







SKIP THE CROWDS  
AT THESE SIX  
SECLUDED GETAWAYS

# SMALL TOWN SPLENDOR

FALL  
TRAVEL

BY MARTY LEGRAND

**FALL GIVES US SCORES OF REASONS** to embrace it. The days are cooler and nights more cuddle-worthy. It's a time for homecomings, pumpkin patches, and corn mazes. It's when weekends beckon you to pick apples, visit vineyards, and take leisurely hikes through fiery-colored forests.

The only hitch, hon, is that you aren't alone. An army of autumn lovers flocks to favorite destinations this time of year. One solution? Think small. As in tiny towns off well-beaten paths. Places celebrated for their singularity, friendliness, and reliably good eats while also possessing the creature comforts and amenities travelers crave.

We suggest six such teensy escape pods for your consideration, all within a few hours' drive of Charm City and, hopefully, devoid of crowds. But shhhh—don't overshare them on social media.

PARK PROWLING<sup>1/5</sup>  
LEAF PEEPING<sup>2/5</sup>  
PUMPKIN HEAVING<sup>3/5</sup>  
IN HAPPY VALLEY

# BELLEFONTE PA

EVERYONE KNOWS STATE COLLEGE, Pennsylvania, home of Penn State University. Not everyone, however, knows about neighboring Bellefonte, a wellspring of industry, wealth, and political power since before the school even existed. Still the seat of Centre County government, overlooked Bellefonte is being rediscovered by those who love its revived downtown, Gilded Age grandeur, and wild mountain setting in the heart of “Happy Valley.”

**BEST BETS:** Bellefonte’s namesake “beautiful fountain.” An 1889 train station turned visitors’ center. A brick promenade, a scenic walking route, iconic monuments, and a sculpture garden. You’ll find them all in Talleyrand Park, the town’s lush, vibrant center. The clear, cool Spring Creek—a renowned trout stream—tumbles over a spillway and ripples through the park. Downstream at Sunnyside Paddling Park, watch kayakers train for competition on a specially designed slalom course.

Back on land, take Local Historia’s guided and self-guided tours to learn about Bellefonte’s 19th-century architecture, much of which has been preserved, plus the town’s iron-making heydays, its Underground Railroad connection, and famous citizens, including seven governors and one trail-blazing female architect. And don’t miss the Bellefonte Art Museum, which showcases and sells local artworks and features unique local history exhibits.

Also check out reborn ex-industrial sites. A former gristmill, Gamble Mill features a farm-to-table restaurant, craft cocktail bar, the boutique Inn at Gamble Mill, and the Speakeasy, a special events venue. At Titan Park, an old metal factory now houses a restaurant, market, and trio of spirits purveyors: Axemann Brewery, Mad McIntosh Cider, and Witches’ Hollow Winery.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Talleyrand Park; Bellefonte Art Museum; Local Historia Tours.

**EAT:** Get a breakfast bowl or overstuffed sub at Bonfatto’s Italian Market and Corner Café, a Bellefonte institution. Four Ways Pub & Eatery serves mighty tasty smashburgers along with comfort classics like grilled cheese sandwiches with house-made tomato soup.

Explore: Fifteen minutes from town, Bald Eagle State Park offers excellent hiking, biking, and lodging at The Nature Inn, an eco-lodge overlooking the lake. In late October, though, beware large airborne squash when Punkin’ Chunkin’ contestants launch pumpkins lakeward from medieval-esque catapults. Departing from Bellefonte Train

Station at Talleyrand Park, the Bellefonte Historical Railroad Society’s vintage rail cars run fall foliage excursions and trips to Eagle Iron Works and Curtin Village, a 19th-century iron plantation.

**STAY:** Several of Bellefonte’s Gilded Age mansions welcome guests. Stay in splendor at Our Fair Lady B&B, whose owners named their inn—and several of its rooms—in honor of the famous Lerner and Loewe musical through which they met as high-school students.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: CARLA CIRIO; COURTESY OF THE BELLEFONTE ART MUSEUM/LORI FISHER; COURTESY OF LOCAL HISTORIA



SHOPPING AND SIPPING NEAR THE SEASHORE  
**MD**  
**BERLIN**

**IT'S BEEN 10 YEARS SINCE** *BUDGET Travel* magazine crowned this charming Worcester County community “America’s Coolest Small Town.” More accolades followed, from Oprah to *Esquire* to BuzzFeed. Still, Berlin retains its homespun-ness—annual bathtub races and a peach festival are still big deals—while also welcoming a modern-hospitality business boom. Walkable and lovingly restored, the historic downtown offers scads of browsable boutiques, art galleries, and a Sunday farmers market through the end of the month. Later, sip a spell at a craft brewery or winery.

**BEST BETS:** Shop Fathom & Co. for fashionable women’s clothing, and Viking Tree for brawny menswear. Pick up a weekend read at The Greyhound, an indie bookstore named for the owners’ racetrack-rescued pet, or a potted plant from Eastern Woodland. Try primo olive oils at Una Bella Salute, plus house-made pickles and piquant hot sauces at Gilbert’s Provisions. Don’t miss The Globe, a former silent movie house turned gastropub and live performance hall, or the delightful Mermaid Museum in the repurposed Odd Fellows building. The latter explores the folklore of these mythic creatures, and even boasts one of P. T. Barnum’s taxidermied half-monkey, half-fish “Feejee Mermaids.”

**EAT:** Sample irresistible confections like Baked Dessert Cafe’s peach dumplings (Berlin’s official dessert) or Mandala Pies’ “Old Farmers Almanac,” a three-pound apple pie with a cinnamon-roll crust. For lunch or dinner, Blacksmith

serves farm-to-table fare with regional panache (Bánh mì with scrapple anyone?).

**IMBIBE:** It’s easy to sip your favorite tipples on this speck of the Eastern Shore. At Burley Oak Brewing Company, founded by Bryan Brushmiller of Essex, quaff a house IPA in the beer garden. The newest neighborhood brewer is Berlin Beer Company, scheduled to open around press time in a former feed store. Meanwhile, savor small-batch spirits at Forgotten 50 Distilling, with cocktails like the “Baltimore,” a Marylander’s Manhattan featuring Baltimore Spirits Company’s rye whiskey. Also enjoy one of The Buzz Meadery’s meads or mead-cider blends, fermented from local apples and pears. Or even relish an afternoon of wine and wildflowers at Windmill Creek Vineyard & Winery, a historic family farm in an incomparably pastoral setting.

**STAY:** The Inn Berlin, the town’s newest B&B, offers upscale amenities and hip décor in a historic farmhouse that’s an easy walk from town.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF BLACKSMITH’S RESTAURANT; JUSTINE ZECHIN; COURTESY OF THE GREYHOUND BOOKSTORE; COURTESY OF BAKED DESSERT CAFE & GALLERY; NATALIE DEHART; COURTESY OF THE INN BERLIN; BRANDY BURST



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT:** Greyhound Bookstore; Baked Dessert Cafe; The Inn Berlin; Blacksmith restaurant’s delicious fare.





BEACHING <sup>2</sup>/<sub>5</sub> BIKING <sup>2</sup>/<sub>5</sub> AND BIRDING  
BY DELAWARE BAY DE

# LEWES

**LEWES, AT THE MOUTH OF DELAWARE** Bay, on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean, has endured a tumultuous past: short-lived Dutch settlement, pirate hideout, 1813 British naval target, ship graveyard, World War II defense battery. Today, it's a place of refuge where the shop-lined streets are tranquil and the resplendent harbor holds only harmless fishing boats, yachts, and a ferry that churns back and forth to New Jersey. It's an ideal offseason base for exploring coastal Delaware's lesser-known beaches and byways.

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**BEST BETS:** Cape Henlopen State Park is the nexus for biking and hiking trails—the most scenic being Gordons Pond Trail, offering Instagram-worthy views of the Atlantic. Birders, take note: In fall, the park's hawk watch tallies thousands of migrating raptors. And while there are both park and town beaches, be sure to seek out more secluded sands, too. Two lie to the north between Lewes and Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge, another birders' paradise, or the northern Beach Plum Island Nature Preserve. Better known but equally isolated, Broadkill Beach, a horseshoe crab sanctuary, offers miles of shoreline for beachcombing, fishing, and bonfires. Forgot bug spray or water? The Broadkill Store has you covered, plus breakfast and lunch.

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**EAT:** It's fall, so make like a Marylander and go all in for oysters. At Lewes Oyster

House, a classy nod to old seafood houses, eat them raw, roasted, and charbroiled. Also enjoy bivalves, burgers, and pumpkin ales at Big Oyster Brewery. Just outside of town, The Station on Kings has a bakery and café worth visiting for seasonal fare.

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**BROWSE:** Lewes' tiny downtown abounds with boutiques. Pamper your pets with gifts from P.U.P.S. of Lewes, where there's often a friendly canine in residence. As a child, Michele Buckler, the owner of Sand N Stones gift and nature shop, loved to collect river rocks at her grandparents' farm in Upperco; now, she sells her own wire-wrapped jewelry (including gems and sea glass), plus local field guides and holistic products. Shop for vintage vinyl at The Vintage Underground. Get a cup of joe at Notting Hill Coffee Roastery and try resisting house-baked goodies like their Ooey Gooeys. Don't miss the region-

THIS SPREAD, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: SHUTTERSTOCK (3); COURTESY OF LEWES OYSTER HOUSE/MEGHAN STEELE/HEARTBEAT BRANDING; WIKIMEDIA COMMONS; SHUTTERSTOCK; COURTESY OF THE VINTAGE UNDERGROUND





ally renowned Historic Lewes Farmers Market on Saturdays through November 23.

**STAY:** Based on your druthers, book overnight digs along the Lewes-Rehoboth canal. The boutique Hotel Blue is a lap of luxury with in-room fireplaces and an indoor sauna. The Dogfish Inn, a campy retro motel, offers e-bike rentals and bike tours led by beer-schlepping sherpas, all tied to the Dogfish Head Brewery, based just up the road.

*THIS SPREAD, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:* Cape Henlopen State Park Gordon Pond Trail; Breakwater Lighthouse; the Lightship Overfalls Museum; Lewes Oyster House; the Zwaanendael Museum; Prime Hook; The Vintage Underground.











SAMPLING THE  
SHENANDOAH VALLEY

# MOUNT JACKSON VA

**WITH MATCHLESS MOUNTAIN VIEWS**, small Shenandoah Valley towns—such as Strasburg, Woodstock, Edinburg, New Market, and Mount Jackson, to name a few—are like potato chips to leaf peepers traveling Interstate 81 or U.S. 11. Meaning you can’t stop at just one. Consider Mount Jackson, especially, for Virginia’s longest covered bridge, a classic bowling alley (with duckpins, no less), apple orchards, vineyards, a double shot of convivial coffee houses, and one iconic snack factory.

**BEST BETS:** Rising above I-81, Mount Jackson’s water tower depicts a trompe-l’œil basket of Shenandoah Valley apples and indicates the town exit. Seek out the Visitors Center, with its town museum that showcases Mount Jackson’s rich past. Meanwhile, partake in a living piece of local history at Shenandoah Bowling Lanes, a duckpin alley that opened in 1948. Aficionados of Charm City’s classic sport will love its six vintage lanes and 1950s vibe. South of town, drive across the historic, 200-foot-long Meems Bottom Covered Bridge, spanning the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. Then drive a little farther to an absolute must-stop, the Route 11 Potato Chips factory, where you can sample and purchase these crispy regional favorites. The town’s first-ever Tater Fest will honor “Jacktown’s” beloved spud in September, featuring a French fry-eating contest, a Couch Potato 5K, and more tuber tributes.

**EAT:** Chat up locals at either of Main Street’s community-oriented coffee shops. Coffee to

**CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** River Bluff Farm Bed and Breakfast; the Shenandoah Valley at Shenandoah National Park; Route 11 Potato Chips factory; Meem’s Bottom Bridge; apple orchard pickings.

Grow preaches the gospel of pour-over brewing and hosts special teas, while Coffee & Cream serves fresh-brewed java and hand-dipped ice cream. Both sell yummy baked goods. Southern Kitchen, a diner in nearby New Market, has served quintessential Virginia dishes since 1955. Think fried chicken, stewed tomatoes, and even peanut soup.

**GET FRUITY:** Pick a big bag of apples at Showalter’s Orchard in Timberville and don’t leave without tasting their dreamy apple-cider doughnuts. Its on-site cidery also serves hard and regular cider. Afterwards, follow a mini wine trail to three local vineyards: Cave Ridge, an award-winning winery hailed for its service; The Winery at Kindred Pointe, serving vino and hard ciders in its equestrian-themed tasting room; and Third Hill Winery at DeMello Vineyards, a family-run winery in a picturesque setting.

**STAY:** Eat breakfast on a deck overlooking the Shenandoah River’s North Fork at River Bluff Farm B&B, a secluded log-cabin inn in New Market. Mountainside rental lodgings near Bryce Resort in Bayse also include modern cabins, chalets, and even heated glamping tents. All offer splendid valley views.



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FALLING FOR FALL  
IN THE BLUE RIDGE

# PARIS VA

**LIKE ITS FRENCH NAMESAKE, THIS** Paris is for lovers—of romance and nature. Only an hour from the nation’s capital but seemingly light years from civilization, this bucolic Blue Ridge foothills outpost is the teeniest of our small towns. Yet it’s easily accessible and well-situated. On the outskirts of Virginia horse country, it’s blessed with an uber-romantic country bed-and-breakfast, The Ashby Inn, and surrounded by award-winning wineries, as well as green spaces ideal for hiking, foliage viewing, and amorous stargazing.

**BEST BETS:** Enjoy fall scenery along the miles of hiking, biking, and horseback-riding trails—including part of the Appalachian Trail—at Sky Meadows State Park, a nearly 2,000-acre gift to the Commonwealth by philanthropist Paul Mellon. Designated an International Dark Sky Park, Sky Meadows also admits visitors after dark to admire the heavens from its observation area. Consort with conifers, behold a bevy of boxwoods, and gawk at grandiose “champion trees” at the State Arboretum of Virginia in nearby Boyce. In late October, a 300-tree grove becomes a vibrant yellow bower during Ginkgo Fest.

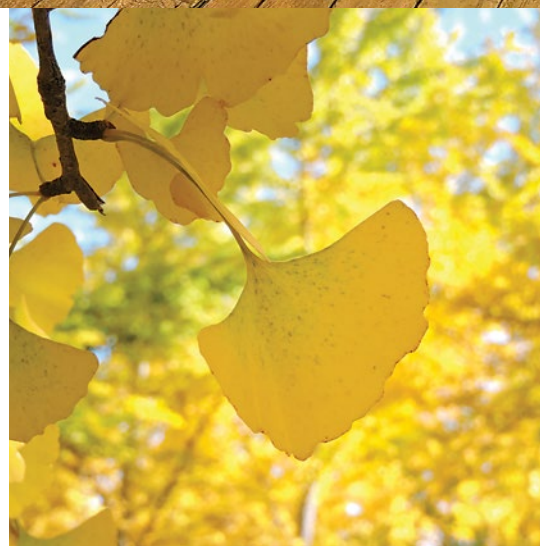
**EAT:** The Ashby Inn’s farm-to-table restaurant boasts more dining honors than its tasting menu has courses: “most romantic,” “best scenic view,” “best brunch,” and numerous *Wine Spectator* awards. Reservations required. Enjoy more farm-to-fork dining at Hunter’s Head Tavern, a British-style spot in Upperville, owned by the certified organic Ayrshire Farm and featuring dishes like Ayrshire pork loin, seared and served with a blackberry-sage sauce. In nearby Marshall, Field & Main is another regionally sourced treat.



FROM TOP: Hunter’s Head Tavern; Blandy Experimental Farm; The Ashby Inn.

**SAVOR:** Seven miles south of Paris lies Delaplane, a cradle of fine Virginia winemaking. Oenophiles will love Lost Mountain (formerly RdV Vineyards), a world-class winery now in the hands of French vintners. It offers appointment-only tours of its grape-strewn grounds and wine caves followed by tastings. Meanwhile, family-run Delaplane Cellars affords glorious views of the countryside and an array of award-winning wines. At the 500-acre Valley View Farm, sip site-made wines and hard ciders, then shop for local jams, honeys, and fruit butters at its Locavore Farm Market.

**STAY:** The historic Ashby Inn is Paris’ primary claim to fame. It offers six romantic rooms (think four-poster beds and cozy quilts) in the 1829 main house, as well as four suites with soaking tubs and fireplaces in a converted 1893 schoolhouse. All come with sweeping views of the countryside, plus a gourmet country breakfast.





FOREST BATHING  
IN THE POCONOS

# STROUDSBURG

PA



**RESEARCH TELLS US THAT IMMERSING ONE'S** senses in nature lowers our heart rate and blood pressure. If that's so, Stroudsburg is a traveler's answer to Xanax. Nestled in the Poconos, this lovely town is surrounded by parks, forests, creeks, nature preserves, the awe-inspiring Delaware Water Gap, and two Ice Age remnants deemed National Park Service Natural Landmarks. When not neck deep in nature, discover varied dining, a lively theater, and shops aplenty in town.

**BEST BETS:** Straddling Pennsylvania and New Jersey, the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area follows 40 scenic miles of the Delaware River. If popular trails thwart your privacy, seek lesser-known paths to peaceful wilderness immersion, such as nearby Dingmans Ferry, where Hornbecks Creek Trail leads to Indian Ladders, a picturesque, sluicing waterfall. On the New Jersey side, hike

**FROM TOP:**  
The Delaware Water Gap; Beef Wellington at Memento; Cafe Duet.

Dunnfield Creek Trail past stately hemlocks to Sunfish Pond, a natural glacial lake and designated

Natural Landmark. Pennsylvania has its own glacial-age Natural Landmark, the Tannersville Cranberry Bog. Book a guided walk with the Kettle Creek Environmental Education Center to admire the ancient peat bog's native orchids, calla lillies, and carnivorous pitcher plants. Birders will enjoy Stroudsburg's Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge. At this former golf course, old cart paths offer top-notch fall feather sightings. You might even score an eagle.

**EAT:** Wake up with an espresso at Café Duet, then order a gourmet sandwich to-go for your picnic nosh. Corned beef and cabbage can also be savored at Siamsa, an authentic Irish pub. For fine dining, Memento is home to house-made pastas and other Italian specialties prepared by the restaurant's European-trained chef.

**WANDER:** Reflecting varied 19th-century architectural styles, downtown buildings have been adapted for 21st-century uses. Shop for hiking gear at Dunkelberger's, a beloved outfitter housed where Freemasons once met. Buy bath products, soy candles, and handmade jewelry at Pocono Soap, once the residence of a U.S. attorney general. A former five-and-dime has morphed into Main Street Jukebox, now a treasure trove of new and used vinyl and CDs. When the nearby Sherman Theater opened in 1929, Laurel and Hardy headlined, and today, the venue hosts concerts, musicals, comedians, speakers, and special events, like October's EMO Night Halloween Party.

**STAY:** The Swiftwater—a 100-room, mountainside hotel—opened in June, offering guest-coddling amenities: an indoor-outdoor pool, plunge-pool suites, a garden patio complete with fire pit, and a fine-dining restaurant. **B**



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