

# Our Vermont



S U M M E R  
2 0 2 2

*Yours to experience—the traditions, people,  
and places of the Green Mountain State*

**6 SWEET CORN  
RECIPES TO SAVOR  
THIS SUMMER**

**INSIDE BILLINGS  
FARM'S MAGICAL  
SUNFLOWER HOUSE**

**GETTING UP CLOSE  
WITH VERMONT'S  
AMAZING WILDLIFE**

## A Sense of Place

**T**he town of Maidstone lies in Vermont's remote and beautiful Northeast Kingdom. There are about 211 people living in Maidstone, possibly a few more if friends or travelers visit. Roger Irwin lives here. A former dairy farmer, he is now one of this country's foremost nature and wildlife photographers ["Into the Wild," p. 23]. His photographs of animals are so intimate it seems as though his subjects are standing right in front of us. Sometimes people call or email him and say they will be passing through and would like to see his studio, and if he can, he makes the time.

I have always been struck by how many stories I have found in a state with by far the smallest population in New England (645,570).



You would need to add nearly the entire population of Minneapolis to bring Vermont up to the amount of Rhode Island, home of New England's second-smallest populace. To me it seems that, per capita, there must be more extraordinary people who live along Vermont's rural roads than anywhere I know; maybe there is a force of nature that instills uncommon drive and creativity. Chances are, if you travel around the state for a few days this summer, you too will meet someone you will remember.

Many of my own summer drives have led me to such Vermonters. I have met writers and singers and composers and photographers and artisans who live and incubate ideas in some of the loveliest landscapes and villages in the country. Last August I met Julie Moir Messervy, one of America's most acclaimed landscape designers, at the top of a nearly three-mile dirt road just across the border from New Hampshire. Her emailed directions carried more than a hint of Vermont resilience and a dash of daring: "The road is partially washed out from a recent storm. You'll find men working on it. Be patient and they will let you by. Go up the hill 2½ miles until you reach a triangle of weeds. Take the left fork.... It will feel like it takes forever, so call if you feel lost."

What makes summer in Vermont unlike anywhere else is that even when you feel lost, you will be happy to roll down the windows and take it all in.

*Mel Allen*

Mel Allen  
editor@yankeemagazine.com

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PUBLISHER  
*Brook Holmberg*

MARKETING DIRECTOR  
*Kate Hathaway Weeks*

EDITOR IN CHIEF  
*Mel Allen*

EDITOR  
*Jenn Johnson*

ART DIRECTOR  
*Katharine Van Itallie*

SENIOR FEATURES EDITOR  
*Ian Aldrich*

SENIOR FOOD EDITOR  
*Amy Traverso*

ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
*Joe Bills*

PHOTO EDITOR  
*Heather Marcus*

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS  
*Edie Clark, Annie Copps,  
Rowan Jacobsen*

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS  
*Adrienne Anderson, Adam DeTour,  
Corey Hendrickson, Michael Piazza*

*On the cover: A hot air balloon prepares for liftoff as part of the annual Quechee Hot Air Balloon, Craft, and Music Festival, which celebrates its 42nd year in 2022. Photo by Susan Cole Kelly*

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# A Time for Blackberries

*Eaten right from the vine, they are the essence of summer.*

**O**n one of the rare sunny days late last summer, I took an old milk jug off its peg and walked out into the back field where I know there is a nice tangle of blackberry bushes. All summer, the hay grows tall and walls off the fields. In August the hay is cut and baled, and then I can go back out into my wide open spaces.

When I got out to the edge of the field, I found that the berries had grown plump and dark, perfect picking. The birds had not gotten them all yet. I popped one into my mouth. The deep-purple fruit was warm and soft, and my tongue broke it easily, making it all sweet juice. I plucked another one quickly, and another, tossing them back like little candies. They were unbelievably sweet, teetering at that perfect point of ripeness that might tomorrow fall to the bitter side of spoilage. My frenzy eased. I started dropping them into the bucket, which at first plunked with each addition but soon was silent as I guided the host of them in.

Days in that New England summer had been cold. I can't remember ever keeping a fire in the woodstove in July. But that summer, in the mornings, I had reluctantly crumpled newspaper, snapped sticks in two, and lit the blaze to warm my summer room. As I stood at the edge of the great field, the sun warmed my neck and shoulders like an old friend come home. Crows lofted above in their mysterious flights from limb to limb, hoarsely crying, while crickets sang along. Bright yellow goldenrod nodded in the afternoon breeze. I wanted to stay out there forever, picking through an endless summer's day.

The jug holds two quarts and soon the button-sized berries mounded above the rim. I turned reluctantly back toward the house, thinking how these berries could be used. I thought about making a pie. I thought about making jam. It takes so many berries to boil down to a pint, but the reward is good—on toast, unbelievably sweet. I thought maybe I would freeze them and bring them out on a winter night.

When I got back to the kitchen, I put the jug up onto the counter. The phone rang and it was an old friend, wanting to get together. “Come over,” I said. “I’ll put something on the grill.” He came and we sat outside on the grass, eating our meal from chipped plates. We had not seen each other in a long while, so our sentences ran into each other’s, a flowing stream. The smell of fresh-cut hay was all around us. From the hollow, the crows let loose with a great commotion of shrill cackles. We fell silent. They sounded drunk or as if they had struck gold. “I think,” I said to my companion, “they found the blackberry patch.”

The heat of the day was behind us. We gathered our plates and went inside. “How about some berries?” I offered. There was no resistance. I measured out the jug into big bowls and poured cream into a pitcher. We sat down at the table, in front of the open windows, where we could hear the enthusiasm of the crows. The berries were still warm from the sun, sweet like sugar. The dark, winelike color stained our bowls and our lips. There would be no pie, no jam, no winter berries. These berries were for the moment, and no moment could have been more perfect. —*Edie Clark*

Local Flavor

# Gold Stars

*From breakfast tables to evening cookouts,  
now's the season for sweet corn to shine.*

## Fresh Corn Muffins

*Crunchy from the rough texture of cornmeal, these beautiful corn muffins are flecked with kernels of succulent fresh corn.*

**1 cup all-purpose flour**  
**1 cup yellow cornmeal**  
**¼ cup sugar**  
**3 teaspoons baking powder**  
**½ teaspoon salt**  
**1 cup milk**  
**1 large egg**  
**¼ cup butter, melted**  
**1 cup uncooked sweet corn kernels**

Preheat the oven to 400°. Generously grease 12 muffin tins. Combine the flour, cornmeal, sugar, baking powder, and salt in a large mixing bowl. Whisk to blend thoroughly.

In a separate bowl, beat together the milk, egg, and melted butter. Add to the dry ingredients and blend well. Stir in the corn. Pour into the prepared muffin tins and bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in the center comes out clean. *Yields 12 muffins.*

## Summer Corn Chowder

*Corn and bacon are a familiar duo, but you can find similar harmony pairing corn and smoked mussels in a chowder filled with summer vegetables such as tomatoes, zucchini, and chilies.*

**3 tablespoons salted butter**  
**1 medium onion, diced**  
**1 medium or 2 small firm zucchini, cut into matchsticks**  
**1 small jalapeño pepper, seeded and minced**  
**¼ cup all-purpose flour**  
**½ cup dry white wine, such as pinot grigio**  
**4 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth**  
**1 can (28 ounces) chopped tomatoes**  
**8 ounces smoked mussels in oil, drained**  
**Kernels from 4 medium ears of sweet corn**  
**2 cups coarsely chopped baby spinach**  
**1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme leaves**  
**Salt and pepper to taste**  
**Fresh thyme sprigs, for garnish**

In a large heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat, melt butter. Add onion and cook, stirring often, until pale gold in color, about 8 minutes. Add zucchini and jalapeño and cook, stirring, for 4 more minutes.

With wine and broth handy, stir the flour into the vegetables for about a minute, then add the wine and whisk until smooth. Whisk in the broth, then stir in the tomatoes with their juices and simmer for about 10 minutes. Stir in mussels and corn, and cook 5 minutes. Then add spinach, thyme, and salt and pepper; simmer for 5 more minutes. Serve hot, garnished with fresh thyme. *Yields 6 servings.*



Local Flavor



## Shrimp and Corn “Clambake” Packs

*Inspired by the iconic New England clambake, this dish replaces lobster with quick-cooking shrimp, along with spicy sausage, corn, and potatoes. Smoked mussels are optional but add a wood-fired flavor.*

**1 pound (26–30 count) tail-on shrimp**  
**4 ounces linguiça, chouriço, or other spicy sausage, cut into ¼-inch-thick disks**  
**2 ears sweet corn, each shucked and cut crosswise into 8 pieces**

**2 medium red potatoes, thinly sliced**  
**1 tin (4 ounces) smoked mussels (optional)**  
**4 tablespoons salted butter, divided**  
**4 large cloves garlic, minced**  
**1 teaspoon Old Bay seasoning, divided**  
**Minced fresh parsley, for garnish**

Prepare your grill for direct, medium-high heat (about 400°).

Lay four sheets of aluminum foil, each about 15 inches long, on your counter. Top each sheet of foil

with an equal-size sheet of parchment paper.

Divide the shrimp, sausage, corn, potatoes, mussels, butter, garlic, and Old Bay seasoning equally among the packets, piling the seafood, sausage, and vegetables in the center and topping them with the butter, garlic, and seasoning. Fold the foil and parchment paper up over the ingredients, pinching securely at the top to seal.

Set the packets on the grill grate, cover, and cook until the shrimp is fully cooked and the corn is tender, 15 to 20 minutes. *Yields 4 servings.*

## Grilled Corn with Herbed Bacon Butter

*Fresh herbs and crisp bacon elevate buttered, grilled corn to delicious new heights in this easy summer recipe.*

- ½ cup (1 stick) salted butter**
- 1 small shallot, peeled**
- ½ cup packed fresh herbs (basil, thyme, oregano, savory, chives, and/or cilantro)**
- 4 strips cooked crisp bacon, crushed to fine crumbs**
- Salt and pepper to taste**
- 10 ears sweet corn, any size, shucked**
- ½ cup grated Parmesan**

In a food processor or blender, pulse the butter and shallot until smooth. Add herbs and process until well incorporated but not puréed (you want to see little flecks of green). Add bacon crumbs and pulse to mix. Add salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.

Prepare grill for medium-high direct heat (you should be able to hold your hand a few inches above the grate for 3 to 5 seconds), then place corn on grill and cover. Cook, turning regularly, until corn is tender, about 10 minutes. Serve slathered with butter and sprinkled with Parmesan. *Yields 10 servings.*

## Savory Corn, Leek & Pancetta Tart

*In texture, this delicious tart falls somewhere between quiche and a savory pie as it adds classic French flavors—leeks, Gruyère, bacon—to a rich corn custard.*

### FOR THE CRUST

**½ cup unsalted butter, cold, cut into small pieces**  
**1½ cups all-purpose flour**  
**½ teaspoon table salt**  
**½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**  
**½ cup cold water**  
**1 teaspoon Dijon mustard**  
**½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce**

### FOR THE FILLING

**8 ounces pancetta or bacon, diced**  
**2 tablespoons salted butter**  
**3 medium leeks, white part only, rinsed and thinly sliced crosswise**  
**1½ cups fresh sweet corn kernels**  
**2 large eggs**  
**½ cup heavy cream**  
**½ teaspoon table salt**  
**½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**  
**½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg**  
**¾ cup plus ¼ cup grated Gruyère**

Make crust: Put butter, flour, salt, and pepper in the bowl of a food processor and pulse until the mixture has the texture of coarse meal. Add water, mustard, and Worcestershire and pulse just until dough begins to form a ball. Turn dough out onto a floured counter and form it into a disk. Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least an hour and up to two days.

Preheat oven to 400°. Set a 10- or 11-inch tart pan with a removable bottom on a baking sheet. On a floured counter, roll the dough out into a 12-inch circle (for 10-inch pan) or a 13-inch circle (for 11-inch pan). Transfer the dough into the pan and press it into the corners. Run a rolling pin over the edges of the pan to neatly trim the dough. Line the inside of the crust with parchment paper or aluminum foil, and fill with dry beans or pie weights. Bake until golden, 10 to 15 minutes. Set aside to cool while you prepare the filling.

In a large skillet over medium heat, cook pancetta until browned and crisp, about 5 minutes per side. Remove from skillet with a slotted spoon, reserving fat, and drain on paper towels. Add butter to pan and sauté leeks until soft and slightly golden, about 10 minutes. Add the corn and stir for 1 minute, then remove pan from heat.

Heat oven to 375°. In a bowl, whisk together eggs, cream, salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Add ¾ cup cheese, then stir in leek mixture and pancetta. Pour the filling into the prebaked pie shell and sprinkle the remaining ¼ cup cheese on top. Bake until puffed and golden, about 40 minutes. Serve warm. *Yields 8 servings.*

## Sweet Corn & Maple Ice Cream

*Subtle sweetness is the hallmark of this unusual but delicious frozen treat.*

**2 medium ears sweet corn**  
**1 cup whole milk**  
**1 cup heavy cream**  
**1 large egg plus 2 egg yolks**  
**¾ cup maple syrup**  
**¼ teaspoon table salt**  
**½ teaspoon vanilla extract**

Holding a coarse cheese grater over a mixing bowl, grate the corn kernels off the cob. Break or cut the cobs in half, and put them, along with the grated corn, into a heavy-bottomed 3- or 4-quart pot. Add the milk and cream, and set over medium-low heat, stirring often, until the mixture bubbles at the edges, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from heat and let the mixture steep until the cobs are cool enough to handle. Scrape their juices into the pot one more time with the sharp side of a table knife. Discard cobs.

Return the pot to medium-low and bring the mixture back to a simmer.

In a medium bowl, whisk together egg, yolks, maple syrup, and salt. Carefully whisk about ½ cup of the hot milk mixture into the egg mixture until blended. Repeat this process twice more to slowly raise the temperature of the eggs. Pour the egg mixture back into the pot, whisking continuously over medium-low, until the mixture reaches 175° on an instant-read thermometer. Remove from heat and stir in vanilla. Pour the custard into a shallow container and cover with plastic film pressed onto the surface. Chill until very cold, 4 to 12 hours.

Once chilled, it should register 35° to 40° on an instant-read thermometer. Pour into an ice cream maker, leaving 1 inch at top; prepare according to freezer instructions. *Yields 6 servings.*

# SUMMER GRILLING 101

A food pro's handy tips to get you all fired up for peak barbecue season.

**C**hicken breasts. Steaks. Burgers. Asparagus. Sweet corn. Honestly, is there anything better than the taste of food cooked over a live fire? Here, former *Yankee* food editor Annie Copps shares her tips for making sure your summer grill-out delivers plenty of flavor with minimal fuss.

## Get Your Gear in Order

Gather together everything you are going to need from start to finish. Once you get started, you can't walk away—remember, this is live-fire cooking!

If you have the space, consider storing all your outdoor grilling utensils and gadgets in a sturdy canvas bag in the mudroom. I like to have tongs, mitts, and thermometer in the bag, and the rest I gather before I go outside.

## Bring on the Heat

I prefer lump charcoal—I like the flavor, I think you get better heat, and it's more interactive. Once you get your chimney starter going and glowing with coals, dump the coals out onto a neat pile of charcoal and let them burn until they become gray. Give the whole grill a gentle shake or carefully spread the coals out with the tongs.

Place the grate on the grill and let it heat up for a few minutes, then scrape it down with a stiff wire brush to remove any browned bits. This will keep food from sticking; so will using tongs to lightly run an oiled paper towel or hunk of fat over the grill grates

Your grill is good to go (medium-high heat) if you can hold your hand 6 inches above it for 5 seconds.

## Easy Does It

After bringing your ingredients to room temperature (they'll cook more quickly and evenly), you're ready to get down to the business of grilling. Use tongs or spatulas rather than forks or knives to handle the food; tongs will help keep things in one piece, while other utensils will poke holes in all your hard work.

Don't move your proteins around too much. If cooking steak or chicken, find the right spot and lay the meat down, then let it cook a few minutes before moving or turning. If you oiled the grate, then chances are the steak or chicken won't stick when you move it. One turn ought to do it.



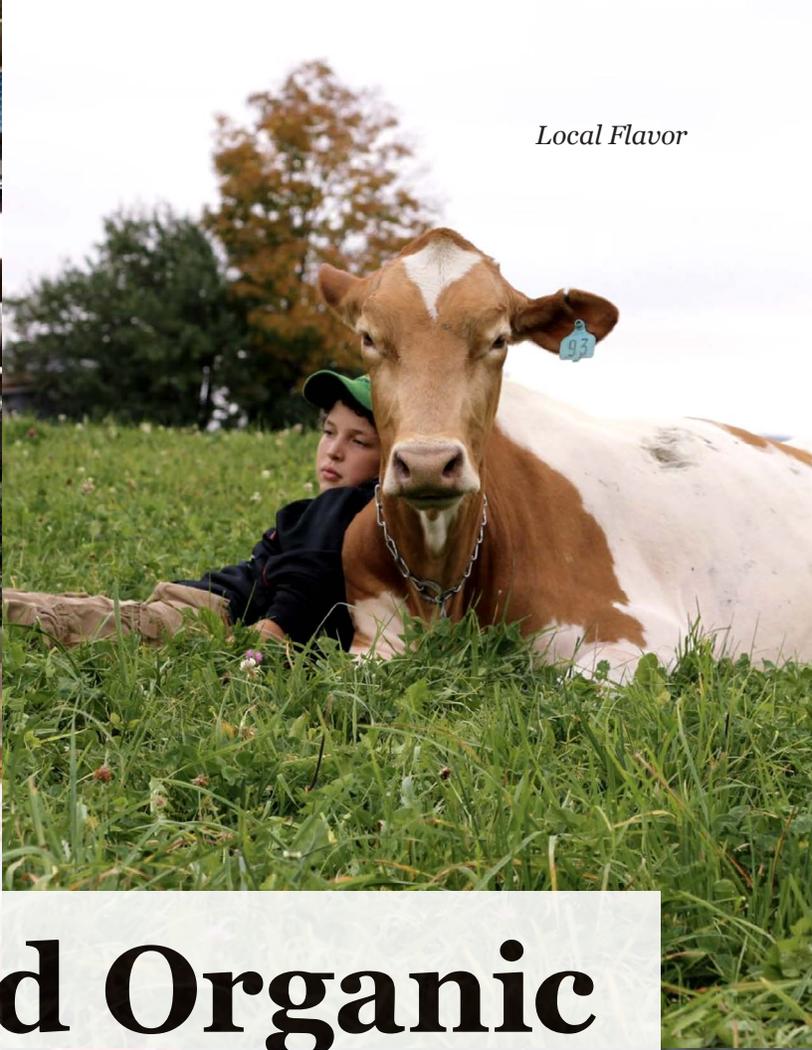
Looking for fresh inspiration for your outdoor feasts? Discover 11 of *Yankee's* favorite summer grilling recipes at [newengland.com/summer-grilling](http://newengland.com/summer-grilling).

## Mind Your Marinade

Brush-on marinades with sugar should be added at the end; the sugar will burn, not caramelize, if added too soon. Any marinades with acid (citrus juice, vinegar) will cook protein—if you want the flavor, but not the acid, try the zest from citrus fruits and/or add such flavors toward the end of the marinating process.

## Give It a Rest

When cooking proteins (meat, pork, chicken, fish) be sure to let them rest at least 5, if not 10, minutes before slicing them. The juices will release while they are cooking, and if you cut into them right from the grill all those flavorful juices will run. But if you let them rest, the meat will absorb and redistribute the juices, ensuring maximum flavor.



# Strafford Organic Creamery

*As part of an ongoing series, we meet up with small producers bringing the bounty of Vermont to our table.*



**F**rom the height of land at RockBottom Farm, her family's 600-acre hill farm in Strafford, Amy Huyffer can look out toward New Hampshire's White Mountains—her former home, as she spent a number of years in Jackson before coming to Vermont to attend law school. She's come a long way since then, in more ways than one: Amy did earn her law school degree, but now she spends her days heading up the farm's dairy, Strafford Organic Creamery; overseeing the breeding program for its Guernsey herd; and together with her husband, Earl Ransom, keeping the whole operation running while raising four boys. We caught up with Amy on a busy summer morning last year to talk a bit about family, cows, and, of course, ice cream. —*Jenn Johnson*



**How did you and Earl meet?** It was my second year of law school, and I was at a bar [in South Royalton] that I also worked at and frequented. I had already kind of caught Earl's eye because I didn't drink very much—I actually drank milk at the bar. And one of his friends had asked me to dance but wasn't very good at it, and he said, "You need Earl," and handed me off to him. Earl was a *very* good dancer, and ... six months later we were married. Turns out, dairy farmers are not commitment-averse!

**What was your introduction to the farm like?** Earl had grown up there, and after college he started the farm back up again. When we were courting he invited me over to see it, and I remember going up the driveway, which is pretty magical, with big trees on either side, and you come out into this high valley and can see forever. And I thought, *I'll bet when Earl's been away and he comes up this road, he feels everything clicking into place.* It didn't occur to me at the time that someday this would be my home, and I'd feel that way too.

**You raise Guernsey cows—what makes them special?** Well, they've been bred for docility all the way through, so they're all pretty nice cows. But really, they just make the best milk—even a Holstein farmer would tell you that. Their butterfat globules are bigger than most other cows' and they carry the flavor and color of their feed through their milk more than other cows do. So if you are really careful in putting high-quality feed in front of your cows and maintaining your pastures, Guernseys are going to maximize that and, you know, show it off.

**In addition to the milk it processes, Strafford Organic Creamery is also known for its ice cream. Tell us a little about how you got into that.** For me it's kind of a labor of love.

Back when I worked at the bar, I would sometimes make ice cream with a hand-crank machine and put it on the menu. Earl had actually eaten my ice cream before he knew who I was! Here we do about 2,000 pints a week, and from the beginning we wanted our cream to be up front, the lead singer, with the other flavors singing backup. And it had to be *real* food: Our maple ice cream is just maple syrup, no sugar. The strawberry ice cream has strawberries, the coconut has coconut. In terms of flavor development, we've kept it pretty simple.

**What's it been like raising your kids on the farm?** The boys, they do everything. They were on tractors on their own when they were 11, they can weld, they can do so much. Jackson can pull a calf on his own; he's going to study dairy farm management. Clifford, my oldest, is at UVM as a mechanical engineering major. Harley will probably arrange his life so he doesn't have anything to do with a farm, though I suspect he might miss it. And my youngest, Oliver ... we'll see. Our family dinner table conversation, sure, sometimes it's about cows. But Earl was a history major, the younger two boys are science geeks. Oliver is into vexillology, the study of flags, so we hear a lot about that. It's wide-ranging. If you could hear it, you'd think maybe you were at a staff meeting for Encyclopedia Britannica.

## WHERE TO BUY

■ **Strafford Organic Creamery** products are sold at natural food stores and co-ops in Vermont and western New Hampshire, as well as in Greater Boston via the Farmers to You delivery partnership. For details: [straffordcreamery.com](http://straffordcreamery.com)

# Blooming Wonder

*Step into a sunflower extravaganza at Woodstock's Billings Farm & Museum.*

**O**f all the possible backdrops for wedding engagement photos—covered bridges, scenic orchards, a lakefront at sunset—day-to-day workplaces don't usually rise to the top of the list. Unless, that is, you can step outside your office and into a wonderland of sunflowers.

As interpretation and education coordinator at Billings Farm & Museum, Christine Scales had exactly that opportunity in the form of the Sunflower House, a display of hundreds of red, orange, and gold blooms that's billed as the largest of its kind in the nation. Launched in 2019, it's become a summer sensation at Woodstock's venerable outdoor history museum, attracting media coverage, flocks of visitors, and yes, professional photo sessions.

"It's so joyful, it's just impossible to take a bad picture in there," says Scales, who had her engagement portraits with her fiancé, Eric, taken in the Sunflower House in 2020. "We've had people book it for maternity photos, family photos... We even had two wedding proposals in the Sunflower House—both of them successful!"

It's fitting that a fairy-tale garden like this has a little magic in its origins. A children's book featured in Billings's preschool story hour program, *The Sunflower House* by Eve Bunting, had gotten the staff thinking

about creating their own sunflower house—a modest eight-foot circle of flowers that could be a living play space for kids, maybe, like the one in the book. Then came a fateful meeting with the master gardener at the Woodstock Inn & Resort, Benjamin Pauly.

"We had gotten together with Ben to talk about a new garden shed we were putting in at Billings, and we happened to ask him if he'd ever heard of a sunflower house before," Scales recalls. "And he didn't say anything at first—he just pulled out a folder full of pictures of sunflower houses and his whole plan for creating one. And on a much larger scale than what we were originally picturing."

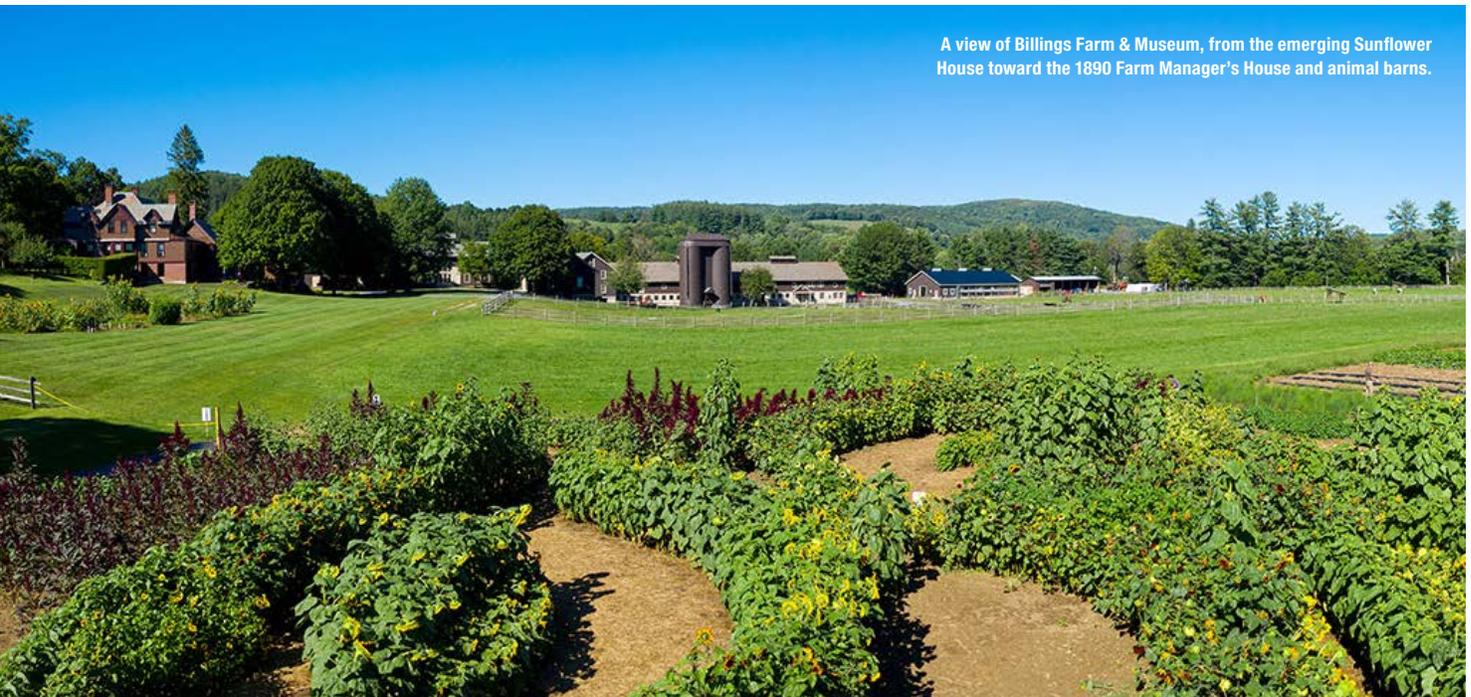
Pauly, it turned out, had been mulling the idea following a conversation over dinner with John Hallowell, then president of the Woodstock Inn & Resort, and his wife, Yarra. "She loves to garden, and she and I always talk shop," says Pauly, mastermind of the inn's famed organic farm, Kelly Way Gardens.

"She asked me, 'What's new this year?' Since we've had a home run every year at Kelly Way with each project that we've been adding on there, it really got me thinking, *What's the next amazing thing we can do?*"

To Pauly, the logical place for a showstopping new garden project was Billings Farm & Museum, which like the Woodstock Inn is owned and operated by



Among the most enthusiastic visitors to Sunflower House: pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds.



A view of Billings Farm & Museum, from the emerging Sunflower House toward the 1890 Farm Manager's House and animal barns.

EVAN KAY (FARM); BILLINGS FARM & MUSEUM (SUNFLOWER)

the nonprofit Woodstock Foundation. He had already been consulting with Billings for a few years and wanted to help strengthen the connection between the two properties. And when Yarra suggested a sunflower house, Pauly found his inspiration.

“Some may have thought that a corn maze would be the better thing to do—to make a big impact, to bring people to Woodstock. It’s a classic Vermont fall attraction,” says Pauly. “But my feeling was: *Nobody* else has a sunflower house.”

Besides, he adds, a maze is all about finding your way *out*. “A house is something you want to inhabit; you want to be a part of it and feel comfortable and experience everything around you.”

Working with the idea of creating “rooms” and “hallways” in a living structure, Pauly designed and planted the first Sunflower House at Billings Farm & Museum for the summer of 2019. Set on a quarter acre and featuring just over a dozen varieties of sunflowers, the end result made a big impression. “It was this beautiful, amazing, magical thing,” Scales recalls. “When I saw it for the first time, I immediately thought, *Yeah, people are going to want to come to see this. They’re going to come from all over to see this.*”

As popular as it was the first year, the Sunflower House positively boomed in 2020, a year when the need for outdoor, socially distant activities saw people streaming to places like Billings. And the crowds were back in 2021 to experience the biggest iteration of the Sunflower House yet, at 100-plus varieties on nearly half an acre; that was also the year Billings saw its largest-ever number of visitors.

**W**hen reached by phone for this article in late April, Pauly was on-site at Billings, occasionally talking over the sound of trucks bringing in dirt as he outlined the plan for this year’s Sunflower House.

“The design last year was built around a dinosaur shape—not anything you would actually notice as you walked through, but just my fun inspiration for how to organize the space,” he says. “This year, it’s more of a combination of random things I was thinking about: mandalas, visiting churches that have a labyrinth set into the floor. So it’s going to be a kind of meditative walk in a secret garden, with the varieties of sunflowers on the outside being the taller ones, but getting smaller as you go deeper inside.”

The palette he’s using is broad. There will be 108



**ABOVE:** Like a living blueprint, an early Sunflower House design reveals its rooms and hallways from above.

**BELOW:** Sunflower House creator Benjamin Pauly, creative director of landscape and design at the Woodstock Inn & Resort.

sunflower varieties all told, and while he says it’s hard to go much past that number “since they all start looking alike,” the way Pauly describes the flowers he’s chosen makes it clear there will be a kaleidoscope of sizes, shapes, and colors, all carefully

selected for how their heights and bloom times will play together through the season, which runs from late July through September.

There’s Starburst Panache, a five-to-six-footer that bursts into light-yellow double blooms all along its length (“You just walk around a corner and see it, and it knocks you over,” Pauly says). And Mammoth Grey





Stripe, a go-to giant that reaches 12, even 14 feet tall, with flowers that are up to two feet in diameter and hang like showerheads late in the season. And Soraya, which tops out at just four feet but is laden with cheery, dark-orange flowers that brighten the scene in fall, when other varieties have faded.

In addition, Pauly has begun adding what he calls “sunflower buddies,” about 50 different kinds of plants to complement the stars of the show—zinnias, marigolds, amaranthus—and offer visitors peak color through the season.

But even as he’s plotting out this year’s Sunflower House, Pauly is also laying the groundwork for “the next amazing thing”: Billings Farmstead Gardens, which will open in late June and mark another major green-thumb attraction for the museum. Not only is it a major expansion and reimagining of Billings’s former Heirloom Garden, it’s also a testament to Pauly’s new role in bridging the Woodstock Foundation properties, as creative director of landscape and design.

“Where Kelly Way is all about the culinary experience, and that elevated, organic farm-to-table-dining aspect of gardening, Billings is really about history and education,” he says. “It’s a place where we can get people excited about gardening, and engage kids, and create a sense of magic.”

To that end, the 8,000-square-foot Farmstead Gardens bring together several different kinds of gardens—including heirloom, pollinator, and even a “pizza” garden (filled with tomatoes, oregano, basil, etc.)—into one cohesive experience. Built for ADA accessibility, the new attraction is meant to help raise

As a photo backdrop, the Sunflower House is so irresistible that the staff at Billings Farm & Museum have even hosted #VTSunflowerHouse challenges on Instagram, with Billings Farm cheese going to the lucky winners.

awareness about ecology, horticulture techniques, and nutrition even while channeling the same sense of wonder as the Sunflower House.

“There are structures in there. There are elements that create a sense of mystery,” Pauly

says. “So you’re not just seeing everything in one glance; you’re walking through and engaging with it.

“You know, whatever reason people come to Billings is fantastic, whether it’s for the history or the dairy and farming aspect,” he continues. “But if we can get an even larger audience to come to see Billings’s gardens in their own right—they’re going to hear about them, they’ll want to see them—that’s our goal.” —*Jenn Johnson*

## IF YOU GO

■ The 2022 **Sunflower House** season at Billings Farm & Museum runs July 30–September 15. For information on related programming such as Mindful Mondays and the monthlong Pollination Celebration—or to learn more about the new **Billings Farmstead Gardens**—please visit the museum website. *69 Old River Road, Woodstock; billingsfarm.org*

■ The Woodstock Inn & Resort’s **Kelly Way Gardens** are open to visitors during the summer months and also offer a range of guided tours, tasting events, and gardening classes, as well as the farm-to-table Red Barn Dinner Series. *106 Kelly Way, Woodstock; woodstockinn.com*

# Driving Tour

*These Green Mountain greens are a golfer's delight.*



COURTESY OF JAY PEAK

Ski slopes dressed in rich summer green provide an impressive backdrop for a day on the links at Jay Peak Championship Golf Course.

**W**hile Vermont's golf profile has never been confused with that of, say, Florida (the Green Mountain State is home to just 70-odd courses, while more than 1,300 are dotted across its neighbor to the south), what it lacks in quantity it definitely makes up for in quality. Golf fans will find a number of top-ranked public clubs here, all bolstered by Vermont's four-season infrastructure of lodging, dining, and shopping.

Vermont's golf facilities cater to players of all abilities, with courses that are wrapped with some of the finest views in the country. Ready to swing into action? Read on for a selection of some favorite public golf courses in Vermont. —*Ian Aldrich*

### **Green Mountain National** Killington | 18 holes, par 71

Winter-sports enthusiasts may revere Killington as New England's largest ski mountain, but not long after the snow melts, the golfers descend. The fairways here are narrow, the woods close, and glacial boulders abound, but with views as special as the one from the 16th tee, you may be tempted stop swinging and take photos. And since cell service spotty at best, the hours spent here will be a true respite—one made even sweeter when a beer cart with Vermont's famous craft brews shows up on summer days. *gmgc.com*

### **Jay Peak Championship Golf Course** Jay | 18 holes, par 72

Located just six miles from the Canadian border, this Graham Cooke–designed jewel opened in 2006 and is consistently ranked as one of the state's top public golf courses. Notes *The American Golf Resort Guide*: “Amidst Cooke's modern shaping, [it] offers a strong test set attractively against a mountainous North Country backdrop”—which is to say that its woods and waters offer up some creative obstacles. However, each hole features four different tee locations, allowing even relative newbies comfortable access to this serene but challenging course. *jaypeakresort.com*

### **Fox Run Golf Club** Ludlow | 18 holes, par 70

Formerly known as the Okemo Valley Golf Club, Fox Run makes its home in the heart of the Green Mountains, just across the street from the region's famous ski resort. Stretching across more than 6,500 yards, this course is a delight to play. The 17th is a deceptively hard hole that challenges drivers to clear a body of water, while the 12th has been described as a classic New England par-4, with

a long beautiful fairway that escorts players to a famously fast green. When you've retired the clubs, test your other skills at the newly installed bocce, horseshoe, and cornhole setups. *foxrungolf.org*

### **The Golf Club at Equinox** Manchester | 18 holes, par 71

The golf club at the famed Equinox resort opened in 1927, and with its later redesign by Rees Jones, it has remained at the center of the Vermont golfing universe: *Golf Digest* recently ranked it as one of the “Top 75 Courses in the U.S.” The mountain views and other bucolic backdrops (that is indeed a church steeple within a couple of nice drives from the second hole) don't let up, and neither



The Golf Club at Equinox

does the course play. The final two holes are big ones, most notably the 17th, a par-4 that runs 435 yards. When you're done, take advantage of nearby downtown Manchester Center for a chance to rest and refuel as you make plans for the next day's round. *equinoxresort.com*

### **Brattleboro Country Club** Brattleboro | 18 holes, par 71

Opened in 1914, this under-the-radar gem has been ranked as one of the top 25 public golf courses in New England by *New England Golf Digest*. And for good reason: The 18 holes here are deceptively challenging. Where to begin? How about the 2nd, a par-5 that runs 504 yards and climbs not one but two hills? Or the 6th, a respectable par-4 in length whose greens are defended by a complex of bunkers? Then there's the 10th, a 492-yard par-5 that makes reaching the green in two shots no mean feat. And on it goes. *brattleborocountryclub.com*

# Out & About

*A sampling of summertime events across Vermont that are worth the drive.*



## MAY–JUNE

### Manchester

*Celebration of the Peonies at Hildene*

From late May to mid-June, when its thousands of peonies burst into glorious bloom, the c. 1907 formal garden at Robert Todd Lincoln's Vermont estate is a summer sight not to be missed. [hildene.org](http://hildene.org)

## THROUGH OCT. 16

### Shelburne

*"Maria Shell: Off the Grid"*

Quilt lovers will want to beeline it to the Shelburne Museum to see the exhibit of Maria Shell's vibrant, contemporary quilts, which push the boundaries of this traditional American craft. [shelburnemuseum.org](http://shelburnemuseum.org)

## JUNE 3–12

### Burlington

*Discover Jazz Festival*

Begun as a grassroots musical get-together, this festival has grown into one



Foal Days

of Vermont's largest annual events: a 10-day celebration that welcomes tens of thousands of music fans into local clubs, restaurants, and other venues for jazzy performances by regional and international acts. [flynnvt.org](http://flynnvt.org)

## JUNE 4, 11, 18, 25

### Weybridge

*Foal Days*

The UVM Morgan Horse Farm trots out its newest crop of gangly youngsters

for Foal Days, held every Saturday in June. The equine exuberance never fails to delight, so bring your camera and a picnic lunch to enjoy on the spacious grounds. [uvm.edu](http://uvm.edu)

## JUNE 17–19

### Quechee

*Quechee Hot Air Balloon, Craft, and Music Festival*

The skies fill with a riot of color as New England's longest-running hot air balloon festival returns. Among the on-the-ground diversions are live music and comedy, a kids' play zone, and 50-plus artisan and food booths. [quecheeballoonfestival.com](http://quecheeballoonfestival.com)

## JUNE 22–JULY 10

### Weston

*"Shrek: The Musical"*

Weston Theater Company kicks off its 86th season with this bighearted and fun-packed fairy tale, staged outdoors at Walker Farm as well as at other locations around the state. Other season highlights include *Hair* (July 20–Aug. 13) and *Steel Magnolias* (Aug. 18–Sep. 4), both at the historic Weston Playhouse. [westontheater.org](http://westontheater.org)

## JUNE 24–26

### Woodstock

*Bookstock*

Bibliophiles, rejoice in three days of appearances and workshops by prize-winning and emerging writers, live entertainment, and an enormous book sale. It's free, walkable, and fun for all ages! [bookstockvt.org](http://bookstockvt.org)

## JUNE 25–26

### Stowe

*Vermont Renaissance Faire*

Step back in time at the Mayo Events Fields as it hosts a weekend of medieval-inspired crafts, food, and entertainment ranging from jesters to jousting. [vtgatherings.com](http://vtgatherings.com)

## JUNE 25–26

### Woodstock

*Dairy Celebration*

At the annual Billings Farm & Museum celebration of Vermont's dairy heritage, visitors are invited to sample cheese, learn how Billings cares for its cows, and see prize-worthy livestock at the Youth Invitational Dairy Show. [billingsfarm.org](http://billingsfarm.org)

## JULY 2–DEC. 31

### Bennington

*"Parks & Recreation"*

Mother Nature takes the spotlight in this exhibit at Bennington Museum, which presents contemporary artwork inspired by Vermont's state parks and natural areas. (Jeffersonville's Bryan Memorial Gallery also hosts a portion of this exhibit, June 23–Sep. 5.) [benningtonmuseum.org](http://benningtonmuseum.org)

## JULY 3

### Montpelier

*Independence Day Celebration*

The capital city's largest festival kicks off with a food truck gathering and a FamilyFest on the State



Quechee Hot Air Balloon, Craft, and Music Festival

## Destinations

House lawn. Also on tap: a road race and a parade. Expect plenty of great food, live entertainment, and a spectacular fireworks show. [montpelierlive.org](http://montpelierlive.org)



**JULY 7–SEP. 15**

### Manchester

#### Manchester Music Festival

Southern Vermont Arts Center comes alive with the sound of music as it hosts everything from opera to orchestral to chamber ensemble performances during this venerable summer festival (48 years and counting). Catch one of the Young Artists concerts to see the next generation shine. [mmfvt.org](http://mmfvt.org)

**JULY 10–AUG. 28**

### Glover

#### “Our Domestic Resurrection Circus”

Performed Sundays at the headquarters of the legendary Bread and Puppet Theater, this show

mixes stilt dancers, a brass band, and papier-mâché beasts of all sizes in a raucous show that is equal parts celebration and social activism. [breadandpuppet.org](http://breadandpuppet.org)

**JULY 21–23**

### Burlington

#### Vermont Brewers Festival

Suds lovers, rejoice: One of the world’s premier beer festivals returns to Burlington’s Waterfront Park for the first time since 2019. More than 30 Vermont brewers will be featured over three days of tastings, along with live music and food and retail vendors. [vermontbrewers.com](http://vermontbrewers.com)

**JULY 30**

### Cabot

#### Cabot Arts & Music Festival

Brand-new on the summer scene is this debut event organized by the nonprofit Cabot Arts and held on the lovely Cabot Village Common. Attractions include nine bands in a range of genres, arts and crafts vendors, food trucks, and a sculpture exhibit. [cabotarts.org](http://cabotarts.org)



**AUG. 11**

### Shelburne

#### Lyle Lovett and His Large Band

Expect a mix of classic Lovett tunes and new songs—from the recently released album *12th of June*—when this four-time Grammy winner and beloved American troubadour comes to the Shelburne Museum as part of its Ben & Jerry’s Concerts on the Green series. [shelburnemuseum.org](http://shelburnemuseum.org)

**AUG. 11–14**

### Bennington

#### Battle Day Weekend

See Revolutionary War history come to life

during a reenactment of the pivotal 1777 Battle of Bennington, in which the Green Mountain Boys joined with militiamen from New Hampshire and Massachusetts to defeat British troops. And make plans to nab a spot on Main Street for the big parade. [bennington.com/battleday](http://bennington.com/battleday)

**AUG. 12–14**

### Waterbury

#### Vermont Antique & Classic Car Meet

Year after year, automobile aficionados flock to this show, one of the largest and oldest in the Northeast. Hundreds of classic rides and race cars will be on display at Farr’s Field throughout the weekend, which also features a flea market, food and craft booths, and a downtown street dance. [vtauto.org](http://vtauto.org)

**AUG. 14**

### Ferrisburgh

#### Pie & Ice Cream Social

If you haven’t yet had a chance to discover the hidden gem that is Rokeby Museum, this nearly four-decade-old summer tradition is a great way to do it. Dig into homemade pie and ice cream, enjoy some live music, and explore the grounds and exhibits of one of the best-documented Underground Railroad sites in the country. [rokeby.org](http://rokeby.org)

**AUG. 16–20**

### Rutland

#### Vermont State Fair

Celebrating agriculture since 1846! Reach new heights on the Ferris wheel, thrill to the action of the demolition derby, try your luck at games of chance, ride the carousel, enjoy 4-H livestock shows, indulge in some tasty treats (fried dough, anyone?), and much, much more. [vermontstatefair.org](http://vermontstatefair.org)

## Ballet Goes Free-Range

Born from the idea of bringing classical dance to rural Vermont, the **Farm to Ballet Project** is a series of joyful performances starring dancing vegetables, barnyard animals, and even the seasons themselves. Against a beautiful outdoor backdrop at venues such as Retreat Farm, Champlain Orchards, and Billings Farm & Museum, dancers from Ballet Vermont weave together a story that speaks to our relationship to the land. *Saturdays and Sundays July 9–30*; [balletvermont.org](http://balletvermont.org)



# Into the Wild

*Photographer Roger Irwin reveals nature's astonishing beauty.*



**W**hen Roger Irwin was 11 years old, his parents opened their Maidstone, Vermont, home to a pair of working photographers from New York City who were on assignment for *Vermont Life*. The visit was just two days long, but for young Roger, it was life-changing. The two photographers told Irwin about their work, showed him their Leica cameras, and later sent the Irwins a set of black-and-white photos they'd made of the family.

"I was just fascinated by the quality of the images," recalls Irwin, now 71. "There were real stories associated with each one of their pictures."

Irwin soon started crafting his own stories. He picked up an 8mm camera to make home movies and later a 35mm camera to shoot pictures for his school yearbook and newspaper. But soon life and work would take him in other directions. Irwin remained in Maidstone, got married, and raised four children on a 250-acre dairy farm.

Then, a little over 15 years ago, Irwin sold his cows and settled into semi-retirement. Not long after, he purchased a new camera. "I could finally afford to do photography again," he says with a chuckle.

Irwin's work was inspired by his love of the land and being out in the wild. He set up blinds around his



Roger Irwin

own property and waited patiently, sometimes for many hours, for wildlife to emerge. In deep autumn he'd shake off the chill with a small propane heater just so he could keep "putting in the time." Come summer, Irwin embraced the long days, heading out in the predawn hours, his backpack loaded with equipment, to hike the hills and paddle the waters in the nearby towns of Granby and East Haven. Often, he wouldn't arrive back home until suppertime.

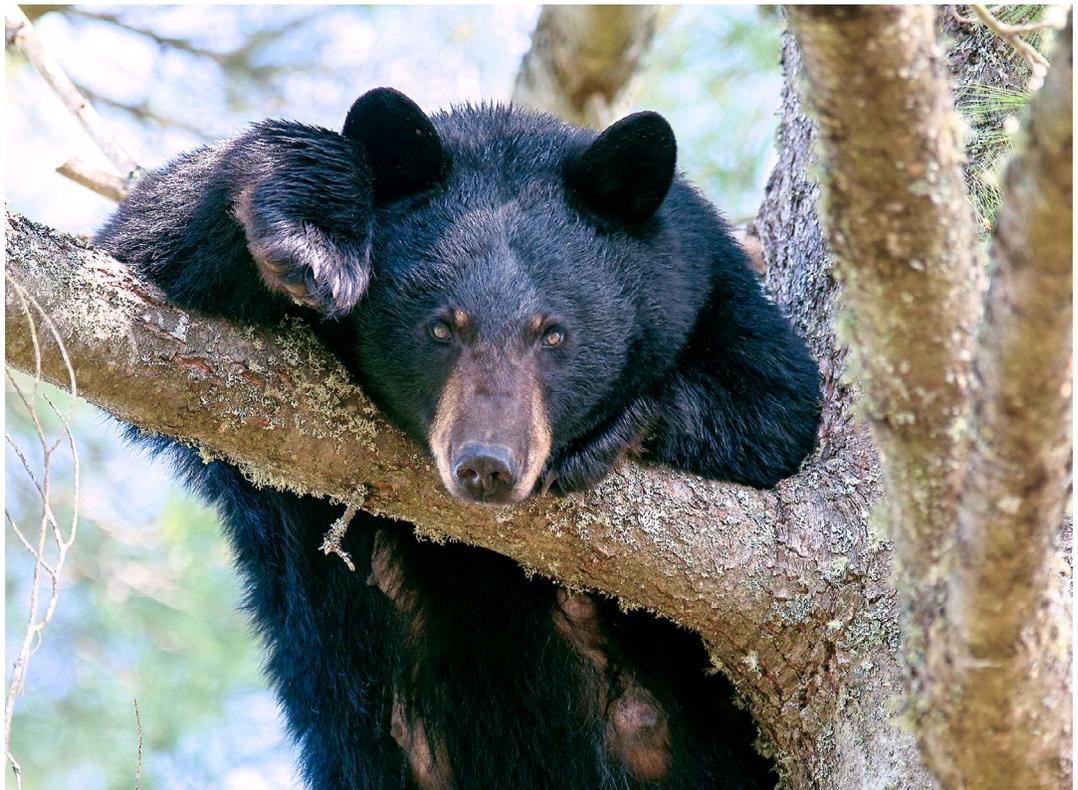
"I'm not a big people person," says Irwin, who has dialed back his vigorous shooting schedule in recent years. "And I just love getting out there, among all the peace and quiet, and all that natural beauty. To be in the woods or on a pond, to have those places all to yourself, it's kind of nice."

Irwin's passion for those backwoods settings is evident in his work. He is not an intruder in the landscape, but instead a patient observer—a photographer capable of sinking into his surroundings as he waits for a moose to appear, or for the light to hit the forest in a certain way.

Over the years, Irwin's intimate nature images have

**PREVIOUS PAGE: Loons on Stevens Pond in Maidstone. Compared with mammals, which Irwin typically photographs from behind a blind, "birds are a bit more accepting of a person being around. At some of the ponds I go to, they're used to seeing fishermen, and might even come up to the kayak to see if you've maybe hooked anything they can steal."**

**RIGHT: Parents may recognize the look on this mother bear's face. "She had two cubs up this pine tree who weren't coming down," Irwin says. "So after about 15 minutes of wandering around the base of the tree and talking to them, and them not obeying her, she started climbing up. I just love the expression: 'Man, these kids are wearing me out!'"**



ALL WILDLIFE PHOTOS BY ROGER IRWIN; PORTRAIT COURTESY OF ROGER IRWIN

RIGHT: Irwin doesn't do a lot of macrophotography, but occasionally he'll capture tiny-world scenes like this bee feasting on summer goldenrod.

Plus, he says, "insects are pretty cooperative about having their picture taken."

BELOW: With its beaver ponds, woodlands, fields, Connecticut River floodplain, and glacial delta, Irwin's own property in Maidstone provides a rich hunting ground for his wildlife photography. He keeps his eyes open while traveling, though, which is how he spotted this photogenic little barn swallow while driving in New Hampshire near the Vermont border.



graced numerous covers of *Northern Woodlands* magazine and been featured by the Nature Conservancy and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. And for Irwin, the opportunity to show his images and invite others to share his appreciation for Vermont's woods and wildlife is maybe the most important part of the work. His photos tell stories, and, as Irwin learned long ago, getting access to those stories can be a powerful thing.

"I just love being out there," he says. "It's my passion, and I just want people to know what's out there and to see what I've been lucky enough to see." —*Ian Aldrich*

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To see more of Roger Irwin's wildlife images, go to [rogerirwinphotos.com](http://rogerirwinphotos.com) or visit [facebook.com/Roger.Irwin.Nature.Photography](https://www.facebook.com/Roger.Irwin.Nature.Photography).





**ABOVE:** Irwin happened upon this moose family years ago while hiking up a logging road near the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. “We had more moose back then. It’s harder to find them now,” says Irwin. These days, he most often sees moose around local ponds in summer—which is when having a kayak for his photography comes in handy.

**RIGHT:** Irwin’s farmhouse and barns sit on glacial delta land, and foxes sometimes dig their dens into its sandy soil. Shooting from behind a chair blind, he caught this image of fox kits out sunning themselves, momentarily transfixed by the commotion of nearby birds.



Although Irwin regularly carries around his camera and tripod for unexpected moments, he says, “90 percent of the animals I see, I don’t get a picture of. And only 10 percent of what I do get a picture of is worth keeping” — like the lovely image of this days-old fawn, which he came across while walking the woods on his property.



**RIGHT:** Though Irwin has captured many memorable images of bobcats—like this one enjoying a little stretch near a blind on his property—a photo of their elusive bigger cousin, the Canada lynx, is still on his bucket list. “I actually saw one last year in my headlights while driving in Maine, way up there by Parmachenee Lake,” he says. “If I keep trying, maybe I’ll get one someday.”

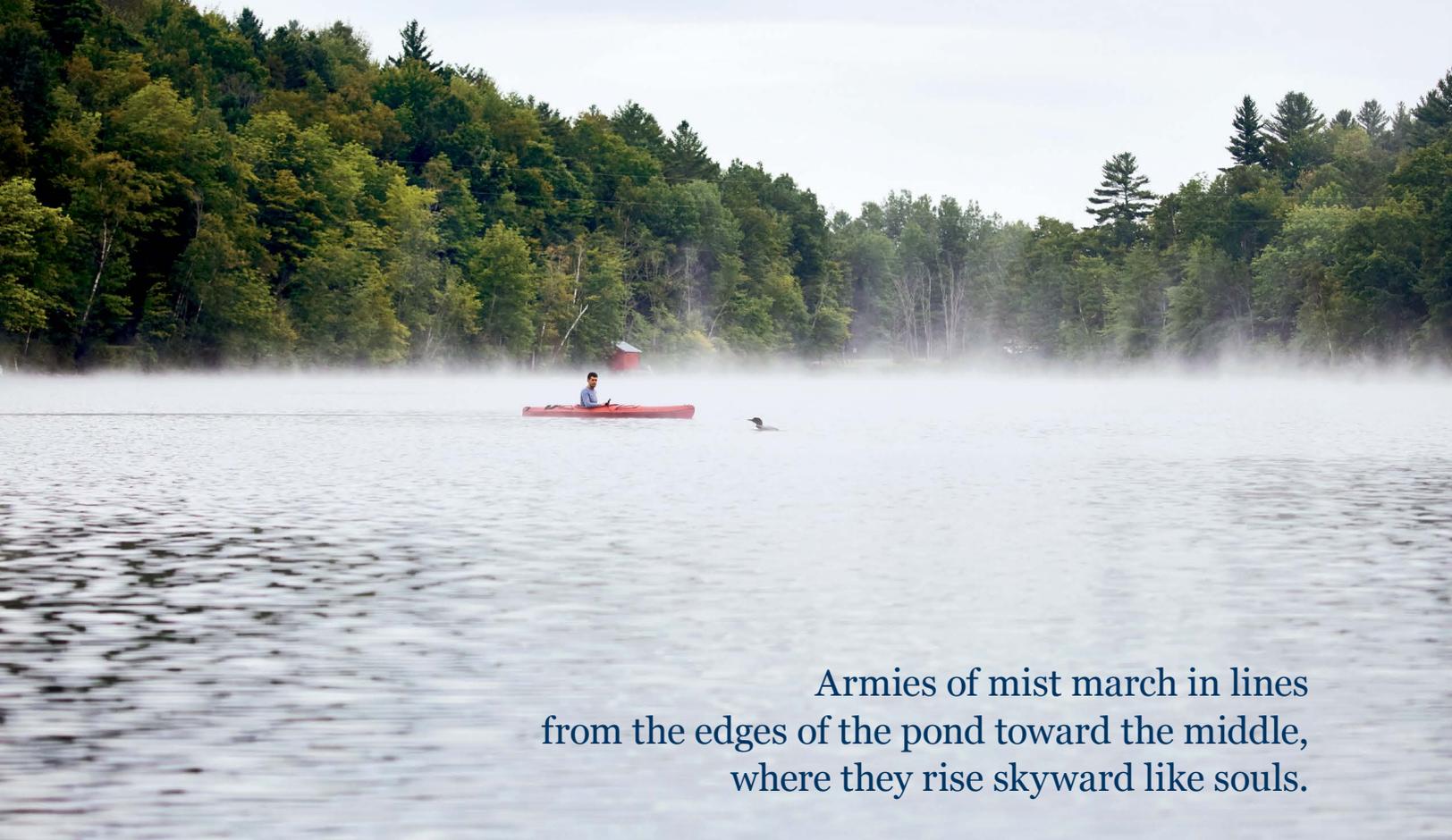
**BELOW:** This stately blue heron was frequenting a pond just seven miles from Irwin’s house, which meant Irwin could easily throw his kayak into the back of his truck and drive out morning after morning with his camera. “I spent enough time there that the heron got used to me and let me get pretty close,” he says—and which eventually yielded this iconic shot.



# Mirror Lake

*Diving into summer on a tranquil Vermont pond.*





Armies of mist march in lines  
from the edges of the pond toward the middle,  
where they rise skyward like souls.

**T**hese are the mornings I'll remember. The sky is already lit at 5 a.m., the lake like glass. Mist hangs in the hollows on the far shore, ghosted in the water below. No one else will be up for hours. I scooch my feet over the slippery rocks on the edge, then glide out into cool, green space, each arm stroke spraying whitewater. The mirror unzips before me, and my widening V rocks the sky. The lake bottom drops away, 40 feet, 60 feet, gone, until I'm just a tiny flier between heaven and earth. Technically, I know, even summer days end, but right now the lake is an infinity pool.

We bought the house for the lake. The house was everything I'd sworn never to take on—a 160-year-old farmhouse no longer square in any corner, with single-pane windows, a nest of snakes in the flagstone basement, and electrical wires sheathed in ... could that be cloth? But it didn't matter. It was in North Calais, on Number 10 Pond, a body of water I'd kept tucked in the back of my mind since childhood. I'd grown up two towns away, swimming happily in a typical Vermont mud puddle, but a few times we'd driven by Number 10 and I'd stared at the hills reflected in its stony depths and thought about the lives led there. Thirty years later, my wife mentioned an old Cape that was coming up for sale. *No way in hell*, I said. *It's on Number 10 Pond*, she said. *Buy it*, I said.

And so we and our 4-year-old son found ourselves with a rickety white house and a downright dangerous dock pushing out into freakishly clear water. On a

blistering June day, I dove in, clawed my way to shore, and pronounced it unswimmable: ice water.

That's the nature of Number 10, which you won't find on any map. That name, bestowed by settlers on the body of water beside the 10th of the town's 14 one-room schoolhouses, officially ended in the 1960s, when the state of Vermont upgraded all the ponds in our area to lake status. Overnight, Dog Pond, Sabin Pond, Nelson Pond, and Number 10 Pond became Valley Lake, Woodbury Lake, Forest Lake, and Mirror Lake. You won't catch locals using those names, but the state got one thing right: Number 10 is half a mile across and 106 feet deep. It's no pond.

The depth makes it cold and clear. Its forested sides rise steeply. As above, so below, as the ancient mystics used to say. Boulders and bass tumbling into the abyss. It takes the sun a long, long time to heat up all that water, and that's what fooled me. Number 10 Pond is far from unswimmable. It just takes its own sweet time getting there.

That first spring, loons nested on Number 10 for the first time in decades. We liked watching them cruise by our dock, their chick clinging to Mom's back or scrambling behind, the symbolism too obvious to even need mentioning. Mom and Dad took turns diving under and coming to the surface with minnows for Junior. We fed our kid Goldfish and let him paddle near the dock in arm floaties.

We'd lived in nice places before, but this was different, and the first time we listened to the loons wail

like wolves through the night, we knew we were lifers. Everyone needs something in the landscape to orient by: a mountain, a garden, a lake. We took our cues from Number 10's mood. Was it a swimming day? A sailing day? A day to simply watch the light play across the surface? We named every corner. Birch Point. Cedar Shore. Loon Lagoon. We discovered the log where the turtles like to sun, and the water lilies where the catfish gang hides out. When our son and his friends got bigger, we sent them to the rope swing on their own.

But mostly we swim. We like to say that we enjoy the lake in every season—there's the occasional miraculous Christmas ice skate—but let's face it: November through April is an acquired taste. Mostly we leave it to the ice fishermen, unmoving black specks on a grainy white scrim. For us, rebirth comes in April, when the ice breaks up and the loons come barreling in like overenthusiastic summer people.

Swimming starts on some unseasonably toasty May day. You know you're pushing it, but you can't resist. You stand on the dock, trying to absorb whatever heat you can into your skin; then you overrule your self-

## There's nothing like plunging into a cold lake to snap you right back into your body. There's no better cure for the wandering mind.

preservation instinct and leap. You pretty much bounce off the surface and wind up just where you started, gasping, but it's a beginning. The next day, you jump again, paddle out 10 strokes, then beat a quick retreat to the dock, your feet aching. Then you take stock of the situation, confirm that you didn't die, and do it all over again, maybe 12 strokes this time.

By June, weather gods willing, you can really swim. It's still freezing by *Homo sapiens* standards, but one of the great lessons of New England lake swimming is that it's all in your head. There's nothing like plunging into a cold lake to snap you right back into your body. There's no better cure for the wandering mind. You couldn't be more present, your heartbeat booming the seconds underwater. It's terrifying, but I have yet to meet the person who dives into the icy lake, climbs out, and says, "Gosh, I wish I hadn't done that."

Early in the season, I keep an eye out for the loon chicks, bobbing along like gray rubber duckies. That first year I got too close, and the dad shot over and howled in my face, chasing me all the way back to the dock. He was a nervous new father back then, yodeling at kayakers and the resident eagle and night shadows

24/7. The loons started with two chicks and ended the season with one. We all blamed the eagle, though it would never have held up in court. The eagle just sat in its favorite pine tree, stone-faced.

By July, I forgo showers, slipping sleepy-eyed into the water first thing. Armies of mist march in lines from the edges of the pond toward the middle, where they rise skyward like souls. By midmorning they burn off and the wind buffets the surface into thousands of steely grooves. Swimmers and paddleboards crisscross and bake in the sun. July is when you start getting strong, powering across the lake two, three times a day. On steamy nights we run down the dock and fling ourselves into the starry ink, a Double Dipper above and below us.

And then one day something has changed imperceptibly. It's still summer, but that little shower that came through last night must have been cool, because the lake doesn't feel quite as silky as yesterday, and when the sun slips behind a cloud, you shiver.

In September the lake is warmer than the air and the fog is absolute. I pad down the wet path, feet numb from the grass, and dive into an undifferentiated white ether, no shore, no sky, water striders flicking away. I stroke through nothingness, and then turn and find my way back, Adirondack chairs coalescing out of the mist, and I haul myself back onto the dock, towel off fast, and pull on jeans, trying to get my heat back.

And then comes a day when you can't do it. Some dreary morning in the 40s. The shower beckons, warm and uneventful, but it also feels like the day your aging parent decides not to go for the daily walk. Just not up to it. After that, there are always the Indian-summer moments, the midday dips into shock, but you're fighting a rearguard action. You know how it ends.

The loons pull out in November. There's no ceremony. Mom and Dad take off, leaving Junior bobbing in confusion, never having flown in his life. By then, the water is so cold that it churns like oil. Swimming is done, but we can't let the pond go, so in the short afternoons we canoe through fleets of crackly yellow leaves skating across the surface. The young loon blinks in the failing light, his feathers still patchy with adolescence. *Fly*, we urge him. *Fly*. But really that's only part of us talking, the rational part that knows it's the nature of things, that it has to happen. We try to ignore the other part, the part that can think only about how very quiet it will be around here soon, the part that has been whispering all along, *Stay*.

—Rowan Jacobsen



# Happy Campers

*Down-home goes upscale at this Springfield farm's "glampground."*

**L**ook into an alpaca's eyes—dark, long-lashed, almost cartoonishly friendly—and it's hard to resist the urge to reach out a hand, ready to pet. Let your gaze drop lower, though, to the very large, very no-nonsense teeth protruding from the sharply tapered muzzle, and well ... the hand hesitates.

"Let him come to you," Pete Fuller advises the visitor he's leading on a tour of the alpaca pasture at Springfield's Parker Hill Farm, which Pete co-owns with his wife, Patty. "And crouch down a little."

The visitor crouches as suggested. The alpaca edges

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: An alpaca grazes peacefully near the guest tents at Parker Hill Farm; evening lights cast a glow on the campground's pond; inside one of the fully furnished "glamping" tents; co-owner Patty Fuller gets a nuzzle from Mazey, one of the farm's two Jersey cows.

closer. Human and animal are face to face. Then, gently, curiously, the alpaca snuffles around the visitor's cheeks and temples, close enough to brush whiskers against skin.

It is exactly the kind of moment that many people come here for. Although Parker Hill Farm is what is popularly known as a "glampground"—an overnight destination that mixes

tent living with luxury touches—the chance to visit with its decidedly non-glamorous permanent residents, which range from alpacas and cows to chickens and ducks, is the amenity that seems to move visitors most deeply.

“We had one guest, I think she was from Boston, who was actually in tears. She said, ‘You don’t understand—this is the best day of my life!’” says Pete. “That was kind of an eye-opener for me, because so many people haven’t spent any time around animals or understand where their food comes from. That’s when I realized that we take for granted that we get to experience this every day.”

Heading north from Rockingham, it takes almost 10 minutes of back-road curving and dipping past fields and woods to reach Parker Hill Farm, set on a compact slice of 18th-century farmland. Then a similarly meandering driveway leads past fenced fields, a brick farmhouse, a huge old gunstock barn, and a storage building. Tools lean here and there; this is clearly a place where hard chores are done. It could be any working farm—until you head toward the back of the property, toward a small, perfect pond, and see the five canvas platform tents tucked into the trees around it.

This is the glampground (or “boutique campground,” as the Fullers call it), and by all estimations it’s the first of its kind in Vermont.

“There are other places in the state that advertise glamping, but they’re really cabins, or maybe one tent set up on someone’s private property,” says Patty. So



**ABOVE:** Installing ensuite bathrooms in all the tent sites (and showers in three of them) was “a definite plumbing feat,” says Pete Fuller. **BELOW:** Pete and Patty Fuller with daughter Sam—the family trio who took Parker Hill Farm Boutique Campground from dream to reality.

when it came to issuing a lodging license for Parker Hill Farm, the state health department was initially perplexed.

“They didn’t quite know what to do with us,” Pete says. “There was a lot of discussion, I guess, up in Montpelier before they ultimately classified us as an inn. And then we had to get a regular restaurant license for our little ‘café’ back there.”

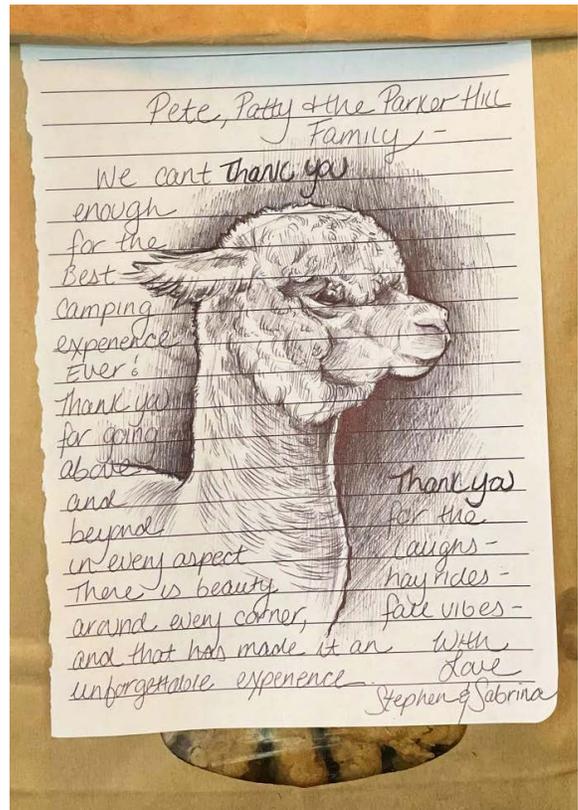
Ironically, since the Fullers opened Parker Hill Farm last year, they’ve been contacted by someone else in Springfield wanting to open a glamping spot in town, and they even fielded a call from a Delaware woman who wanted to move to Vermont and start a glampground, too.

It’s a testament to Parker Hill Farm’s early success, which is something that Patty and Pete say, repeatedly, they’ve “been floored by.” Neither comes from a hospitality background: In their former lives, back in San Francisco, she was a nurse and he worked in environmental engineering.

But by 2014, Patty says, “we had gotten to the point where we were both feeling burned out, and we wanted to unplug. Pete and I are both”—she pauses, and laughs—“I guess ‘adventurous’ would be the good term, and ‘impulsive’ would be the bad term. So we were ready to make a big move.”

Patty originally wanted to pull up stakes for Pennsylvania, where she had grown up, but Pete, a Connecticut native, convinced her to look at New England. They eventually settled on Vermont’s Windsor





FROM LEFT: One of the farm's many birds, a Barred Rock hen, peeks out from her coop; a Parker Hill Farm alpaca is memorialized in an artistic thank-you note from two of the campground's first-year guests.

County, with Pete scouting about a dozen properties before finding Parker Hill Farm.

"It was the last property the realtor took me to," he says, "and I pretty much walked on it and said, 'This is it.'"

"That was me, too," Patty chimes in. "When I came a couple weeks later and pulled into the driveway, I was like, I don't even need to go inside."

Aside from renovating the property and acquiring some animals, the Fullers didn't have an immediate vision of what to do with their new home. They only knew they wanted to eventually make their living right there, working in the open air, at the place they loved.

Patty had already been thinking about maybe using the barn for hosting weddings and special events when a visiting friend suggested they consider building a glampground. That was around 2016. It was Covid, though, and people's renewed interest in all things outdoors that brought the idea back to the surface.

Fast-forward to 2021. With the campsite built and permits in order—and thanks to design and engineering assistance from Pete's brother Bill, and all-hands-on-deck help from daughter Sam—the Fullers held their opening weekend that spring. "It was chaos, to

be honest," Patty says, and laughs. "But somehow we pulled it off!"

And as the season progressed, positive reviews kept coming in. Guests loved the plush beds and the cozy firepit; they praised the gourmet breakfasts, featuring local meats, eggs from the farm's own birds, even blueberries Pete had just picked himself. And they showed their thanks in some memorable ways, too—from the couple who literally didn't want to leave, to the pair of musicians who treated the Fullers to an Irish bagpipe-and-fiddle concert.

"One thing that surprised me," Pete says, "is I thought that when people came here, they'd be all into recreation and activities and doing this and that. But most people just wanted to come up and do ... *nothing*. Just decompress. Walk around. Sit by the pond. And it's so quiet up here at night, and with no city lights around, the stars are spectacular.

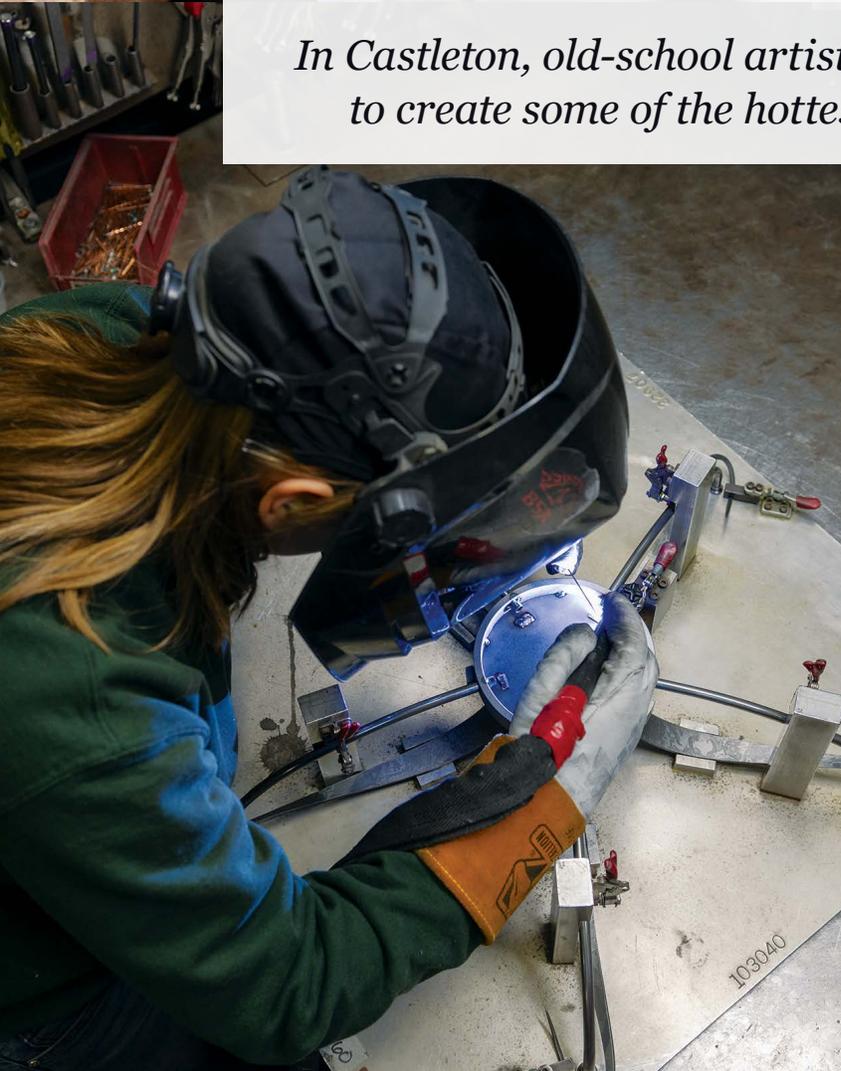
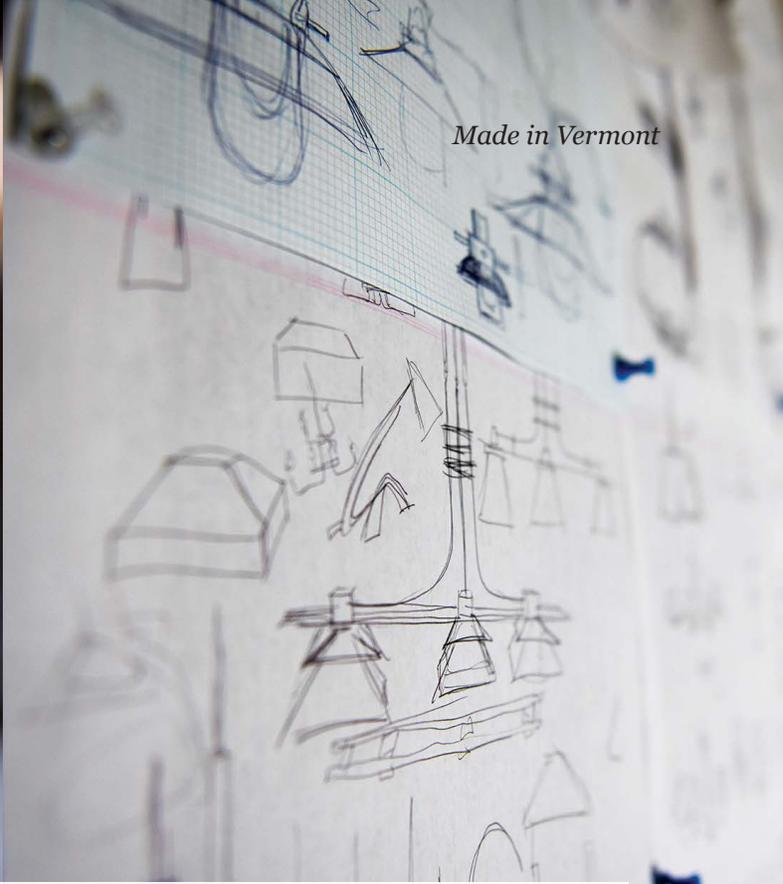
"This is so Vermont,' they'd tell us. 'This is amazing.'" —Jenn Johnson

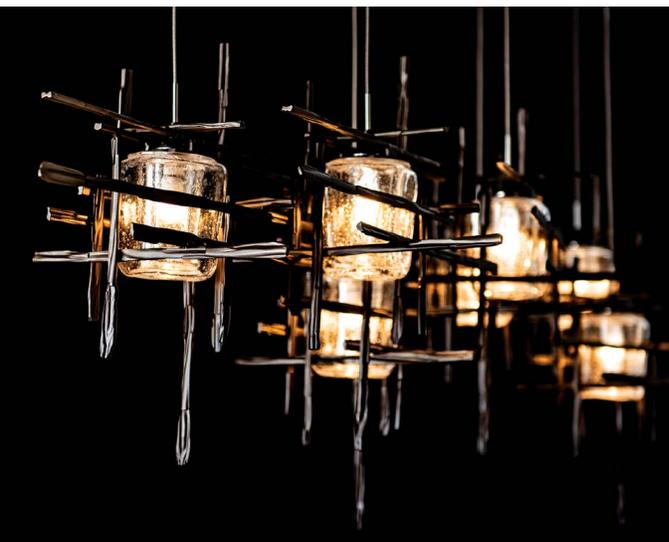
For more information on Parker Hill Farm, or to book a stay, go to [parkerhillfarm.com](http://parkerhillfarm.com)

Made in Vermont

# Hubbardton Forge

*In Castleton, old-school artistry meets cutting-edge design to create some of the hottest lighting fixtures around.*





Some 1,700 miles from Vermont there stands a showroom in Dallas that's a testament to modern artisan craftsmanship from the Green Mountain State. Like its sister showrooms in Las Vegas and High Point, North Carolina, it's filled with the wares of Castleton-based luxury lighting manufacturer Hubbardton Forge. There are sconces that glitter, pendants that gleam, chandeliers whose lines dance and swoop.

But the most popular item on display here is a homely, unpolished hulk of black industrial metal, tucked into a corner by the entryway. It is a forge—it is *the* forge, the one used by George Chandler and Reed Hampton, two young UVM graduates, when they founded Hubbardton Forge in 1974 and began turning out hand-wrought candlesticks, fireplace accessories, and eventually lighting fixtures. And to current CEO Maria Mullen, it is priceless.

"We are not like everybody else. We don't want to be like everybody else," she says. "And the best way to do that is to remember our history and our founders—who we are and where we came from. We try to keep that history front and center all the time."

Having arrived at the company in 2020 as chief operating officer, then stepping into the CEO spot the following year, Mullen is relatively new to the Hubbardton Forge tradition

but not to the world of handcrafting. Her grandfather was an expert woodworker in New York City who was known for his custom cabinetry and furniture; both her architect father and her uncle worked with him. "I grew up around that, and I always loved the smell of woodworking and being down at the shop," Mullen says. "Subconsciously, I guess, it somehow got under my skin."

Her own career path veered at first toward fashion, including jobs at brands such as Versace and Bruno Magli. But it was after she signed on with Murray Feiss, a family-owned company famed for making decorative residential lighting, that she "kind of fell in love with the lighting industry. To me it seemed like it was still fashion, but for your home." By the time Hubbardton

Forge recruited her, Mullen had been leading her own lighting design company, Kalizma, for six years.

Today, Mullen and her senior team oversee some 250 designers, artisans, engineers, and staff at what is now one of the biggest and oldest commercial forges in the country. And while the



TOP LEFT AND MIDDLE: From the artistic Tura Pendant to the austere Shadow Box Sconce, Hubbardton Forge has expanded its design range far beyond traditional New England styles.

TOP RIGHT: Company CEO Maria Mullen.

LEFT: The sprawling Hubbardton Forge headquarters in Castleton, located just down the road from the Hubbardton barn where the company was born in 1974.



LEFT: The hand-blown opaline glass in these Atlas Pendants has subtle variations in tone, ensuring no two orbs are exactly alike. ABOVE: LED technology plays a big role in some of Hubbardton Forge's most dramatic designs, such as this Solitude Circular Pendant.

founders, Chandler and Hampton, transitioned out of the company more than a decade ago, their spirit remains. “This was two guys in a barn with a vision, and they did it their way,” Mullen says. “They didn’t follow the conventions of the lighting industry at the time—they went more on feel, and art, and loving the product that they were putting out. And they absolutely always focused on quality.

“That all still resides here. We really have that feeling in our building of what we call it ‘the pride of the forge.’”

Put into practice, that means everything at Hubbardton Forge’s 100,000-square-foot factory in Castleton is made to order and crafted by hand. All the work—from initial designs to shipping the finished product—happens right on-site.

Even in assembling the ingredients of its creations, the company sticks close to a “made in Vermont” ethos. Its lighting and home decor have incorporated, for instance, graceful hand-blown glass from Simon Pearce and Burlington’s AO Glass, Vermont wood and stone from Maple Landmark and Fair Haven’s House of Slate, and lighting technology from LEDdynamics in Randolph. Working with local partners like these not only makes for a smaller carbon footprint, but also gives Hubbardton Forge a big advantage in the design process, Mullen says.

“Collaborating is so much easier when you can go right down the road to meet with the slate manufacturer or the wood manufacturer and say, ‘No, this thickness would be better than this thickness,’ and ‘We need something more like this shape,’” Mullen says. “Because again, we’re not doing cookie-cutter things here. And sometimes just explaining what our crazy ideas are can be challenging.”

Those crazy ideas—say, a custom-ordered chandelier measuring a whopping nine feet in diameter—begin with Hubbardton Forge’s design team, who all come from different backgrounds, including engineering and even jewelry design. They then work shoulder to shoulder with the company’s artisans and engineers, welders and forgers and finishers, to bring the concept to life. “We’re not sending a drawing off to a faraway land and getting a prototype that we may or may not like,” Mullen says. “We’re all putting our two cents in, one way or another, and getting it to be the best product that it could be.”

These days, Hubbardton Forge’s designs can be spotted in such prestigious locations as Las Vegas’s MGM Grand and Luxor hotels; closer to home, more than 100 of its sconces, chandeliers, and pendants lend sparkle to Stratton Mountain Base Lodge. The company has also notched a number of accolades, most recently winning the lighting fixtures category at the international home-industry competition known as the ARTS Awards.

Yet as Mullen sees it, making this heritage Vermont company a household name isn’t what motivates those who work there (though a designer once joked to her, “I’m tired of us being a ‘nice surprise’ to people... I want them to know who we are!”). The goal instead is to create something that people will want to keep for a lifetime.

“If you buy something beautiful, it stays with you,” she says. “We want people to have that attraction, that feeling when they will look at our product that they can’t live without it. It’s not just plugging a hole; it’s not something you’ll trash at some point down the road. It’s going to become an heirloom.” —Jenn Johnson



# Out of the Mix

*Ben & Jerry's failed flavors meet their maker at this quirky cemetery.*

Call it the luck of the Irish: This past St. Patrick's Day, the ubiquitous Vermont ice cream maker Ben & Jerry's announced that its Dublin Mudslide flavor had returned from the dead. The news not only delighted fans of the long-discontinued Irish-cream-based concoction, but also gave hope to others still pining for pints of flavors gone but not forgotten.

Founded in Burlington in 1978, Ben & Jerry's has debuted hundreds of flavors over the years. And while some become staples—like Cherry Garcia, 35 years and still going strong—the vast majority eventually melt away. Wavy Gravy. Dastardly Mash. Peanut Butter and Jelly.

Their memory lives on, however, at the company's Flavor Graveyard. An actual fenced-in plot set on a hill overlooking Ben & Jerry's original Waterbury factory, it offers ice cream fans the chance to pay tribute to more than 30 discontinued flavors. Opened in 1997, this bite-sized Boot Hill is lined with headstones made of real granite (since the original resin ones tended to “disappear”) and featuring epitaphs affectionately crafted by Ben & Jerry's copywriters (*Wild Maine*

*Blueberry / From the land of the puffin, / Now when we crave you / We turn to the muffin).*

A digital version of the Flavor Graveyard also lives on the Ben & Jerry's website, along with articles like “The Five Stages of Flavor Grief” and a tongue-in-cheek video of a funeral—complete with hearse and mourners—for the flavor What a Cluster (2011-2014).

But nothing beats a pilgrimage to Waterbury for true die-hards. And who knows? With guided factory tours set to return this summer, complete with samples, anyone bereaved by the loss of a favorite ice cream might just discover a new flavor to fill that hole in their heart, and of course, their stomach. —*Jenn Johnson*

## IF YOU GO

■ The **Ben & Jerry's Factory** Flavor Graveyard and Scoop Shop are open daily; factory tours and the indoor gift shop are expected to reopen in late June. 1281 Waterbury-Stowe Road, Waterbury; [benjerry.com/waterbury](http://benjerry.com/waterbury)



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