

weekend getaways

Two by car and two by air.

Pack your bags.

by Theresa Gawlas Medoff

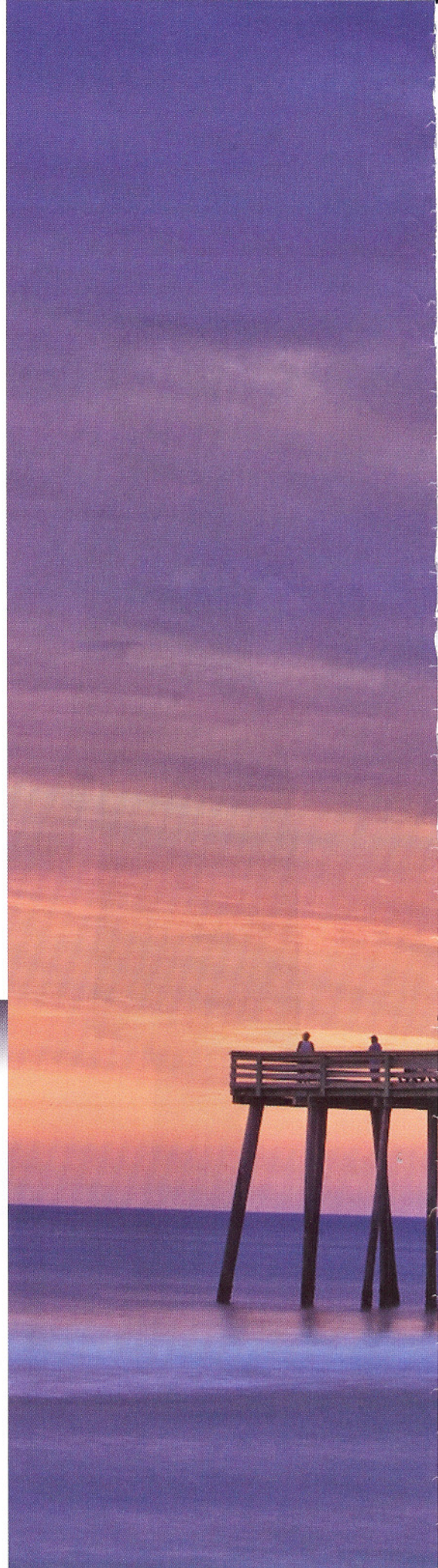


The Outer Banks, North Carolina

Imagine hang-gliding down the steep sand dunes of Jockey's Ridge State Park on North Carolina's Outer Banks, a mere six miles from the spot where the Wright Brothers made their inaugural flight—picturesque Roanoke Sound on the west, and on the east, the Atlantic Ocean. All you need is one hour of ground school instruction. Kitty Hawk Kites will have you out on the dunes, wafting 5 to 15 feet above the sand.

The Outer Banks might be most famous for its beaches, but it's also a fantastic place to get out and get active with sports like hang gliding, kiteboarding, kayaking and horseback riding.

Cape Hatteras is one of the best places on the East Coast for kiteboarding. This June it's hosting for the first time the Triple S Invitational, which attracts some of the world's best kiteboarders. While the region's wind and



Sunrise at the Kitty Hawk Pier,
which is part of the Hilton Garden Inn
Kitty Hawk property.





Top: Riding horseback at Cape Hatteras National Seashore. Below: Kayaking on the salt marshes of Pamlico Sound.

waves beckon the pros, it also happens to be a great place for newbies.

With 390 square miles of calm, waist-high waters, Pamlico Sound is like a vast kiddie pool. And thanks to improvements in equipment in the past five years, kiteboarding is more accessible than ever. In a day-long lesson, the staff at Kitty Hawk Kites can teach newcomers what they need to know to be up and kiteboarding by afternoon.

Kayaking is a sport that most anyone can do, and the Outer Banks offers a variety of environments in which to do it. There's ocean kayaking for the more experienced, as well as calmer water kayaking



on Pamlico, Currituck and Roanoke sounds. Birdwatchers will enjoy kayaking the saltwater marshes of Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge, a major resting area for many types of migrating birds. More than 365 species have been identified in the refuge since it opened in the 1930s, says

Aaron Tuell of the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau. For a greater variety of animal species, consider a short drive to the mainland to kayak in the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. Yes, you might see alligators there, as well as birds, deer and maybe even a black bear. Outfitters throughout the Outer Banks rent kayaks and offer guided tours.

There's something so romantic about riding horses on the beach, and when the beach is as wild as that on the Cape Hatteras National Seashore, it's even better. Equine Adventures offers a two-hour horseback riding tour during early mornings and evenings Monday through Saturday. The trip starts with a 45-minute ride through the Outer Banks' only maritime forest and follows a series of trails to the beach, where riders are set free to enjoy surfside riding at their own ability for half an hour before the return trip through the woods.

There are plenty of other sports for active types to enjoy on the Outer Banks, too, including stand-up paddle boarding, surfing, wind-surfing, biking, hiking, boating and scuba diving. (outerbanks.org)

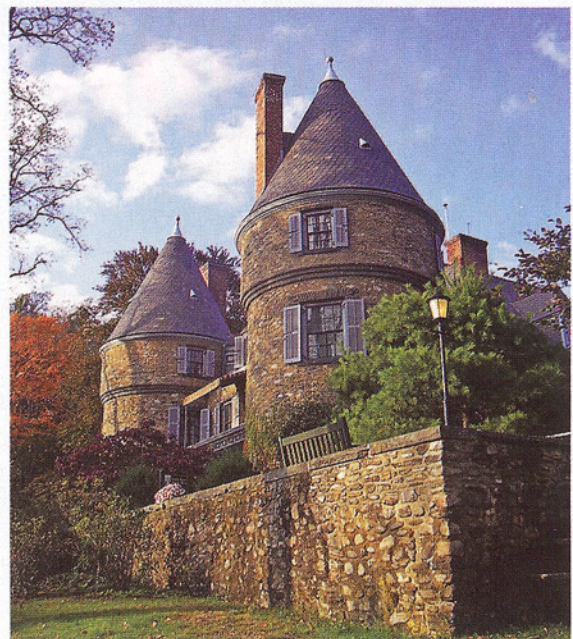


The Pocono Mountains

If "luxury Pocono Mountain vacation" sounds oxymoronic, you haven't been keeping up with developments in Northeast Pennsylvania's outdoor playground. Sure, there are still rustic motels by a lake throughout the area, and a few of those kitschy couples resorts are hanging in there, but those who know where to look will also find fine dining, world-class spas and distinctive small hotels.

The Hotel Fauchere in the town of Milford, near the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, is the perfect home base for a pampering weekend. The Gilded Age hotel once hosted luminaries such as Teddy Roosevelt, Mae West, Babe Ruth and Andrew Carnegie. Restored in 2006 to its former glory and modernized with touches like radiant floor heat and iPod docking stations, the Relais & Chateaux hotel has 16 elegant rooms with hardwood floors, marble bathrooms and comfy bedding.

After browsing Milford's boutiques and galleries, weekenders can head to nearby Grey Towers to tour the French chateau-style mansion (a National Historic Landmark) that





was once the home of Gifford Pinchot, first chief of the U.S. Forest Service and a two-term governor of Pennsylvania. The dramatic entrance hall and dark wood interior are impressive, but the real reasons to visit the home are the dramatic exterior spaces, including the wisteria-covered outdoor dining room where food was served on wooden platters that floated on a water-filled table.

For dinner, the chef-owned, farm-to-table restaurant at the Settlers Inn in nearby Hawley offers locally raised chicken or lamb accompanied by an impressive selection of wines that, year after year, earn the inn the Wine Spectator Award of Excellence. The inn is a 1927 mission-style lodge with Arts and Crafts decor throughout. A perfect evening ends back at the Hotel Fauchere, where the staff will build a fire in the outdoor pit for any guest who asks. The marshmallows are ready for roasting.

The following day should be devoted



Clockwise from left: Grey Towers, Lodge at Woodloch and the Hotel Fauchere

to pampering at the Lodge at Woodloch, a six-year-old spa that's been named the No. 6 destination spa in the world by Travel & Leisure magazine.

A day spa package, in addition to chosen spa treatments, gives guests access to select fitness classes and all the spa facilities and lunch in the Treetop restaurant. (poconos.org)



From top: Fonhill, the Moravian Pottery & Tile Works, cigar store statues at the Mercer Museum



Discover Doylestown

Henry Chapman Mercer's neighbors in Doylestown, Pa., must have been intrigued by the construction that went on from 1908 to 1912 at the bachelor's property on the edge of town. This Renaissance man—known as an archaeologist, antiquarian, artisan and inveterate collector of pre-industrial tools—was building a 44-room castle completely of hand-mixed, poured concrete and equipping the home, which he called Fonhill, with the latest amenities, like indoor plumbing, radiators and electricity.

A guided tour of the National Historic Landmark is a highlight of any visit to the Bucks County town. Fonhill is a wonderment of small rooms, hallways and staircases (32 of them). What makes the home extraordinary, however, are the tiles that adorn the ceilings, floors, pillars and walls—tiles of Mercer's creation and those he collected on expeditions to Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

As a supplement to the Fonhill tour, visitors can stop at the Moravian Pottery & Tile Works down the hill from the castle. Mercer was a proponent of the Arts and Crafts movement. He found the pottery to produce handmade tiles from locally procured clay. The Tile Works is now run by Bucks County as a working history museum, where visitors can see artisans reproduce Mercer-designed tiles.

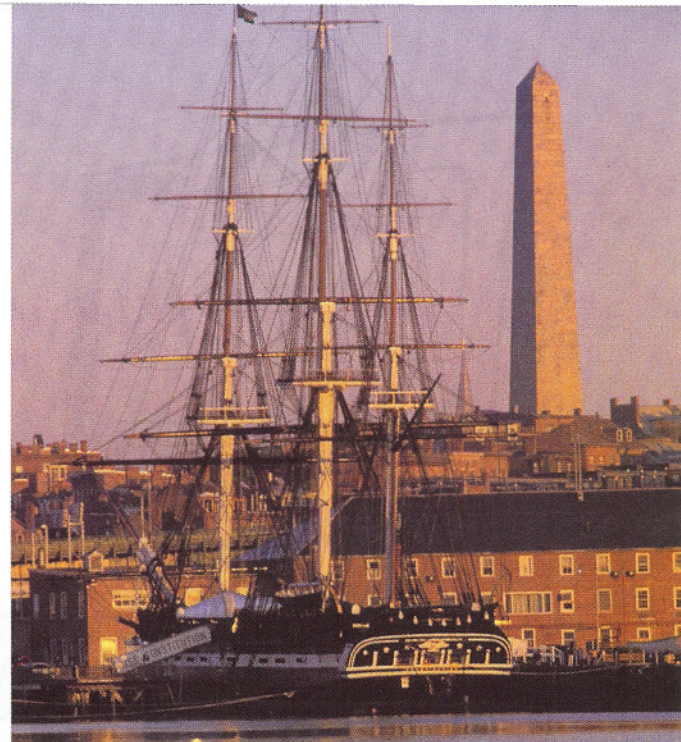
Mercer built another concrete castle to exhibit his collection of tools. It's in the center of Doylestown. Every kind of tool, from butter churns to whaling tools to a Conestoga wagon, is displayed throughout the six-story, maze-like Mercer Museum, hanging haphazardly from the ceiling and preserved in massed collections in glassed-in alcoves, just the way Mercer arranged them a century ago.

The regional art museum, located next to the Mercer Museum, is named for another native son, writer James A. Michener. The James A. Michener Museum of Art will host "Offering of the Angels: Treasures from the Uffizi" through Aug. 11.

Doylestown also offers numerous restaurant and upscale shops clustered on Main Street and State Street. There's also a community-based movie theater downtown, the County Theater, which shows independent, art and foreign films.

Good options for dining include Chambers 19 Bistro, Bobby Simone's or the Freight House, which is near the train station. (visitbuckscounty.org.)

FONTHILL PHOTOGRAPH: REFLECTIONS BY RUTH PHOTOGRAPHY



Clockwise from left: The Rose Kennedy Greenway, the U.S.S. Constitution in Boston Harbor, Fenway Park



Boston

From the brick sidewalks of Beacon Hill to the wide boulevards of Back Bay, Boston, Mass., has always been a walkable city. Now that the Rose Kennedy Greenway is open, there are walkable stretches from the North End to South Station—along land once occupied by highway. With the significant progress being made on the 47-mile HarborWalk, new areas of the city are becoming more pedestrian-friendly.

In most cities the waterfront is one of its most alluring destinations, but before Boston's Big Dig, the massive roadwork project that removed the elevated Central Artery and replaced it with a tunnel, Boston's harbor front was effectively cut off from prime

tourist spots like Faneuil Hall. Now it's a pleasant stroll from the popular marketplace to destinations like Long Wharf, where boats depart for cruises of the harbor and afternoon whale-watching tours, and the waterfront restaurant of the South End's newly opened Liberty Wharf. By the end of June there will be another new waterfront destination: two new replicas of the Boston Tea Party ships and a technologically advanced, interactive museum to go along with them.

With the opening of a new Harbor Islands visitors center on the Rose Kennedy Greenway, it's easier than ever to get to Georges or Spectacle islands, part of the group of 34

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islands and peninsulas that make up the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreational Area. Spectacle Island has a swimming beach, five miles of walking trails and a café. The main attraction on Georges Island, aside from the wildlife and natural scenery, is a Civil War-era fort that offers costumed interpretation and living history demonstrations. From Georges you can take another ferry to several more rustic islands.




Swan boats in Boston Common

Late spring and summer are the best seasons for enjoying historic green spaces like Boston Common, the oldest park in the country and once a place to graze cattle, and the 24-acre Public Garden, home to the swan boats that have been operating for more than 130 years—under the same family's ownership.

Another favorite, Fenway Park, celebrates its centennial this year. Guided tours of the beloved Red Sox ballpark and its famous Green Monster are offered daily.

Summer's also a great time to walk the Freedom Trail, the 2.5-mile path marked by a red stripe that connects 16 stopping points related to the Revolutionary War, including the Old North Church of Paul Revere fame. In recent years Boston's most famous walking tour has been joined by a host of other guided tours, including a Pirates and Patriots maritime history tour of the waterfront and food tours of city neighborhoods like the North End's Little Italy.

Boston has another picturesque waterfront as well—the Charles River Esplanade, a three-mile-long park along the river. It's the perfect place to take a picnic dinner and catch one of the free concerts that are offered throughout the summer at the park's outdoor performance stage, the Hatch Shell. (*BostonUSA.com.*) 

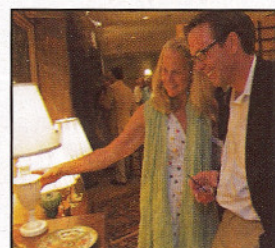
Brandywine River Museum ANTIQUES SHOW May 26 - 28



Fine antiques from 31 nationally-known dealers

Preview Reception

Friday, May 25, 6 to 9 p.m. \$125



Breakfast and Tour

Saturday, May 26, at 9 a.m. \$25

*Pierced, Punched, Painted:
Decorated Tinware from Winterthur*

Dealer Booth Talks

Sunday, May 27 & Monday, May 28
10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Show Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

\$15 admission

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