

ARTS AND MINDS: Clockwise from left, Tanglewood's new Linde Center for Music and Learning; *Wall Drawing 340* by Sol LeWitt at Mass MoCA; Tourists hotel partners Ben Svenson, Scott Stedman, John Stirratt, and Eric Kerns; the Inn at Kenmore Hall; a dance performance at Jacob's Pillow; Greylock Works' Salvatore Perry and Karla Rothstein; and the Music Room at Blantyre.

Back to the Berkshires

Forward-thinkers breathe new life into fabled elite cultural playground

BY ANDREW SESSA



ROBERT BENSON (TANGLEWOOD); ZORAN ORLIC (MASS MOCA); SAM DEITCH (TOURISTS); DANI FINE (BLANTYRE); HAYIM HERON (JACOBS PILLOW); NILS SCHLEBUSCH (GREYLOCK OWNERS)

If you think you know the Berkshires, think again.

Thanks to a group of intrepid entrepreneurs and creative visionaries, there's a whole new dimension to this destination in Massachusetts' western reaches. That makes it high time to give the land of rolling hills and tall mountains, lush forests and open fields, rushing rivers and slow streams a fresh look — and what better time to visit than the fall, when leaf-peeping season is upon us? In the weeks and months ahead, the region's foliage will achieve its peak palette of reds, oranges, and yellows, but, these days, that's only part of the draw.

The Berkshires — about 130 miles from either New York or Boston — have tempted holiday-makers of all stripes for well over a century, of course. No less a literary lion than Herman Melville wrote lovingly about the area as early as 1855, and major American landscape painters including Thomas Cole captured its pristine wilds even earlier. During the Gilded Age, barons of industry built grand summer homes they rather understatedly referred to as “cottages.” The Berkshires rose in prominence and opulence.

That legacy of art and culture, as well as luxury, lives on in the region to this day, with long-standing museums, performing arts venues, and historic hotels providing a tempting allure. But today that new dimension, created by those entrepreneurs and visionaries, is very much part of the Berkshires' present. Though some of these talented tastemakers and change agents have come from outside the region — including the powers behind the Hyatt-owned spa-resort brand Miraval, which will open its latest outpost here this spring — they pay homage to the Berkshires' history and honor its sense of place at every turn. Whether reimagining long-lived cultural institutions and haute hotels or establishing new ones, they are creating places and spaces that feel sophisticated, stylish, and of the moment.

Here, the openings, expansions, and renovations that make the Berkshires a must-visit this fall, both for longtime visitors looking to rediscover a favorite spot and for those thinking about making their first trip.

NORTHERN
BERKSHIRES



Greylock Works

The creative renaissance of an industrial-era artifact

New York-based architects Karla Rothstein and Salvatore Perry were driving to the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in mid-2015 when they passed a wreck of a century-old factory in North Adams with a “for sale” sign outside. They were intrigued: “Everywhere you look, there's history, depth, and authenticity,” recalls Rothstein. Now, four years later, the pair is well into the process of turning the 240,000-square-foot former cotton-spinning mill and its 9-acre campus into a mixed-use creative and culinary center. They've been gradually activating the complex with events and pop-ups almost since taking ownership in late 2015. The first tenant programming arrived this past summer when a jewelry atelier, floral design studio, and artisanal distillery and tasting room launched. Nov. 23 brings Greylock's third annual Festive, a one-day celebration of regional food and design that last year attracted 100 makers, 25 performers, and 1,600 attendees; and, this winter, cooking classes begin in a newly outfitted demo kitchen. Come spring, a casual, locally sourced restaurant, the Break Room, created in collaboration with top Berkshires chef Brian Alberg, debuts. Looking further ahead, Rothstein and Perry have plans for nearly 50 loft apartments and an atmospheric double-height bar set amid the factory's decommissioned industrial equipment in the former boiler room. 413-398-9114; greylockworks.com

Mass MoCA

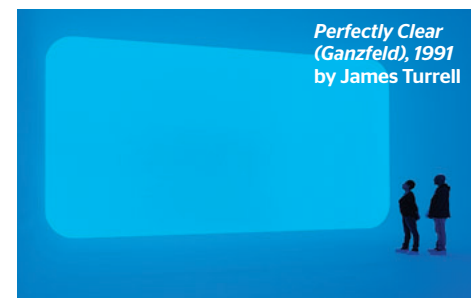
A contemporary art icon expanded

“When we first opened, we always had good temporary shows, but you could tour the museum in an hour or two,” says Joseph Thompson (below), the longtime director of this 20-year-old contemporary art museum, housed in a series of 19th-century, brick-and-beam mill buildings on a 16-acre site. “But now people spend a whole



day here, a whole weekend.” That’s because of a major 150,000-square-foot expansion completed in mid-2017 that includes art

fabrication workshops, performing arts facilities, and new galleries that double the exhibition space and prove the biggest game-changer. The museum now welcomes upward of 250,000 visitors a year — an increase from 80,000 two decades ago — and houses expansive and immersive long-term shows by 21st-century art powerhouses such as Laurie Anderson, Jenny Holzer, and James Turrell, who has nine don’t-miss custom light installations here. Thompson’s goal for the institution’s expansion, he explains, is “to take our space, add time and talent, and team up with artists and foundations that have important works that can have a home here.” The outcome puts Massachusetts’ northwest corner more squarely on the map for contemporary art aficionados than ever before. 413-662-2111; massmoca.org



Nature Study (Velvet Eyes)
by Louise Bourgeois



Tourists

A smart new hotel in a reinvented midcentury motor lodge

This 14-month-old 48-room hotel achieves the neat trick of being incredibly hip but still supremely comfortable, thanks to partners with creative pedigree to spare. Young design-minded Boston developer Ben Svenson teamed up with Wilco bassist



John Stirratt, whose years of touring had given him definite ideas about what a hotel should be. Svenson then brought in Eric Kerns, co-founder of North Adams’ Bright Ideas Brewing, to manage the project. Together, they turned a midcentury roadside motel into a contemporary rustic-chic resort. Its simple design uses such humble materials as plywood, concrete, linen, denim, and canvas to deeply stylish effect. The rooms’ large windows, glass doors, and private decks look out onto the wooded landscape, making them ideal perches for viewing fall foliage. The food served in the living-roomlike lounge works wonders with the bounty of local farms. Next to the hotel last spring, the owners opened the Airport Rooms, a classic-cocktail bar that reimagines an 1813 farmhouse. The 55-acre property also includes walking trails aplenty. From \$199. 413-346-4933; touristswelcome.com



DAVID DASHIELL/THE EASTON FOUNDATION/LICENCED BY VAGA (VELVET EYES); OLYMPIA SHANNON/(THOMPSON); FLORIAN HOLZHER (LIGHT INSTALLATION); DANE TASHIMA (TOURISTS SIGN ROOM); JOHN DOLAN (TOURISTS LODGE); DANIELLE ADAMS (KEY); MCGEENEY (EGG SANDWICH)

CENTRAL BERKSHIRES



Blantyre

A hotel in a Gilded Age mansion rebooted for the 21st century

In Lenox, Blantyre began welcoming hotel guests in 1981, but the history of America’s first Relais & Châteaux property starts long before. Industrialist Robert Paterson built the turreted, English-style Tudor mansion in 1902 as a summer retreat, hosting parties that spilled

onto the 100-plus-acre grounds. That legacy has been given glorious new life by Silicon Valley real estate developer Linda Law (right), who bought Blantyre in 2017. Law’s significant but still-subtle innovations, which debuted last year, include an



expanded spa, a casual new bar and bistro whose lighter fare complements the more formal dining room’s gourmet tasting menu, and a Dom Pérignon Champagne Salon. She rid the public spaces, eight rooms, 11 suites, and four cottages of their

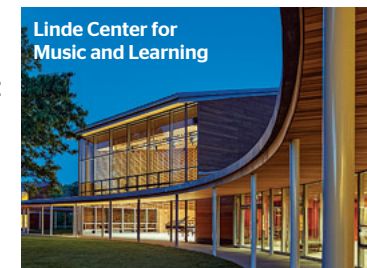
layers of English country patterns, replacing them with a simpler pastel palette. She then added contemporary furnishings with classic lines to sit among antiques and original moldings, wood paneling, and marble fireplaces, creating a hotel at the top of its game. From \$645. 413-637-3556; blantyre.com



Tanglewood

Beloved music venue’s next act

Throughout its 80-plus-year history, Tanglewood — the pastoral Lenox outpost of the Boston Symphony Orchestra — has been a strictly summertime affair. But the June opening of the four-pavilion Linde Center for Music and Learning, the first public-facing building on the 210-acre campus to be heated, now makes Tanglewood a year-round proposition. To lead the institute’s innovative new programming, Tanglewood brought in Sue Elliott, who has decades of experience in music education and community engagement. Elliott and her team curated an inaugural season packed with lessons for amateur artists; performances, concerts, and films; a speaker series including such grandees as Madeleine Albright and Doris Kearns Goodwin; and master classes with the likes of Yo-Yo Ma and Renée Fleming. At press time, Elliott was putting the finishing touches on what she promises will be an equally enticing schedule for fall. 888-266-1200; tanglewood.org



The Inn at Kenmore Hall

Pitch-perfect hospitality and design

This Georgian-style home in Richmond has history to spare, having hosted the likes of artist Daniel Chester French and composer Leonard Bernstein over its 227 years. But it wears its past lightly and honors it smartly. That it proves itself one of the most stylish hotels around should come as no surprise, given its new owners: Frank Muytjens, J. Crew’s former head of men’s design; and artist and restaurateur Scott Edward Cole. They opened the inn in the summer of 2018 after a painstaking restoration that revealed original wide-plank floors, plaster walls, and additional assorted authentic details. Now sun pours in from huge windows, setting the mix of 18th- and 19th-century antiques and modern furnishings aglow. The 20 acres of grounds, featuring a large new stone patio that debuted this past July, also demand exploration. From \$395. 413-698-8100; theinnatkenmorehall.com



Jacob's Pillow

Home of the nation's premier dance festival focusing on the future

Since Pamela Tatge (below) signed on as director of Jacob's Pillow in 2016, the nearly nine-decade-old summertime dance festival in Becket instituted a five-year plan to expand its programming and campus. The idea, Tatge explains, is "to think big about where the Pillow should go in its next evolution." So far, Tatge, who served as director of Wesleyan University's Center for the Arts for 16 years, has overseen the completion of the Perles Family Studio, a climate-controlled performance, rehearsal, and education space that welcomes artists year-round. Now, during nonsummer months, choreographers and dance companies can incubate and workshop new projects, then perform them in informal presentations to the Pillow community. The space also will host open-door dance parties beginning Nov. 9. Next up: The growth of the Pillow's community engagement programs, as well as modernizations to the Ted Shawn Theatre, which opened in 1942 as the first performance space in the country specifically designed for dance. 413-243-0745; jacobspillow.org

