



Life & Culture

TRAVEL

Perfect Catskills getaway

Nicole Pensiero For South Jersey Times

Thinking back, it was undoubtedly that still-memorable coming-of-age 1987 surprise hit film, “Dirty Dancing,” that first sparked my interest in the Catskills. For decades, this beautiful region of New York State was a major year-round draw for millions of East Coast residents looking for fun and relaxation — and the movie brought that innocent, charming era to life.

But when air travel started becoming less expensive and central air conditioning more prevalent, the famed, sprawling “Borscht Belt” resorts (like Grossinger’s, which “Dirty Dancing” was modeled after) found business in decline and eventually closed. For many years, beginning in the 1980s, the Catskills’ fate as a still-relevant tourism draw seemed on the brink.

Today, this four-county region is enjoying a new surge in popularity, offering whatever it is you need to unwind — be it hiking, biking, antique hunting or waterfall climbing. From newly opened craft beer distilleries to artsy boutiques — not to mention miles and miles of unspoiled, breathtaking landscapes — there’s no shortage of vacation fun for visitors of all ages and interests.

Our destination for a recent late-summer visit was the most northern part of the Catskills, Greene County, and a small town there called Windham that was an easy 3½-hour drive from South Jersey. In Windham, we checked in to the Thompson House, a 70-room property that, since 1880, has been operated by six generations of the same family. There are several room options; we stayed in the one building open year-round — aptly named “Evergreen.” Our spacious, rustic suite opened to a breathtaking back door view of nearby Windham Mountain, home to a popular ski resort. Looking out at dusk, we couldn’t wait to do some sightseeing.

The Thompson House proved an ideal setting-off spot for our various day trips. We got many travel tips from the staff at this family friendly place that comes complete with an outdoor pool, a shuffleboard court, and a miniature golf course. You can even purchase a s’mores kit — complete with graham crackers, chocolate, and marshmallows — and the outdoor fire pit will be set up for your use.

Our stay included two tasty and plentiful home-cooked meals daily, breakfast and dinner, both with many menu options. And, in true Catskills tradition, there was always an included evening activity at the Thompson House. We especially got a kick out of a show by area trial lawyer-turned-magician, “Sean the Prankster.”

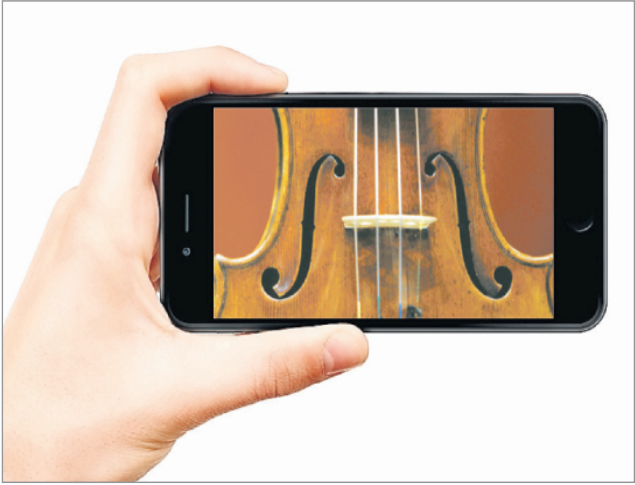
With only a few planned stops during our three-day visit, we were surprised at how many enjoyable, unplanned adventures came our way. Some highlights of our recent Catskills road trip included:

Kaaterskill Falls: A stirring sight, Kaaterskill Falls is custom-made for nature-lovers. This 260-foot waterfall — taller than Niagara Falls — has been the inspiration for many paintings, including one by the region’s most famous artist, Thomas Cole (1801-1848). The falls are also mentioned in Washington Irving’s famous story from 1819, “Rip Van Winkle.” (This memorable character, I should add, is immortalized throughout the Catskills in name, artwork, and even via a bridge.) Kaaterskill Falls offers various viewing platforms, along with hiking trails, so dress appropriately.



SEE TRAVEL, B5

Kaaterskill Falls, in Catskills, New York, is 260 feet high, which exceeds Niagra Falls in height. File photo



A streaming service dedicated to classical music features more than a million tracks. South Jersey Times staff illustration

Dedicated service launches with more than 1 million tracks

A new streaming service devoted exclusively to classical music has launched in the United States, Britain and the Netherlands.

Called Primephonic, the platform claims to have nearly all classical music ever recorded, with more than 1 million tracks available at the push of a button.

Catalogs on offer include those from Warner Classics, Sony Classical, Universal Music Classics, Deutsche Grammophon, Decca and EMI, in addition to more than 400 other labels worldwide. Users can search by composer, title, artist, musical period and genre; background information, including colorful anecdotes about the artists and recordings, is also available.

Another feature tailored to the classical music listening experience is the option to compare different recordings of the same work side-by-side. In a genre that dates back hundreds of years and has seen compositions recorded many

different times by all sorts of artists, this can give listeners crucial perspective on the evolution of the art form. The team of classical music fans behind the service has also created a variety of specially curated playlists that allow listeners to take deep-dives into obscure corners of the canon, including medieval compositions and minimalism.

In a news release, Primephonic Chief Executive Thomas Steffens said the company’s goal was to usher in a new era for classical music in the digital age.

“As a classical music lover myself, I have often experienced the frustrations of listening to classical music on today’s existing streaming services,” he said. “Streaming has revolutionized the way the world listens to music, but it has failed to revolutionize classical music.”

Another concern for Steffens was a sustainable business model that provides fair revenue for classical artists. To this end, the company has developed a pay-per-second model that takes into consideration the long-form nature of classical compositions and compensates accordingly.

— Los Angeles Times



30-Minutes-Or-Less E.R. Service Pledge

A physician, physician assistant or nurse practitioner is committed to working diligently to have you initially seen within 30 minutes of your arrival. If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911.



Cooper

Emergency Medicine



The Memorial Hospital OF SALEM COUNTY

Travel

FROM B1

The "Cats of Catskill": For the past decade, the town of Catskill has set up a display of about 50 fiberglass felines around its main shopping district (from May through September), decorated by area artists. Called "Cat'n Around Catskill," the art installation is actually a fundraiser for local nonprofit groups, and is quite impressive. (Picture a Star Trek-styled cat and you'll get a sense of the creativity at play here).

While in Catskill, we enjoyed a couple of hours at Dutchman's Landing Park, located on the banks of the Hudson. There, we relaxed and enjoyed an afternoon crafts fair, along with a free concert by folk-pop singer Jules Taylor. It's a spacious, welcoming green space that undoubtedly will be ablaze with autumn colors before long.

The Catskills Beverage Trail: A scenic route to visit six Greene County breweries/wineries, we hit two of the most popular, both in Catskill, the county seat. The Rip Van Winkle Brewery offered a terrific lunch menu (the eggplant Parmesan sandwich and piping hot pizza were big hits), along with house-made craft beer. We also enjoyed a beer sampling at Catskill Taproom, the new, river-front location for the well-established Crossroads Brewing Co.

Thomas Cole: A two-hour visit to the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, also in Catskill, proved not only educational, but enjoyable. Home of the founder of the Hudson River School style of artwork made popular in the 1800s, the site's tour includes an impressive audio-visual program that features Cole's own (still-relevant) musings on the impact of progress on this region's natural splendor.

The historic Circle W Market: This is a frozen-in-time, charmingly retro market (originally opened in 1908, it fell into disrepair and was closed for many years before reopening in 2009 with a gift shop, market and café). We even were invited to take a peek inside the nearby historic Clark House B&B, which also hosts occasional weekend art shows.

Windham Mountain Resort: Our most unique experience was the free, Friday night “Music on the Mountain” bluegrass concert at the massive Windham Mountain Resort, just minutes from our hotel. To get to the two-hour free show, you are taken up the mountain by ski lift, and returned back to the parking lot in the same fashion. Along

A wooden covered bridge with a gabled roof and vertical slats, spanning a small stream. The bridge is surrounded by dense green trees and foliage. A gravel path leads to the bridge, and a large rock lies on the right side of the path.

Windham Path is a 1½-mile loop and is popular with walkers and bicyclists. greatnortherncatskills.com

with some great tunes (there are different acts throughout the summer), there was reasonably priced food and drink available. It was a fun evening, and seemed a very smart way for this resort to draw in visitors when it's not ski season

The Windham Path: This 1½-mile loop through sweeping, undisturbed landscape is popular with walkers and bicycle riders alike. This stroll proved to be an instant memory-maker. It's located just minutes from downtown Windham, which is filled with charming little shops, cafés and full service restaurants.

The historic Saugerties Lighthouse in nearby Ulster County: Built in 1869 and now housing a tiny B&B, it's a bit of a walk through marshes to reach the lighthouse, but worth it. The views are amazing and there are tables and benches available so you can relax and take in the Hudson River scenery.

On the way home: Heading toward New Jersey, we made a two-hour stop in the famed town of Woodstock, New York, which was teeming with tourists eager to peruse its fun boutiques and hip cafes. Side note: while Woodstock's name is synonymous with the massive music festival of August 1969, that

event was held on a farm nearly 40 miles away, in Bethel, New York, a spot that now houses the popular Bethel Woods Center for the Arts.

Throughout our visit, we were amazed by the amount of undeveloped land in the Catskills — a region that tends to divide its towns into three very accurate categories: Mountain towns, valley towns, and river towns.

Much of the beautifully unspoiled landscape is located within the boundaries of the 700,000-acre Catskill Park, a mix of private and public lands, as well as the vast Catskill Forest Preserve, a publicly protected area filled with mountains, meadows, forests, lakes, and rivers.

By the close of our getaway, we truly understood why so many visitors still return year after year to the Catskills. The physical beauty alone is an immediate stress-reducer and there were no shortage of things to do and see.

Connecticut resident Barbara Coleman told us she first came to the Thompson House in 1962 with her grandparents, and has repeated that tradition every summer since 1988: "This is my second home," she says. "It's better up here now than ever."

For more information, visit: greatnorthernerncatskills.com.



The “Cats of Catskill” is a display of 50 fiberglass felines set up by the town from May through September and decorated by local artists. *File photo*



Sweetsboro
Est. 2007
Pastry Shoppe

Sweetsboro Pastry Shoppe is an old fashion European bakery with roots from Philadelphia and Germany. We specialize in quality baked goods from scratch. We feature custom birthday and wedding cakes as well as a wide variety of specialty cakes.

Like us on Facebook!

1302 Kings Highway | Swedesboro, NJ 08085
856-241-7722
www.sweetsborobakery.com

Shop Hours: Mon. - Sat. 6:30am - 7pm · Sun. 6:30am - 5pm



ENJOY THE OPEN ROAD

• With an Auto Loan From Us •

NO Payments for 60 Days
PLUS Get a \$25 Gas Card*

**RATES
AS LOW AS
1.75%
APR***

**OFFER ENDS
OCTOBER 31,
2018!**

*APR=Annual Percentage Rate. Rates effective until October 31, 2018 and subject to change without notice. APR may vary based on creditworthiness, loan amount, and security offered. Rates shown are for qualified borrowers and subject to credit score, age of collateral, and term. Rate shown reflect .25 discount for automatic payments through direct deposit. Contact the credit union for the complete details.
**Offer good while supply of gas cards last.







APPLY TODAY!
Visit www.MembersOneNJ.org

Never Worry About Clogged Gutters Again!




**NO PAYMENTS
NO INTEREST**
Until Fall 2019[†]



FALL SAVINGS

15% OFF

LIMITED TIME ONLY



America's #1
Gutter Protection Company
One Time Investment • Lifetime of Benefits

- ✓ Eliminate clogged and overflowing gutters
- ✓ Keep leaves, needles, debris out, & animals out
- ✓ Proven to handle up to 22 inches of rain per hour
- ✓ Installed by trained & certified technicians
- ✓ LIFETIME No Clog WARRANTY, transferable
- ✓ Approved by all major roofing manufacturers

FREE Estimates
Senior & Military
Discounts Available

Limited Time Only!
609-785-3625






**TRIPLE
LIFETIME
WARRANTY**



*Min. purchase required, offer expires 10/31/18. Offer applies to Gutter Helmet only and must be presented at time of estimate, cannot be combined with any other offers and subject to change without notice. Void where prohibited by law. †Subject to credit approval. Interest accrues during promotional period but all interest is waived if paid in full within 12 months. Ledor is neither a broker nor a lender. Financing is provided by 3rd party lenders, under terms & conditions arranged directly between the customer and such lenders. satisfactory completion of finance documents is required. Any finance terms advertised are estimates only. †Based on an independent 2014 national marketing study. NJ HIC Reg. #15VH04341800 © 2018 Ledor Corporation