williamson's shop abounds with midcentury decor and other intriguing items, mostly from the 1950s to the 1990s. You might find a Marcel Breuer-designed Wassily chair or a whimsical tulip lamp, or anchor pieces like teak dining room tables and low-slung sofas. There's also a great selection of smaller gifts and accent pieces, from Russian nesting dolls to vintage vinyl to 1950s CorningWare. [midmodliving.com](#)

BIKE TOUR

[PortCity Bike Tours, Portsmouth](#)

Proving that sometimes two wheels are better than four, PortCity's guided trips let you soak up New Hampshire's Seacoast in an unforgettable way. The company offers a range of options, from a two-hour pedal through Portsmouth's historic neighborhoods to a photo-worthy exploration of harbor and islands. But for our money, the three-and-a-half-hour coastal ride and lobster roll journey is the summer trek that will keep your spirits riding high long after you've retired the bike for the day. Private and custom tours are also available. [portsmouthnhhistoricalbiketours.com](#)

CRAFTS GALLERY

[Gibson Pewter, Washington](#)

Second-generation craftsman Jonathan Gibson meticulously casts, hammers, and spins pewter tankards, candlesticks, pitchers, oil lamps, and more. You can watch him work, using traditional tools and classic Colonial designs, inside his rustic barn studio beside the picturesque Washington town common—the highest village center in New Hampshire. Gibson also displays and sells stunning antique pieces dating back as far as the early 18th century. [gibsonpewter.com](#)

DAY HIKE

[Mount Tecumseh Trail, Waterville Valley](#)

If you're looking to ease your way into conquering all 48 of New Hampshire's 4,000-footers, Mount Tecumseh is a great peak to tackle first. While it was recently found to be a few feet shy of qualifying for the Granite State's 4K club, it still offers a challenging five-mile out-and-back climb that rewards you with sweeping views

of the Waterville Valley ... and those bigger northern summits you may want to bag next. [waterville.com/hikes/mount-tecumseh](#)

OUTDOOR RETAILER

[REI Co-op, Bedford](#)

While outdoor people prefer to be, you know, *outside*, REI's newest New England store inspires one to linger indoors. Surveying its 22,000 square feet, you can practically feel the endorphins kicking in. Paddleboards and boots, bikes and climbing gear, bocce sets and kites—they're all there, along with knowledgeable staffers who are always amped at the chance to assist you in getting you back outdoors in no time. [rei.com](#)

PYO BERRY FARM

[Monadnock Berries, Troy](#)

Encompassing 10 acres of land that's been farmed for more than two centuries, and with majestic Mount Monadnock for a backdrop, Monadnock Berries' setting is as delicious as the grape-size blueberries clustered on row after row of bushes. Grab a snack at the rustic café and farm stand before heading out to harvest delectables that also include gooseberries, currants, and raspberries. [monadnockberries.com](#)

SCULPTURE GARDEN

[Bedrock Gardens, Lee](#)

It's hard to think of a more enchanting way to pass a sunny afternoon than with a ramble through this collection of shade trees, lawns, water features, and art installations. The serene Spiral Garden and striking Belgian Fence are favorite spots in which to commune with nature, and handmade benches and swings throughout the property provide seating for contemplation. Check out the array of native plants and whimsical gifts in the garden shop, too. [bedrockgardens.org](#)

USED BOOKSTORE

[Old Number Six Book Depot, Henniker](#)

However much time you've allotted for your visit to this bibliophile's dream, prepare to tuck on at least an extra hour to peruse the 160,000-plus titles that stuff the floor-to-ceiling shelves. Opened in 1976, the shop boasts books in practically every genre, along with a rich collection of old magazines (including some long-ago *Yankee* issues). Even better, it operates much as it did half a century ago: no website, no email, just a landline and owners who are delighted to welcome you. 603-428-3334

RHODE ISLAND: Weekend Away



ERIN MCGINN

CHARLESTOWN

This southern New England seafood mecca is filled with diversions.

Which products does *your* local convenience store tout? Deli meats? Snacks? Milk? Lottery tickets? I did a double take as I drove past the Charlestown Mini-Super, then turned around so I could snap a picture of the rope-strung boards dangling from the market's roadside sign: *Scallops. Oysters. Fresh tuna. Littlenecks. Swordfish. Shrimp. Smoked fish. Salmon.* I already knew Charlestown as New England's most famous all-you-

can-eat lobster destination and the host of a major summer seafood festival, but local sea fare as a part of everyday life? Sign me up.

Of course, I ventured inside, even though I wouldn't be needing raw fish where I was headed for the night: the **General Stanton Inn**, a "George Washington was here" survivor recently revived and with its own ocean-to-table tavern. But you can learn an awful lot about a community from a hub like the Mini-Super. Especially one that swells from 8,000 souls in the winter to 30,000 each summer.

They come for South County's beaches, of course. They love how easy-to-reach and under-the-radar these swaths of sand are. But a quick scan of the flyers posted in this little store reveals there's a *Who needs the ocean?* side to Charlestown, too. There's live music during Saturday *breakfast* at **The Hungry Haven** and on summer weekend nights at the Charlestown Rathskeller. There's drop-in yoga, indoors and out, at peaceful **Rockbriar Farm** (stroll the gardens or snooze in the hammock after class). There are free family-friendly activities at **Kettle Pond Visitor Center**, Thursday concert and movie nights in **Ninigret Park**, and Friday farmers' markets and Sunday flea markets at the General Stanton.

And what kid wouldn't love searching for Ninigret Park's ginormous trolls, brought to life in 2024 by Danish recycling artist Thomas Dambo with reclaimed natural materials and contributions from local students and volunteers? Ninigret Park is also home to a playground, a cycling loop, a freshwater swimming beach, and **Frosty Drew Observatory**, which hosts free Friday stargazing nights.

In just four days, my daughter and I will see Ninigret Park during its busiest weekend, filled with RVs, salivating seafood lovers, and one guy who walks around wearing a giant balloon lobster he controls like a puppet. Before then, however, I'm on a mission to find the quieter side of this shore town before the

RHODE ISLAND: Weekend Away

carnival-like **Charlestown Seafood Festival**, always the first weekend in August.

My search begins at the sea. Receding glaciers gifted Charlestown with a string of south-facing barrier beaches. The easiest to reach, **Blue Shutters**, is the liveliest. **Charlestown Breachway State Beach** and its campground are popular, too. **Town Beach** is lesser known, except to locals. But it's **East Beach** where you'll find tropical-blue surf, space to sprawl on cinnamon-sugar sand, and the wild tranquility of a largely undeveloped three-mile stretch of coast. There's very little parking here, so arrive early or reserve a four-wheel-drive permit and camping spot.

Don't sleep on Charlestown's **salt ponds** as an alternative for on-water recreation. Those same glaciers gouged these tidal lagoons embayed by the barrier beaches. They're like briny lakes with ocean breezes. **Ninigret Pond**, the largest, is not only a stunning place to kayak or windsurf, but also a prime breeding ground for bivalves. Some 40 percent of oysters harvested in Rhode Island come from Ninigret Pond, and **401 Oyster Co.** offers aquaculture boat tours here on select dates in summer. You can also buy a nonresident recreational shellfishing license and dig your own quahogs, soft-shell clams, and oysters at low tide. They never taste better than when your back and shoulders still feel the effort.

If you kick off your weekend with outdoor exertion, a festival (**Rhythm & Roots** is a Labor Day weekend tradition), a day at one of the splashier beaches, or a night of all-you-can-devour indulgence at **The Nordic's** lobster-plus-everything buffet, Sunday morning calls for sipping an iced wildflower latte at **Dave's Coffee** or savoring a fresh-baked-focaccia egg sandwich at **Quonnie Farms**. Then, there are so many places to stretch your legs—the loop skirting Watchaug Pond within **Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge**, for example, where the diversity of vegetation attracts more than 250 feathered species.

I prefer to walk around **The Fantastic Umbrella Factory**. How to describe this inimitable bazaar,

where shoppers crunch along clamshell paths, brown bags of feed for the roaming hens in hand? You might leave with a block-print T-shirt, candy, or an armload of plants. The vibe is more subdued inside soft-spoken wampum artist Allen Hazard's shop, **The Purple Shell**. This Eastern Native trading post filled with indigenous handcrafts is "like a museum," he admits.

Got time? He's a living connection to the ways of his Narragansett and European ancestors. He'll tell you how quahogs, especially the ones with big, deep-purple shells, "are becoming harder and harder to find." How he's concerned about overfishing and pollution not only because he turns these shells into one-of-a-kind jewelry and hand-carved walking stick embellishments, but also because he really likes quahog chowder.

Back outside, what I love most is the peace you can find inside the maze-like bamboo forest. Listening to the rustle of skyscraping grasses and your own inner voices—most likely your heart and stomach debating, *What's next?* A beach sunset? Or another heaping plate of seafood? —*Kim Knox Beckius*

CHARLESTOWN HIGHLIGHTS

- **The Breachway Grill**, breachwaygrill.com
- **Charlestown Rathskeller**, thecharlestownrathskeller.com
- **Monahan's Clam Shack by the Cove**, monahansri.com
- **The Nordic**, thenordic.com
- **Breachway Bait & Tackle**, breachwaybait.com
- **The Fantastic Umbrella Factory**, fantasticumbrellafactory.com
- **Ninigret Park**, charlestownri.gov/parksandrec
- **General Stanton Inn**, thegeneralstantoninn.com
- **Hathaways Guest Cottages**, hathawaycottages.com
- **Phil & Ann's Sunset Motel**, philandannsmotel.com

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RHODE ISLAND: Editors' Picks



MARK FLEMING

Eat & Drink

BEACH BAR

Ocean Mist, Wakefield

You can't get much closer to the water than this local institution perched directly above the shoreline, where waves roll under the wooden deck. And in such an intimate venue, you can't get much closer to the entertainment, which is part of why many consider Ocean Mist to be the best live-music spot in Rhode Island. Utterly unpretentious, full of sun-browned characters, and boasting an impressive weekly lineup of rock, reggae, and blues bands, the Mist is also the rare beach bar where breakfast is more than a hangover cure—the food is excellent. oceanmist.net

COFFEE SHOP

Rise 'N Shine Coffee Bar, Providence

Rise 'N Shine is a sweet side-street surprise. Housed in a historic carriage house, this IYKYK gathering place serves locally roasted coffee, pretty lattes, and fresh pastries with a side of Wi-Fi. Owner Neal Kaplan has outfitted the picture-perfect space with comfy seating, newspapers at the ready, and a footwear-centric theme that pays soulful homage to his cobbler great-grandfather and the building's former life as a shoe shop. risenshineri.com

COMFORT FOOD

Ye Olde English Fish & Chips, Woonsocket

Woonsocket may be famed as Rhode Island's center of French Canadian culture—Acadian immigrants once worked the city's textile mills—but this bastion of British comfort food is perhaps Woony's best-known eatery. Founded by émigrés from Yorkshire in 1922, the no-frills restaurant remains true to the recipe carried across the pond more than a century ago, other than replacing lard with vegetable oil for frying. The fish is local, the golden chips sliced in-house, the food savory and delicious—just like in ye good olde days. 401-762-3637

DOUGHNUTS

Knead Doughnuts, Providence and Westerly

There are doughnuts that are cheaper by the dozen, doughnuts that are mixed-media works of art, and then there are Knead Doughnuts: classics worth their weight in gold. Look for the varieties made of brioche dough, a recipe of fresh yeast, butter, and real vanilla bean, fermented for 24 hours for maximum flavor. The Jelly is a masterpiece of hand-rolled brioche filled with seasonal jam and tossed in granulated sugar. "Knead" we say more? kneaddoughnuts.com

GAME-TIME GRUB

Boon Street Market, Narragansett

A cavernous former train depot situated along the Narragansett Pier has quickly become this seaside town's hottest social stop since opening last summer. Part food hall, part indoor-outdoor bar, Boon Street Market readily switches from an affable summer hangout to a lively sports bar when games are on. What remains constant is the quartet of fast-casual dining options: Mexican, Italian, a burger and barbecue joint, and a noodle bar. boonstreetmarket.com

ICE CREAM

Brickley's Homemade Ice Cream, Wakefield

When an eatery can be spotted by its long line of faithful customers, it's a safe bet that folks know its offerings are worth the wait. Such is the case at Brickley's Homemade Ice Cream, a family-owned ice cream shop serving up more than 45 flavors of homemade ice cream, frozen yogurt, sherbets, and sorbets from a window on Main Street. Adding to the allure is the intoxicating aroma of waffle cones baked on-site. brickleys.com

INLAND OUTDOOR DINING

The Tree House Tavern & Bistro, Warwick

A bit off the radar (yet a 10-minute drive from T.F. Green Airport), this hidden gem features a perennially scrumptious seasonal menu with a dedicated tea menu and Instagram-worthy desserts presented in tantalizing fashion. The interior is lovely, but plan ahead to dine in the gardens—a magical spot aglow with lanterns hanging from trees—the kind of setting that could only be dreamed up by a mother-son florist team turned restaurateurs. thetreehousetavern.com

SEASIDE OUTDOOR DINING

The Lobster Bar, Newport

Heading to Bowen's Wharf is a must-do when visiting the City by the Sea, but be sure to venture all the way to the end or you'll miss The Lobster Bar. At this expansive, indoor-outdoor restaurant, you'll discover a jovial atmosphere, friendly staff, and 180-degree views of the harbor. The menu offers a little bit of everything for everyone (even landlubbers) and earns bonus points for its flights of mini lobster rolls: traditional, naked, and fried. lobsterbarri.com

RHODE ISLAND: Editors' Picks

VINEYARD

Sakonnet Vineyard, *Little Compton*

New England's oldest vineyard makes its home in Little Compton, but it's hardly a stodgy institution. New stewards James Davids and Marissa Stashenko have made mindful updates to the property, along with launching new wines and a new menu. Beyond light bites such as flatbreads and charcuterie, recent offerings include lobster rolls, roasted chicken, and cookies. Situated on 169 acres, it's a beautiful place for a taste of the Farm Coast. sakonnetwine.com

Stay

COASTAL B&B

Sea Breeze Block Island, *Block Island*

You can visit Block Island, or you can be immersed. If the latter is what you're after, Sea Breeze is the place to stay. A quick veer off a main road, and you've arrived at the compound of small cottages, artfully decorated and nestled among gardens with an Atlantic Ocean backdrop. A chef-cooked breakfast is delivered each morning by picnic basket. seabreezeblookisland.com

LUXURY B&B

Margin Street Inn, *Westerly*

The simplicity-loving Quakers who built the 19th-century Greek Revival and Colonial Revival mansions that make up this luxurious inn might raise an eyebrow if they could see what their former homes have become. But modern guests revel in the beautifully styled common spaces, the spacious suites outfitted with Matouk and Ralph Lauren linens, the morning reveal of artist and innkeeper Sarah Cooper's ever-changing frittatas, and the landscape adorned with heritage trees and historic outbuildings. Downtown is a pleasant 0.8-mile walk along the Pawcatuck River. marginstreetinn.com

Shop & Play

BODY & BATH BOUTIQUE

Beauty and the Bath, *Wickford*

Part of North Kingstown (which just celebrated its 350th), the village of Wickford is as picturesque as can be. Built around a natural harbor, it boasts one of the largest collections of 18th-century architecture and a thriving shop-small community. Among its merchant-boosters is Lori

Lyons, longtime owner of Beauty and the Bath. Her cheerful shop is replete with sleepwear, gifts, and bath and body products in scents that range from luxe to local (e.g., Rhody fave Del's Lemonade). beautyandthebath.com

COMMUNITY ARTS VENUE

The United Theatre, *Westerly*

This 1926 theater hasn't just been renovated—it's been transformed. Three screening rooms, a black-box theater, and other performance and display spaces occupy the restored vaudeville venue as well as the long-shuttered Montgomery Ward department store next door. Visitors can catch a movie, hear a band, attend a lecture, browse an art gallery, or pose in a yoga class. unitedtheatre.org

GUIDED ADVENTURE

Rhode Island Lighthouse and Newport Harbor Tour, *North Kingstown*

It doesn't get more Ocean State than this 90-minute cruise. Listening to narration by a historian who delivers information with the panache of a TV journalist, you'll pass by 10 historic beacons and lesser-known small islands. Journey under the Jamestown Verrazzano Bridge, see the house built on a rock known as Clingstone, and take in views of rolling lawns behind grand mansions. fastferry.com

JAZZ VENUE

Courtland Club, *Providence*

On Sunday nights, jazz heats up a former bakery on Federal Hill. Circa-1920 ovens still occupy the wall behind the stage, but the club's "New England tropical" food is 21st-century hip. The unmarked entrance at 51 Courtland Street conveys a speakeasy vibe: Be brave, walk in, and you'll be welcomed with a knowing wink from the eclectic crowd of regulars bent over craft cocktails and nodding to the groove. courtlandclub.com

NEW FAMILY ATTRACTION

Harmony Railway & Gift Shop, *Chepachet*

It's no accident this gift shop on Putnam Pike resembles an old railroad station: The front porch doubles as the depot for a diesel-powered miniature train that runs around a half-mile track for the amusement of visitors as well as the satisfaction of retired-firefighter-turned-conductor Russ Gross. The ride ends back at a well-curated shop full of local crafts, farm-raised honey, soaps and lotions, and plenty of train-related swag. harmonyriproducts.com

PUBLIC ART

The Avenue Concept, *Providence*

Providence's reputation as Rhode Island's cultural capital is written all over the city's walls: Nearly 50 monumental murals enliven old red-brick buildings, with themes ranging from simple (fish, flowers, pets) to whimsical (an angel-wing selfie wall) to meaningful (Gaia's "Still Here," which depicts Narragansett artist Lynsea Montanari and nods to the state's extant Native American population). The nonprofit Avenue Concept facilitates self-guided tours of the city's public art with a free mobile app. theavenueconcept.org

SUMMER APPAREL

Three Islands, *Watch Hill*

The Westerly neighborhood of Watch Hill is like a mini Chatham. Within a brief stretch, there's a candy store, an ice cream parlor, restaurants, and boutiques including Three Islands. Founded by cousins Justin Goff and Phil Barney, who became smitten with all things Bali while on a surfing trip, the clothing brand's seasonal flagship is where you can find "a little sunshine for your closet," made from hand-screened batik. threeislandslifestyle.com

SUMMER THEATER

Theatre by the Sea, *Wakefield*

In Wakefield, summers at the shore have meant show tunes as well as sno-cones since 1933, when Theatre by the Sea opened in an old barn on Cards Pond Road. The footlights of this rustic summer-stock stage once drew such luminaries as Mae West and Marlon Brando. Saved from extinction more than once, the theater now offers a four-show run of summer musical staples like *Hairspray*; arrive early for cocktails in the shady courtyard before the curtain goes up. theatrebythesea.com

URBAN GREEN SPACE

Providence River Parks, *Providence*

Begun in 1994 with the opening of Waterplace Park and the Providence Riverwalk, then greatly enhanced by the river-spanning Michael S. Van Leesten Memorial Bridge in 2019, the necklace of parks girding Providence's downtown rivers is finally complete. The opening of 195 District Park on the Providence River's west side six years ago and the addition of Point Street Park in 2023 allow unfettered strolls from the heart of downtown to the mouth of Narragansett Bay. downtownparks.org

CONNECTICUT: Weekend Away



JULIE BIDWELL

WEST HARTFORD

This cultured suburb is the foodie town no one beyond Connecticut's borders is talking about ... yet.

I've never been to Paris in the springtime, but I've been to West Hartford. Don't laugh-cry for me. Connecticut's own little slice of Europe is one of those "if you know, you know" places that many travelers overlook. It's equidistant from Boston and New York City, and you'd be hard-pressed to find a few-block area in either metropolis with the variety of cuisine that awaits in this sophisticated

suburb with 63,000 residents and *two* Whole Foods Markets. When temperatures nudge up in April, out come the sidewalk tables, the street musicians, the couples of all persuasions strolling hand in hand through West Hartford Center and adjacent Blue Back Square. Up spring the tulips, in parks with architectural features and flowering trees worthy of Impressionist paintings.

CONNECTICUT: Weekend Away

I've known West Hartford for half my life, but I sometimes forget how rich it is in Connecticut-centric shopping. In places to walk. In neighborhoods like Elmwood and Bishops Corner, with their own character and restaurant finds. How steeped it is in history.

The newest commercial district is named for local son Noah Webster's Blue Back Speller. His birthplace is one of 41 notable locations mapped on a weathered sign on South Main Street, not far from his 13-foot marble likeness, sculpted for the town by Korczak Ziolkowski of Crazy Horse Memorial fame. I feel like a slacker as I circle the statue of my dictionary idol, reading his credits: *Activist, Author, Educator, Farmer, Journalist, Patriot, Publisher, Scholar*.

There is value in slacking, though. So I've been weekending in WeHa often with the aim of setting to rest a question I hear perennially from Connecticut friends: Why doesn't anybody write about West Hartford as a destination?

Truthfully, it's with some reluctance. Can I live with longer lines for my food-truck favorites at the year-round **GastroPark**? Could it become *more* challenging to secure a table at **Coracora**, a foodie magnet since chef Macarena Ludena's Peruvian dishes earned this unassuming Elmwood eatery (it's in a former McDonald's) a 2023 James Beard Award nomination for most outstanding restaurant in the country?

And what about divulging secrets like the labyrinth concealed in the forest behind **Copper Beech Institute**, a nonreligious mindfulness-education nonprofit at Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center? It's open free to anyone. Whenever I've lost myself in its twists—aimlessly aiming for the moon gate at its center—it's been mine alone, save for the songbirds, the whistle of budding branches.

I'm reminded of the benefits of sharing when I meet my West Hartford-based friend Jeannette at **DORO Marketplace** on a sunny April morning, and we select handcrafted French-butter pastries including a filled, glazed, nut-sprinkled pistachio croissant puffy

enough to fill me all day. On the patio, dressed with lush plants from **Moscarillo's**, we chat with DORO Restaurant Group owners Dorjan and Mira Puka: Albanian immigrants who've helped internationalize West Hartford Center with their **Treva** (Italian), **Àvert** (French), and **Zohara** (Mediterranean) restaurants. As our conversation meanders from the extraordinary food scene to the uniqueness of this community—where art, education, and history are revered, businesses collaborate, and being outdoors is central to life—it's clear I can't keep WeHa under wraps.

Just where to send you, though, when in West Hartford Center alone you'll also find top-notch Afghan, American, Caribbean, Chinese, Japanese, Mexican, steak, and seafood restaurants? Jeannette and I contemplate this at celebrity-chef-owned **Sparrow Pizza Bar**, where toppings like ramps and pesto are splashed to the outer edges of crispy pies. Our debate continues at the **West Hartford Reservoirs**, where 30 miles of trails are open to walkers, runners, and cyclists. "You've made me fall in love with my town all over again," she says, as we realize for every recommendation in this guide, we have a handful more. So, visit while West Hartford's still relatively undiscovered. And please let me know if there's an extra seat at your table.

—Kim Knox Beckius

WEST HARTFORD HIGHLIGHTS

- **GastroPark**, thegastropark.com
- **DORO Marketplace**, doromkpl.com
- **Sparrow Pizza Bar**, sparrowpizzabar.com
- **Coracora**, coracora eats.com
- **DORO Restaurant Group**, dororg.com
- **Delamar West Hartford**, delamar.com
- **Elizabeth Park**, elizabethparkct.org
- **Noah Webster House**, noahwebsterhouse.org
- **Moscarillo's Garden Shoppe**, moscarillos.com

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CONNECTICUT: Editors' Picks

Eat & Drink

CHEESE SHOP

Fromage Fine Foods & Coffees, *Old Saybrook*

Old Saybrook is blessed to have this fromagerie that sports some 250 cheeses from all over the world. Owner and cheese expert Christine Chesanek (her name practically says "cheese") has been curating this wonderful collection and other gourmet specialty foods since 1992, and people come from all over the state to partake of the bounty. Fromage is also renowned for gift baskets and charcuterie for picnics and holiday celebrations. fromagefinefoods.com

CINNAMON ROLLS

The Flour Girl, *Hebron*

This country bakery serves up a sensational treat on Sunday mornings: fresh-baked, generously iced, softball-size cinnamon buns well worth the early-morning drive. Customers begin queueing up well before the 9 a.m. opening, and there's an eight-per-customer limit—far more than a family of four can consume. The icing is a homemade cream cheese recipe. Picnic tables out front and outdoor café tables in back provide seating for instant cinnamon roll gratification. theflourgirlct.com

IMMERSIVE DINING EXPERIENCE

Beauty & Essex, *Uncasville*

Like its sibling locations in New York, Vegas, and L.A., the newly opened Connecticut outpost of Beauty & Essex at Mohegan Sun is more than just a place to get a meal. Wagyu steak tartare, Japanese whiskey, and vintage Fender guitars are all on offer at this glitzy dining spot, where the visitor experience might begin with browsing the upscale pawn shop that doubles as the restaurant's entrance. From there it's on to the speakeasy Pearl Lounge and Bar, where a DJ keeps the vibe flowing, and then the bejeweled Peacock Dining Room. Shareable plates and generous entrées (including a three-pound stuffed lobster) will encourage you to linger—and maybe, just maybe, work up the courage to buy that retro Vox amplifier you've always wanted. taogroup.com/venues/beauty-essex-mohegan-sun

INLAND LOBSTER ROLL

The InishShor, *Colchester*

Owner Alex Levere was contemplating closing the doors to his struggling seasonal eatery until



AVABLU PHOTOGRAPHY

a viewer poll run by a local TV affiliate catapulted the tiny landlocked spot into the upper ranks of the state's lobster roll purveyors. The InishShor's Connecticut-style hot buttered lobster roll is rich and meaty, and it comes with fries and coleslaw—a tough combination to beat. theinishshor.com

PIZZA

Zeneli Pizzeria, *New Haven*

Owned by four Albanian brothers who arrived by way of Naples, Italy, this Wooster Street pizzeria earns rave reviews—no easy feat in a pizza-crazed city. And it's with good reason: Zeneli's Neapolitan-style pies are covered with San Marzano tomato sauce, fresh ricotta, mozzarella, burrata, and Parmesan cheeses; crowned with such toppings as garlic, shaved prosciutto, and whole leaves of basil; then baked in wood-fired ovens. The pasta dishes are fire, too. zenelipizzeria.com

ROADSIDE LUNCH STAND

Clamp's, *New Milford*

"No Sign, No Address, No Phone, Just Good Food." So states this throwback eatery that's been serving up great grub since 1939. Housed in a whitewashed shack with no indoor seating, the bare-bones operation has a cultlike following of both locals and visitors recreating in bucolic

Litchfield County. Of particular note is the burger, made from beef ground daily by a local butcher shop. A few picnic tables and benches provide outdoor seating. *Located at the intersection of Route 202 and Sawyer Hill Road; no website*

SEAFOOD BAR

Moby Dick's Oyster Bar + Grill, *West Haven*

What was once a cozy neighborhood watering hole has morphed into a lively seafood bar that serves as a gathering place for locals as well as shellfish aficionados from all over. Fresh oysters and clams on the half shell, tuna sashimi, a colossal shrimp cocktail, and lump crabmeat are available à la carte or together in the Moby Dick's "Skyscraper" seafood tower. And the mussel pot for two is a marvelous meal unto itself. mobydicks203.com

WINGS

The Bidwell Tavern, *Coventry*

Originally a way station and watering hole for weary travelers, The Bidwell Tavern saw its story begin down the street in 1822. Housed now in another character-filled 19th-century building, it has gained more recent fame for its chicken wings. Served in batches of 10, 20, or 30 wingettes and drumettes, all are deep-fried and accompanied by blue cheese dressing. There are 40 different sauces and dry rubs, so bring friends and try a bunch. thebidwelltavern.com

Stay

B&B

The Watson Boutique B&B, *Thompson*

An hour's drive from Boston or Hartford, even closer to Providence and Worcester, and just a smidge over an hour from Newport, this inn can be thought of as the bull's-eye of southern New England: a perfect home base from which to see and do so much. Yet amid a French Provincial aesthetic that carries straight through to morning's breakfast spread, you may feel content to park yourself here—especially with innkeepers so willing to design custom experiences, from champagne picnics to in-room massages. thewatsonboutiquebb.com

BOUTIQUE HOTEL

The Watershed, *Norwalk*

From the moment you enter this freshly reimagined sanctuary with botanical-garden vibes, the bustle of the surrounding coastal

CONNECTICUT: Editors' Picks

community quiets, and relaxation is the law. A window-walled and wood-paneled lounge overlooks the Norwalk River. On-site Siena Ristorante serves up mouthwatering wood-fired pizzas. A retreat-like rooftop bar might distract you from sleep in one of the newly renovated rooms, where organic teas from nearby Grace Farms Foods soothe you while supporting a good cause. Zen out with your furry friend for an additional fee. thewatershednorwalk.com

GOURMET ESCAPE

[Lost Fox Inn, Litchfield](#)

Two fox statues perched atop columns of river stones beckon travelers into a recently reimagined historic retreat, where modern comforts and unforgettable meals are overseen by old painted portraits. The spirit of the original 1740s tavern lingers in rough-hewn beams and chestnut floorboards, and guest rooms are harmoniously furnished with a blend of vintage and new. It's the Lost Fox Tavern & Restaurant, where Philippines-born chef CJ Barroso crafts a seasonal menu of New England-inspired fare, that's the strongest magnet. Every dish is made from scratch and locally focused, even the fan-favorite seeded whole-grain bread with house-cultured butter, radishes, and rosemary salt. lostfoxinn.com

HISTORY LOVER'S HOTEL

[The Abner Hotel, Litchfield](#)

A stone courthouse with a distinctive clock tower that since 1888 has been an architectural standout on the Litchfield Town Green legally changed its identity in 2024. Check into The Abner, a 20-room hotel named for Reverend Abner Reeve, and you're just a short stroll from the independent law school established in 1774 by his son, Tapping Reeve; the first of its kind in the country, it's now a museum. And so, in some ways, is this cool new place to stay, where the ultimate suite was once the judge's chambers. There's nothing stodgy here, though. The Courtroom restaurant is a convivial hub, and Verdict, the rooftop bar, will have you deliberating over which well-crafted cocktail to swizzle. theabnerhotel.com

Shop & Play

BOOKSTORE

[Montgomery & Taggart, Chester](#)

Wander through the swoon-worthy selection at Connecticut's first romance-themed bookstore,

and find the perfect happily ever after. The cottage, with its own flower-filled reading garden and a lush nature preserve as its backdrop, has a bewitching origin story: Best friends Sarah Borgnis-Tobin and Elizabeth Tucker met working at a library before curating their own dream store. Locally made artisanal goods and bookish gifts are artfully displayed on antique tables, and there are cozy sitting areas and shelves for every subgenre imaginable. Fun fact: The Little Chestnut Airbnb above the store can be rented for your own romantic rendezvous. montgomeryandtaggart.com

CHARTER FISHING

[Nightjack Sportfishing, Stonington](#)

Long Island Sound is ideal for sportfishing, and chartering a boat is the best way to go after the big ones. You and up to five friends can set out on a half-day or full-day outing with this locally owned operation. Skipper John Alves provides all the gear you'll need for fishing fun. Popular catches include striped bass, bluefish, black sea bass, fluke, scup, and tuna. nightjacksportfishing.com

FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT

[Hartford Yard Goats Baseball at Dunkin' Park, Hartford](#)

Play all! At downtown Hartford's Dunkin' Park, there are plenty of things for the whole family to do in addition to watching the city's Double-A baseball team compete. Fans can enjoy a wide variety of tasty food and beverages (Bear's Smokehouse always hits it out of the park), visit the live goats penned in the outfield bleachers, participate in fun promotions between innings, let the kids run the bases, and be dazzled by postgame fireworks on Saturday nights. yardgoatsbaseball.com

FARM STORE

[Tonn's Marketplace, Burlington](#)

Third-generation farmer Jordan Tonn and his wife, Aubri, bring 21st-century biz savvy to their burgeoning operation, which has grown by leaps since his grandfather launched a hobby farm and roadside stand. Their photo-perfect market, with a seasonally decorated antique farm truck and cute alpacas and Nigerian dwarf goats outside, is stocked with fruits and vegetables harvested from their orchards and fields that very day. The balance of the retail lineup is like a whirlwind tour of the best gourmet foods and gifts produced by Connecticut family businesses. Last summer, the Stage @ Tonn's Marketplace made its debut, and when there's live music, you can bet there'll be local food trucks. tonnsmarketplace.com

FLOWER FARM

[White Flower Farm, Morris](#)

This family-owned farm ships plants, bouquets, and gardening accoutrements far and wide. But White Flower Farm is a place, not a catalog: one where you'll be inspired by sweeping display gardens and impossibly lavish containers ... by the sheer variety of combinations of nature's materials ... and even by the simplicity of the all-white Moon Garden, a perennial border that still blooms where it was first planted and that gave this nurturing nursery its name. whiteflowerfarm.com

SUMMER THEATER

[Elm Shakespeare Company, New Haven](#)

At the end of August, Edgerton Park comes alive with nightly performances of a Shakespeare play presented on a sustainably built playhouse stage inspired by Elizabethan theater tradition. Bring a picnic and blankets or chairs to spread out in front of this impressive construction. Admission is free; donations are happily accepted. elmshakespeare.org

TEAROOM AND COCKTAIL LOUNGE

[Fable, Southington](#)

There's a mystical world in the heart of Connecticut where "romantasy" exists outside the book covers. By day, Fable's allure is its menu of more than 60 teas, served hot or iced, with or without elixirs such as lion's mane and rose. All around you are enticing gifts, from beauty potions to antiques. And there are book clubs, workshops, and classes: Make a fairy garden, perhaps, or learn to grow native plants. Then ... the weekend approaches, and night descends. Purple light beckons you to enter Underworld through a back door. Tea? No, no, no. It's time for a beautifully crafted cocktail, even if you're here for a Sip + Read. Expect some nights to be much more high-key, with live music, movie screenings, and themed parties. ctfable.com

TOUR

[Railroad Museum of New England, Thomaston](#)

It's quite the pairing: The Railroad Museum of New England and Fascia's Chocolates. Book a train departure from Thomaston featuring a rotating choice of beverages—wine, beer, spirits—and you'll sip as you learn to taste a variety of chocolates. All trains stop at Fascia's for a make-your-own experience: The treats you design can be devoured when you get back home—if you can wait that long. rmne.org; experienceyourchocolate.com

VERMONT: Weekend Away



OLIVER PARINI

SOUTHERN VERMONT

Classic Green Mountain State scenery and welcoming small towns make for a road-tripper's delight.

Vermont's twisty blacktops may not be the quickest way to get around, but they seem to have been made for that most delightful of summer pastimes, the poke-along ramble. And for serious poking along and rambling, there may be no better part of the state than its southeast corner, where the West River takes its sweet time getting to the Connecticut. Start in Brattleboro and go against the river's flow, through a

100-mile skein of villages, covered bridges, state parks, and attractions steeped in Green Mountain tradition.

BRATTLEBORO TO TOWNSHEND

Brattleboro is a town bustling with bookstores, ethnic restaurants, and galleries. Pottery, glass, fiber art, furniture, and an upstairs devoted to fine art and photography make **Vermont Artisan Designs** a must-stop before heading out of town. Pop into **Mocha Joe's Café** for coffee and locally baked treats, browse **Everyone's Books**, and maybe fatten your CD and vinyl collection at **Turn It Up!**

Leave town on Route 30, which hugs the West River and passes a right turn for the 1872 **West Dummerston Covered Bridge**. The first village you'll hit is Newfane, the shire town of Windham County. It clusters sedately around a classic town green dominated by the Greek Revival **Windham County Courthouse**. The elegant white building to the rear of the courthouse is the **Four Columns Inn**; its restaurant, **Andrea's Table**, features a farm-to-table menu. Linger long enough at the huge **Newfane Flea and Farmers Market** up the road, and getting a table at Andrea's when it opens for dinner might be doable.

Another venerable covered bridge, the **Scott Covered Bridge**, spans the West River just past the village of Townshend. Just ahead is a different sort of span: the narrow steel drive across the Townshend Dam, leading to a recreation area with picnic tables and a sandy swimming beach on **Townshend Lake**.

TOWNSHEND TO WESTON

Route 30 now joins Route 100 and continues north. Tiny Jamaica stands at the threshold of the vast Green Mountain National Forest and gives its name to **Jamaica State Park**, tucked along the West River. Trails lead to Ball Mountain Lake and to Hamilton Falls, an impressive series of pools and cataracts.

Leave Route 30 when 100 breaks off and heads up to Londonderry, where the gallery of **D. Lasser Ceramics** spills onto the lawn in a riot of color. Daniel Lasser and

VERMONT: Weekend Away

his artisans craft a brightly expressive line of tableware, sculptures, and garden ceramics in a vivid palette that makes most pottery look drab.

Ahead lies Weston, a hill town whose fame long surpassed its size because of two landmark institutions: the **Weston Playhouse** and **The Vermont Country Store**. Founded in 1946, The Vermont Country Store still occupies its original premises in Weston, purveying country clothing, practical housewares, hard-to-find products, Vermont foods, and too much more to mention. Across the town green, the Weston Playhouse has presented summer stock since 1937.

WESTON TO ROCKINGHAM

At Weston, the route leaves the West River and Route 100 behind, taking Chester Mountain Road onto Route 11. That leads you to Chester, where Scottish masons long ago created a “stone village” that oddly stands apart in a state known for granite quarrying, but where wood for building houses was always closer at hand. Chester’s village green stretches into an elongated mall, accommodating inns and cafés. Here, **Inn Victoria** and the **Fullerton Inn** are possible overnight choices, the first for its Victorian luxe and the second for feeling more like a small country hotel, which it’s always been. Spending the night or not, it’s pleasant to enjoy lunch on the Fullerton’s broad veranda.

From Chester, head south on Route 35 to Grafton, a town reclaimed from obscurity by a forward-thinking foundation ... and by one of Vermont’s oldest artisan food traditions. During the 1960s, the Windham Foundation set about the task of remaking the entire town of Grafton into the epitome of a New England village. The centerpiece of the project is the foundation-owned **Grafton Inn**, occupying a grand colonnaded structure built as a hostelry in 1801. Dine here at the 1801 Tavern, or the informal Phelps Barn Pub. Also under the Windham Foundation umbrella is the **Grafton Village Cheese Company**, crafters of cheddar using milk from small local farms since 1892. Its cheeses (the two-year-aged is ambrosial) are for sale at **MKT: Grafton**, a block from the inn.

Next, wander down Route 121 along Saxtons River to the town named after it, and jog north via Pleasant Street and Rockingham Hill Road to Rockingham, for a look at one of Vermont’s oldest unchanged buildings: the chastely beautiful **Rockingham Meeting House**, erected in 1787 to serve as both a place of worship and a center of civic life. In all the years since, it’s never been altered, inside or out. The building is open to visitors daily, and there’s no more serene a spot in Vermont’s built environment.

ROCKINGHAM TO PUTNEY

South along Route 5 at Bellows Falls, Vermonters’ penchant for revival and reuse comes across in an old railroad and canal town that’s been stylishly snapped back from the doldrums—in this case, not by a foundation but by the grit and imagination of local artists and entrepreneurs.

The **Windham Antique Center** is a treasure trove at the heart of Bellows Falls. The center is a small town in itself, a warren of rooms filled with vintage furniture, porcelain, jewelry, lamps, and restoration hardware—and an unexpected sideline, a natural history collection that includes geodes bursting with color. Around the corner, on a quaint, narrow alley leading down to the river, creators of present-day art and artisanship work and display at **River Artisans Cooperative** and the **Canal Street Art Gallery**. It’s likely they’ll be having a cup of joe right nearby, at the cozy **Rockingham Roasters** or **Flat Iron Cooperative**.

You’re almost back in Brattleboro now. But as you drive south through Putney on Route 5—especially if there are little voices entreating you from the back seat—you can’t miss **Santa’s Land**, an old-school roadside attraction that’s been here since 1957. Every weekend from late July through Christmas, this is the place to meet Santa and his elves, ride a Christmas-themed train and carousel, play a merry game of mini golf, and have a hot dog and cocoa. It’s not high-tech, but it’s good old-fashioned fun ... like a summer drive in Vermont. —*Bill Scheller*

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VERMONT: Editors' Picks

Eat & Drink

ARTISAN CHOCOLATES

Tavernier Chocolates, Brattleboro

Tavernier combines fine chocolate from Ecuadorian cacao trees with locally sourced and endlessly inventive ingredients—think wild peppermint, spruce needles, morel mushrooms, even slow-cured organic garlic. Along with bars and boxed individual bonbons, specialties include drinking chocolate and “chocolate charcuterie,” a sliceable pâté with flavors ranging from miso to maple, chèvre to lavender. tavernierchocolates.com

DINER

The Country Girl Diner, Chester

Everything seems to take on a relaxed, mid-20th-century feel when you chow down on a towering Texas burger heaped with onion rings, a stack of plate-size pancakes, or a slab of one of co-owner Jess Holmes's peanut butter pies. She uses Vermont eggs, Cabot butter, and local maple syrup in the kitchen at this beautifully preserved diner, a 1944 Silk City classic. countrygirldiner.com

DRIVE-IN RESTAURANT

A&W, Middlebury

No, the servers don't roller-skate to your car. But they do take your order there, and ferry your tray right to the rolled-down window of your—well, probably not a '59 Chevy. Burgers, fries, hand-breaded chicken tenders, Coney dogs, and, of course, that famous frosty-mug-taste root beer are all featured at this veritable museum of delicious roadside eats. awrestaurants.com/locations-list/vt

FARM-TO-TABLE DINING

Maple Soul, Rochester

Better to call it “farmer-to-table”: When dinner service gets under way at this comfortably elegant eatery in a former late-1800s home, the patrons tucking into executive chef Jim Huntington's pitch-perfect cornbread, baby-back ribs, and other down-home fare might include the very folks who provided the ingredients. Not only does Maple Soul partner with 30-plus local farmers and producers, says general manager Jen Huntington, but “we always welcome them here to see what we're doing with their product, to be part of the conversation.”



CLARE BARBOZA

Similarly, the Huntingtons make a point of visiting their partners' operations, which include their sole chicken provider, Happy Bird in Isle La Motte, and regular microgreens supplier Uphill Farm, right in Rochester. The result is a New England-meets-North Carolina menu with a lot of maple, a lot of soul, and a lot of integrity ... which means a lot of fans, too, so reservations are strongly advised. maplesoulvt.com

ITALIAN GROCERY

AR Market, Barre

Vermont's most historically Italian city has the Italian market it deserves. With its initials representing *alimentari* (groceries) and Roscini (a family surname of Italian-born owner Peter Colman), AR Market offers shelves packed with imported Di Martino and Rustichella pastas, San Marzano tomatoes grown in Campania's volcanic soil, almond cantucci and amaretti, fine olive oils, and much more. Colman's other business, Vermont Salumi, smokes and cures on-site, and there's a wood-fired pizzeria next door. armarketvt.com

LOCAVORE BUTCHER SHOP

Roma's Butchery, South Royalton

The village meat market is back, thanks to master butcher Elizabeth Roma and her custom-cut, head-to-tail butcher shop. Drawing on more

than a dozen farms within a 25-mile radius, Roma does pork, lamb, poultry, and grass-fed beef in a variety of cuts. She makes her own sausage, too, and offers handcrafted salumi from Waitfield's Babette's Table. romasbutchery.net

SMALL PLATES

Frankie's, Burlington

Hen of the Wood alums Jordan Ware and Cindi Kozak have brought new energy to the space formerly occupied by the late-lamented Penny Cluse Café, creating an ever-changing menu where small plates—perhaps littleneck clams with charred-scallion butter and house focaccia, or pork croquettes with pickled rhubarb sauce—are the stars. Just don't call them starters: Double up, and that steak entrée might have to wait for next time. frankiesvt.com

WINERY

Whaleback Vineyard, Poultney

A restored 19th-century barn near the waters of Lake Saint Catherine is the home base for this Stone Valley winery. Whaleback's grapevines number more than 6,000 plants across nine beautiful acres, all helping to produce a range of only-in-the-Green-Mountain-State favorites, from the Vermont Apple Blend fruit wine to Whaleback's signature white, Moonlight in Vermont. Drink up the setting in the farm's

VERMONT: Editors' Picks

tasting room, set inside a Colonial farmhouse. [whalebackvineyard.com](#)

Stay

AFFORDABLE OVERNIGHT

[COHO Inn & Motor Lodge, Weston](#)

While the former Colonial House Inn is still a stopover on the long-standing Vermont Inn-to-Inn Walking Tour, owners Ali and Lane Knaack have been busy forging their own path since taking over in May 2024: rebranding, refreshing, and renovating (the last part being ongoing, with the goal of bringing AC units and other upgrades to the COHO's midcentury motel annex). The couple's personal touch can be seen, too, in the wealth of snowboarding books and memorabilia on hand (Lane is a former pro) and the curated offerings of local beer, wine, and charcuterie; outside are Ali's flower beds, which have been known to yield fresh-cut blooms for the main inn and dining room. [cohoinn.com](#)

HISTORIC INN

[The Tillerman, Bristol](#)

A rambling 1790s structure and seven cheery, gable-ceilinged guest rooms are the historic part, while the food and drink are thoroughly modern. The seasonally changing menu relies on local farms, and mozzarella is made in-house. Best seats? The dining rooms are lovely, but sip a Vermont brew or craft cocktail in the clubby parlor, then amble over to the bar for a distinctively garnished pizza—and taste why The Tillerman earned a 2024 *Yankee Food Award* for its pies. [thetillermanvt.com](#)

INN CUISINE

[Derby Line Village Inn, Derby Line](#)

A white mansion located less than a mile from the Canadian border is the domain of Austrian chef-owner Fritz Halbedl, whose menu showcases his native fare—schnitzel in a choice of traditional preparations, sauerbraten, spaetzle, and the sweet soufflé known as Salzburger nockerl—plus a selection of steak, pasta, and seafood dishes, and Austrian wines. Upstairs are five sumptuously furnished guest rooms; the "Majesty" is our favorite. [derbylinevillageinn.com](#)

ISLAND CAMPING

[Burton Island State Park, St. Albans](#)

Surrounded by the waters of Lake Champlain

but just a 10-minute passenger ferry ride from companion state park Kill Kare, Burton Island offers tent sites, lean-tos, and three cabins. There's a surprisingly cosmopolitan feel here, as the park is frequented by Quebec boaters who use its marina and enjoy the Burton Island Bistro, with its wine selection and homemade omelets. [vtstateparks.com/burton.html](#)

RUSTIC RETREAT

[Quimby Country, Averill](#)

Tucked between Forest and Big Averill lakes—and set deep in an early 1900s North Woods dreamscape—the 19 cozy cottages at Quimby Country have welcomed generations of rustication families. High-summer accommodations include three hearty meals a day in the lodge; in shoulder seasons, there's a B&B plan. All cottages have woodstoves, and some have full kitchens, too. [quimbycountry.com](#)

Shop & Play

FAMILY ATTRACTION

[Great Vermont Corn Maze, Danville](#)

Polite Vermonters won't tell you to get lost—unless they're talking about New England's largest and most challenging corn maze, 24 acres of frustrating fun that's taken ears and ears to create. A new design takes shape each season, which begins in late July when the stalks grow tall and runs through mid-October. Afraid you'll never get out? Try the "Scenic Maze" route, which comes with directions. [vermontcornmaze.com](#)

MODERATE HIKE

[Jerusalem Trail, Starksboro](#)

The 2.4-mile Jerusalem Trail starts off gently, at Jim Dwire Road, and remains deceptively easy until you duck under a sap line and cross a logging road. Watch for blue blazes as you scramble over rocks to meet the Long Trail. Turn left, and it's a short hike down to the Green Mountain Club's Glen Ellen Lodge. Take a right, and in another 1.8 miles you'll be atop 4,083-foot Mount Ellen. [greenmountainclub.org](#)

MOUNTAIN BIKING

[Millstone Trails, Barre](#)

In a state with serious trail-riding cred, Barre's former quarry lands are a haven for newbies and experienced pros alike. The rocky playground boasts more than 30 miles of trails across 1,500

acres of ever-changing terrain. Cruise into the season along the large, gentle loops in the Barre Town Forest or take on the steeper climbs of Millstone Hill and its "Gnome Man's Land," whose trails live up to names like Roller Coaster, Vortex, and Screaming Demon. Fascinating quarry relics and scenic overlooks are sprinkled throughout (don't miss the dramatic east-facing Sunrise Lookout, which sits atop the plunging rock walls of an abandoned quarry). [millstonetrails.org](#)

OUTDOOR FOOTWEAR

[Farm-Way, Bradford](#)

Though muck boots remain a fixture at this haven for everything outdoorsy, the offerings venture way off the farm: from sandals and sneakers to hiking boots and, yes, clogs. Brands include Merrell, Blundstone, Keen, OluKai, and even exquisitely crafted hikers made by Italy's Zamberlan. Inventory runs deep for men, women, and kids, and there's plenty of staff around to help with try-ons. [vermontgear.com](#)

PERFORMING ARTS VENUE

[Chandler Center for the Arts, Randolph](#)

When Upper Valley Baroque artistic director Filippo Ciabatti first visited the Chandler, he clapped his hands in the middle of the hall to get a sense of the acoustics. He was immediately impressed, as are the audiences at this 1907 gem, a gift of Randolph native Albert Chandler. Along with concerts in varied genres, the Chandler hosts theater and dance (the Grand Kyiv Ballet was a recent visitor), and Randolph's late-summer New World Festival is a perennial favorite. [chandler-arts.org](#)

RETAIL HUB

[The Essex Experience, Essex](#)

Fast food and fast fashion, begone. At this former outlet mall, a Main Street vibe pulses through 20-plus independent shops and restaurants that include the state's largest collection of Vermont art and crafts (ArtHound Gallery) and a small-batch distillery and brewery with a James Beard semifinalist in the kitchen (Black Flannel and Christian Kruse, respectively). Also local-leaning are the music and events at the Double E cultural hub, where a rescued 1700s barn serves as an outdoor stage. Even that shopping-mall staple, the cineplex (Essex Cinemas), channels the kind of small-town theater where blockbusters share billing with classic, indie, and international films. [essexresort.com/essex-experience-vermont](#)