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Dan Tebo — was born and raised in Central Massachusetts and received a degree in creative screenwriting from Emerson College. In addition to not creatively screenwriting, Tebo’s work has appeared on popmatters.com and his very own VHS of the Week blog at vhsfromtheweek.com, which boasts a dedicated readership in the low double digits.

Bob Audette — has been writing for the Brattleboro Reformer for more than 15 years. He is a graduate of the journalism program at Keene State College in Keene, N.H. In addition to being a coffee bean aficionado, you can find Bob and his family hiking the area mountaintops.

Chris Mays — is a local vegan who prides himself on his downhill skiing abilities. He has been a reporter for the Reformer for nearly a decade. He also snowboards and plays guitar in a trio called Your Friends. He lives in South Newfane with his partner Erin and Yorkie named Lemon.

Victoria Chertok — moved to the Green Mountain state in the mid-1990s and writes and photographs from her home in Southern Vermont. Her work appears in the Brattleboro Reformer and UpCountry Magazine. She enjoys hiking with her two sons, cooking, reading and playing the harp. Her favorite wine is La Marca Prosecco Sparkling Wine.

Brooke Geery — is a freelance journalist and photographer who resides in the East Hills of Rutland Town. She spent 20 years living in Portland where she ran the online snowboard media empire Yobeat.com in addition to doing digital strategy for such brands as Nike, before returning back East to hunt mushrooms, skateboard Vermont’s hidden concrete gems and write about local food, art and culture.
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What’s interesting to the World’s Most Interesting Man?
UpCountry sits down with Jonathan Goldsmith of Manchester and Dos Equis fame

BY BOB AUDETTE
UpCountry Magazine

MANCHESTER — The Most Interesting Man in the World has indeed led a most interesting life, from acting on stage to movies and manifesting his most iconic image as a pitch man for Dos Equis beer.

Jonathan Goldsmith and his wife, Barbara, moved to Manchester in 2010, done with the Hollywood grind that the now 82-year-old man had endured throughout his prolific career, acting in more than 350 movies and television shows.

But, as we all know, the spotlight was not turned off for long. In 2006, he was chosen for what would make him into one of the most recognizable men in the world, not only for starring in ads for Dos Equis, but also as a favorite image for internet meme creators.

For a decade, Goldsmith could be seen on TV, in magazines and online as the Most Interesting Man, helping to triple the sales of the beer brewed in Mexico since 1890.

Since those heady days jetting around the world, Goldsmith, who once bragged in a Dos Equis ad that he "could parallel park a train," spends most of his time relaxing in his Manchester home, going for walks with Willy, his Anatolian shepherd, fishing on Lake Bomoseen and helping to raise money for the Make A Wish Foundation.

One day in October, Goldsmith invited UpCountry into his study (albeit via Zoom) to talk about his career and living in Vermont.

Q: How did you come to be the Most Interesting Man?
A: I was living on a sailboat in Marina Del Rey, Calif., for almost 10 years. There was a casting call for the campaign, and more than 50 people were whittled down to three of us. If it wasn’t for Barbara, I would never have become the Most Interesting Man. She really saved the day. After the final audition, we were on pins and needles, and the casting director called her and said, "We love him, but we feel he’s a little bit old." Well, Barb responded by saying, "Joe, how can the Most Interesting Man in the world possibly be young?" Joe paused and said, "I’ll get right back to you." That’s how it happened.

Q: How involved were you in the creation of the Most Interesting Man?
A: I’m just an actor. The idea came from an ad agency. I didn’t create it at all. A group of very talented young fellows in their early 20s created it. It was a wonderful role. I never really considered myself the most interesting man in the world and neither did a lot of people who knew me, including my wife.

Q: Were you disappointed when Dos Equis decided to move on to a younger actor?
A: No. It wasn’t disappointing to move on. What was disappointing was not seeing anymore some of the wonderful friends I had made on the crew. They were a great bunch of people to work with, and we had a great time.

Q: Who do you consider the most interesting actor you ever worked with?
A: There were a few. Burt Lancaster, who I was fortunate enough to star with in "Go Tell It to the Spartans," a Vietnam War movie. I wrestle with a heavy striped bass from an undisclosed location.
adored him and got to know him personally. It was a great experience for me. I also spent a brief time working with Henry Fonda, a charming, wonderful and gracious actor. I learned from both of them, and from Glenn Ford, who told me rather than wait for the director to say, “Action!” to get started, start a little before that.

Q: Of all the people you have met, who do you actually consider to be the most interesting man in the world?
A: No question about it — President Obama. I spent two days at Camp David as one of the guests for his 50th birthday. He was a fabulous guy in so many ways ... brilliant and charming. He has that wonderful ability that very few people have to be completely engaged and make whoever he is talking with feel recognized and special.

Q: What advice would you give to people who want to be more interesting?
A: You have to be interested in a lot of things, and to be interesting you have to open yourself up to the world, you have to be involved, and you have to read a lot. You have to search for people who titivate your mind and make you want to broaden your own horizons.

Jonathan Goldsmith of Manchester enjoys spending time in the outdoors.
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10 Movies to Use as a Buffer between You and Your Family around the Holidays

BY DAN TEBO

First the good news: after two interminable years, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has finally declared it relatively safe to attend large family gatherings over the holidays.

The bad news? The CDC has finally declared it relatively safe to attend large family gatherings over the holidays. Luckily, we'll always have movies as our great holiday neutralizer. Whether you're dashing out to catch the latest Oscar hopeful at the cinema or slinking down to the basement with a sixer of triple IPA for the umpteenth viewing of "Christmas Vacation," movies offer that great escape we often desperately need.

This winter, we're going to take a look at some Vermont-adjacent films that are bound to raise your holiday hackles. Because if I have to watch "Home Alone" again, I'm going to slap myself in the cheeks until my teeth fall to the ground like Tic-Tacs.

1. "Labyrinth" (1986)
Longtime Manchester resident Jennifer Connelly has been in showbiz for 40 of her 50 years and once gave the world's most disinterested Oscar acceptance speech. She really could've hung 'em up after "Labyrinth" and still have achieved legendary status. Jim Henson's vaguely sexual followup to the "Dark Crystal" features both Muppets and David Bowie. Henson FTW.

2. "Baby Boom" (1987)
Diane Keaton is a wealthy New York City lawyer whose life goes sideways when she inherits a superfluous baby. After being dumped by one of the Ghostbusters, Keaton flees to Vermont, where she beds iconic playwright Sam Shepard and starts an incomprehensibly successful baby food company. Cash money literally rains from the skies.

All of Tim Burton's movies are inherently Christmassy, even though few involve Christmas. It might have something to do with Danny Elfman's score (which slaps, natch) or Michael Keaton's unparalleled performance, but this filmed-in-Corinth funhouse flick is adaptable to any and all holidays.

4. "Funny Farm" (1988)
Chevy Chase headlines as a writer who moves to rural Vermont to write the Great American Novel but instead winds up plagiarizing his wife's children's book wholesale. The entire town is converted into a Rockwellian wonderland in an attempt to help the fractured couple sell their property. These scenes should scratch your yuletide itch ... if such an itch exists.

5. "Twin Peaks: Northwest Passage" (1990)
Middlebury College alum Warren Frost fathered writer Mark Frost, who would grow up to co-father the "Twin Peaks" universe. I can't think of a better way to while away a snowy winter's eve than curling up with a damn good cuppa' joe and a slice of cherry pie while watching the "Twin Peaks" pilot before shower-dosing on the first season.

Long before the wilds of Vermont were overrun by hops-hungry beer bros, they were home to Jack Nicholson-maiming wolves. Jack plays a foundering New York City literary agent who finds fire unexpectedly returning to his loins after being bit by a Vermontese wolf. I initially thought the wolf was an allegory for the decline of the publishing industry but nah — Jack is a no-shit werewolf. Mike Nichols inexplicably directs.
This snow-capped, small town crime drama is the more devastating of the two Russell Banks adaptations to hit screens in 1997. The other one involved a busload of dead children! Nick Nolte plays a New Hampshire police officer with poor dental hygiene and unresolvable daddy issues. A 114-minute infomercial on how not to deal with your alcoholic father.

In David Mamet’s ensemble comedy, a wayward film crew descends on a small town in a part of Vermont that’s totally Beverly, Mass. As usual, Mamet’s dialogue is as impenetrable as Alec Baldwin’s ever-present chest pelt. Levity arrives via some key performances by Phillip Seymour Hoffman and Mamet mainstay Ricky Jay.

For those of y’all who prefer your Christmas films to include actual Christmas, there’s this new school New England holiday classic filmed entirely in New Jersey. This flick features every actor ever born tackling an unholy smorgasbord of familial cliches. Sarah Jessica Parker plays Carrie Bradshaw. Diane Keaton gets cancer and dies. God bless us, everyone.

Barre native Miranda July has earned a reputation as one of the most original artists of the 21st century. And if you really want to see how much your family loves you, try throwing on July’s film “The Future” in place of “A Christmas Story” and see how long it takes before the room has cleared. My grandma split as soon as the cat started narrating, but maybe your grandma will hang on until July humps her couch. If she loves you …
Backcountry skiing, snowboarding, hiking and snowshoeing is inherently dangerous, with many opportunities to get hurt or killed. Bring first aid gear, travel in a group and stay aware of weather conditions. Bring ample food and water, too. Always let someone know where you’re going, and prepare for the worst to have the best time possible.

5 hidden hills to feed your backcountry hunger

No matter if you snowboard, telemark or cross-country ski, these climbs and glides will satisfy

By Chris Mays
UpCountry Magazine

Lift lines can be so pedestrian.
Why bother when you can go solo or with a small squad of key operatives to a backcountry trail near you.

Benefits: Excellent cardiovascular conditioning, mission-oriented legwork (unlike the gym) and views seen only by a select few.

Downsides: None.
Make sure to bring extra, insulated water, food and your own self-rescue gear, in case you need to spend the night.
Enjoy these off-the-beaten paths for your next telemark, cross-country or backcountry ski or snowboard adventure in Southern Vermont.
1. Horace Hill
Town: Dover
Trailhead: Valley Trail off Route 100
Terrain: This small section of woods managed by the Southern Vermont Trails Association is the perfect place to test out your equipment or start off your backcountry adventures. It contains four touring zones and a loop for snowshoeing.
Local tip: Check out tasty food and refreshing drinks at restaurants and bars nearby. Since the trails are part of the Vermont Association of Snow Travelers, watch out for snowmobiles who cannot hear you and might not see you.

2. Dover Town Forest
Town: Dover
Trailhead: End of Rice Hill Road
Terrain: This backcountry touring area, also managed by the trails association, is a short drive away from Horace Hill, making it a natural place to graduate to as a novice or someone with new equipment.

Local tip: Be prepared for steep ascents and stay at the nearby Cooper Hill Inn if you’re trekking from far away. Also, watch out for snowmobiles here, too, as the trails are shared.

3. Dutch Hill
Town: Readsboro
Trailhead: 910 Route 100
Terrain: Now part of the Catamount Trail Association, the Dutch Hill ski area went out of business in the 1980s but recently became popular for touring after backcountry ski enthusiasts banded together to form a nonprofit dedicated to maintaining the gem. It has some of the steepest pitches on the East Coast and is known for getting a lot of snow.
Local tip: It’s a popular spot, so you might want to get there early on a weekend.

4. Thunderbolt Trail at Mount Greylock State Park
Trailhead: Thiel Road after an intersection with Gould Road
Terrain: The trail takes you up Massachusetts’ highest peak at 3,491 feet, offering great views and a warming hut at the summit.
Local tip: There are varied snow conditions at different parts and very steep sections. Waiting until later in the winter when more of the base is covered with snow is advised.

5. Temple Mountain Reservation
Towns: Peterborough, Sharon and Temple, N.H.
Trailhead: Parking is available on Route 101 in Temple at both Miller State Park and the Temple Mountain Reservation.
Terrain: The climb is considered easy to moderate. As the site of a formerly privately owned ski area purchased by the state of New Hampshire in 2007, evidence of the ski trails still remains. The mountain contains several peaks.
Local tip: Especially on weekends, the trail system can be very busy. So get there early.
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Delightful! Sweet, you name it! This totally cool A frame had been refreshed, polished and updated with the addition of gardens, bigger front deck, patio and great drainage. Add to that under insulation and you have a very cozy vacation or full time home! The work is done and all you have to do is move in and enjoy. The very special, secret features are the babbling, singing Clay Brook.....and can you believe you can walk from your house right onto the trail system starting at the Missing Link Trail Head and connecting to miles of trails thru to Putney Mountain. You will never get tired of hearing the brook talk to you, sooth you.....or exploring Vermont on trails that continually excite you with new adventures. Stop! Relax! Kick back and turn you smile to the stars and find wonder while dreaming at your own private fire pit. Affordable, this could be the one!

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This beautiful home offers lovely views of local hillsides & close to 5 acres of meadows & landscaped grounds. The location is choice being close to skiing, yet is country in feel. Featuring sun-filled rooms, hardwood floors, a huge great room w/vaulted ceiling & projector system with screen, a kitchen/family area with fireplace, granite & marble counters & glass front cabinets. The formal dining features crown molding, while the library with sliding barn style doors & a marble fronted fireplace provides a cozy retreat on winter days. There are 4 bedrooms including a main floor principal suite. Relax on the deck escape to the sweet little cottage. Additionally there is a separate building complete with water & heat that offers many possibilities. The 2-car heated garage, whole house generator & security system complete the picture.

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Go see some shows!

Drummers play at Next Stage Arts in Putney in 2019. Visit Next Stage at nextstagearts.org.

UpCountry file photo
Get your mask, your vax card and get out of the house

BY UpCOUNTRY Magazine

With many venues once again holding indoor shows, there are several opportunities for live music in November and December. Concerts include instrumental rock, boundary-pushing American roots, a tribute to Joni Mitchell and a soulful Christmas show by a local star.

"We're bringing the Dartmouth Jazz Band, the music director from Sesame Street, stand-up comedians from Burlington, folk legend Cheryl Wheeler, films with Jay Craven from Middlebury College and David Stern's running a production of Edward Albee's 'Zoo Story,' among other programs," Next Stage Arts director Keith Marks says. "We're proud of the summer Bandwagon Series, and we're leaning into that momentum with our upcoming calendar."

Next Stage Arts in Putney is opening its theater, where it holds many shows, for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic.

"We're bringing the Dartmouth Jazz band, the music director from Sesame Street, stand-up comedians from Burlington, folk legend Cheryl Wheeler, films with Jay Craven from Middlebury College and David Stern's running a production of Edward Albee's 'Zoo Story,' among other programs."

The Stone Church in Brattleboro is also riding on momentum, having opened to indoor shows under strict COVID guidelines in the fall. Its fall and winter lineup includes the Southern California-born roots-brass collective Dustbowl Revival, jam band legend Steve Kimock, dubbed "The Guitar
Monk” by Relix Magazine, and a solstice mini-fest with Low Lily and Matt Flinner.

Many venues are requiring proof of vaccination against COVID-19. Some accept a negative test. Check with the venues for their specific policies.

Arkell Pavilion at Southern Vermont Arts Center
930 SVAC Drive, Manchester
802-362-1405
svac.org
info@svac.org

Dec. 4: Maxine Linehan, “This Time of Year” world premiere, 7:30 p.m. This holiday show by Manchester singer Maxine Linehan, called “fiercely talented” by The New York Times, is about love and loss, yearning and joy and secrets of the heart.

The Stone Church
210 Main St., Brattleboro
802-579-9960
stonechurchvt.com
info@stonechurchvt.com

Nov. 5: Dustbowl Revival with Smooth Hound Smith, 8 p.m. Doors: 7 p.m. Dustbowl Revival is known for pushing the boundaries of what American roots music can be.

Nov. 12: The Edd with Dr. Hammerhead, 8:30 p.m. Doors: 7:30 p.m. The Edd is an instrumental rock quartet from Burlington.

Nov. 14: Steve Kimock & Friends, 8 p.m. Doors: 7:30 p.m. Steve Kimock is regarded as one of the great guitar improvisers of his generation.

Dec. 11: Low Lily & Matt Flinner with Solstice Mini Fest, 7:30 p.m. Doors: 7 p.m. Multi-award-winning bluegrass mandolinist Matt Flinner teams up with American Roots band Low Lily to celebrate the Winter Solstice.

Next Stage Arts
15 Kimball Hill, Putney
802-387-0102
info@nextstagearts.org

Visit nextstagearts.org for show times and updates.

Nov. 5: Kalos with Dan Houghton & Rachel Clemente. Enjoy Celtic music by local players.

Nov. 7: Bill Lowe’s Signifin’ Natives. A living jazz legend comes to town in a partnership with the Dartmouth College jazz program.

Nov. 12: Vermont Comedy All-Stars. Statewide comedians come to the area for an evening of comedy.

Misty Blues Duet’s performance draws The Chalet’s crowd to


Nov. 19: Open Sesame featuring Joe Fiedler. A trombonist and music director of Sesame Street comes to town.

Nov. 26 and 27: Wild Goose Players Present Edward Albee’s “Zoo Story.” This is a David Stern production of a classic theater piece.

Dec. 4: Cheryl Wheeler. A folk legend plays for Southern Vermont.


Dec. 18: The Groovebarbers. An a cappella concert with members of the group Rockapella.

Mass MoCA
1040 Mass MoCA Way
massmoca.org
413-662-2111
info@massmoca.org

Nov. 5 and 6, 8 p.m.: Wayne Shorter and Esperanza Spalding, “Iphigenia.” Nine vocalists, including Spalding, will lead a local 10-person chorus and chamber orchestra, accompanied by Brian Blade, John Patitucci, and Danilo Perez from the Wayne Shorter Quartet, and Jeff “Tain” Watts.

Nov. 20, 8 p.m.: “Fragility Etudes,” music by Susie Ibarra and film by Yuka C. Honda. Composer and percussionist Susie Ibarra’s Fragility Etudes explores humanity’s interdependence with the natural environment through a world of sound. One of SPIN’s “100 Greatest Drummers of Alternative Music,” Ibarra brings together six musicians in a dynamic score of overlapping rhythms experienced in the round.
Lee Bank Stockbridge branch employees provide support to growing community

“Stockbridge especially is known for a lot of history, older families,” Stockbridge Branch Manager Jennifer Wilton said. “Our customers here are very routine, and long-term, faithful Lee Bank customers.”

Wilton, who said she has lived in West Stockbridge for nearly 30 years and grew up in the neighboring town of South Lee, said she wants newcomers to know that Lee Bank can take care of all of their banking needs and also be a major influence in the betterment of the community.

Lee Bank, founded as Lee Savings Bank in 1852, operates five branches, in Great Barrington, Lee, Lenox, Pittsfield and Stockbridge.

New residents have varying reasons for making the area their next or permanent home, Wilton said.

“I think they definitely all enjoy the quietness of the Berkshires and being able to be outside in the Berkshires,” Wilton said. “I can think of one person...”
A DAY IN THE LIFE

in particular who moved here with his family and kept reflecting back to his brother and his family living in the city and living in a postage-stamp-sized apartment without a yard for the kids and how difficult it is; so I think that has really drawn people to the area, to be able to hike, and walk and be outdoors. To have that sense of freedom.”

Each of the four seasons brings in visitors with diverse interests. Now, with fall in full bloom, people are coming to leaf peep, and then ski season will kick off.

“In the summer, there’s lots of art and cultural events,” Wilton said. “Year-round there is a lot to explore here.”

Some simply may crave a sense of belonging with a strong community foundation that cares and has a bank that can handle all of their banking needs, said Pam Boudreau, universal banker II at the Stockbridge branch.

“It’s important to have a sense of belonging,” Boudreau said. “I love our customers. I love to help and support and guide them, whatever their diverse banking needs may be. And helping to empower them.

“We have a wide range of products, and I use my banking knowledge to help them. I love listening to them. We always want to greet them with a ‘hello’ and with their name. Whenever I go out into my community, I am always seeing friendly faces that greet me, whether it’s just stopping off at the post office or just walking down the street.”

Community foundation: respite from big cities

There are no hard numbers on local population growth based on the 2020 census, but Boudreau and Wilton both agree that, anecdotally, they are seeing second homeowners making the Berkshires their permanent residences.

“I think a part of it is the pandemic because it’s allowed people to reevaluate their lives,” Boudreau said. “They wanted to be more part of a community, and I think they found that here in Stockbridge. We have a lot of arts and culture here. There’s a lot of diversity here. It just feels like more freedom here.”

If it sounds like Boudreau is speaking from experience, it’s because she grew up in Stockbridge, moved away for a few years but returned after getting married. Now, 38 years later, she’s still a homeowner here.

A Day in the Life brought to you by LEE BANK

JOYFUL FAMILY HOLIDAYS with THE RED LION INN and NORMAN ROCKWELL MUSEUM

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Sponsored Content
A DAY IN THE LIFE

“I raised my family here,” she said. “I was in banking prior, and I left to raise my family and came back to Lee Bank eight years ago, and I’ve never regretted it. I do find that sense of community and family here.”

Boudreau talks about her commitment to the community — as a member of the Stockbridge Tuesday Club, the Stockbridge Finance Committee and as treasurer for the Stockbridge Chamber of Commerce — but Wilton is quick to point out that Boudreau is being modest about her relationships with clients.

“There are customers who come into this branch who will wait for Pam,” Wilton said. “There could be two other windows open, and they will wait for Pam to talk about whatever is on their mind. We joke that her window is part banking, part therapy.”

The connections are real. Customers can’t wait to share the joyful news of a new baby or a wedding. But the connection means they also share the other, not-so-happy type of life events.

“I can’t think of a business or other bank where you can find that personal connection,” Wilton said.

Strong branches, deep roots

In addition to Boudreau’s service to the community, Wilton also participates in several community organizations and projects that assist those in need. She is on the board of the Berkshire Community Diaper Project, an organization of 8 volunteers that raises money to buy diapers for families in need in Berkshire County because it’s not covered under any other help assistance programs.

“It’s been a strange year, all around, because we haven’t been able to be out in the public a lot and do our normal diaper drives,” Wilton said. “So we’ve been really counting on word of mouth, our website, and monetary donations.”

The money raised has helped the volunteers be able to order the diapers and have them delivered. And a local business, Ray Murray Inc., has provided space to house the orders of diapers.

“We have volunteers that go pick them up and drive them from Sheffield to North Adams, to different drop-off locations where people can go, no questions asked, and pick up diapers,” Wilton said.

Wilton also is involved in the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, which recently had a walk in Pittsfield to raise awareness.

“This was a tough year,” Wilton said. “There was an emotional ceremony highlighting the struggles of many. I think that mental illness is on a high right now for so many reasons, but COVID really didn’t help a lot of people.”

Lee Bank welcomes new businesses, supports existing establishments

Some area businesses, like many others around the country, have felt the financial pinch of the pandemic.

“I think, number one, it’s been most difficult for the restaurants,” Wilton said. “They have had the most challenging time. But on the flip side of their challenges, they have been very creative with the outdoor dining or the take-out and just come up with all the ways that they can stay alive. That’s been so nice to see.”

Some businesses have purchased buildings in other parts of the town, and some have simply closed, which may have to do with retirement, Wilton said.

“Yes, we’ve had changes on the Main Street in Stockbridge, but I would not associate that to COVID. I think we just have people ready to move on,” she said.

To the businesses that are new to the area or considering relocating here, both Boudreau and Wilton said they hope they have the same community-oriented missions as the area’s existing long-time businesses.

“There are some real staples in Stockbridge that have been here forever,” Wilton said. “So I hope that they come in with the same sense of community and putting that first.”

One example she cited is Williams and Sons Country Store, which is on Main Street in Stockbridge.

“I remember going into there with my brother to get some penny candy, and that was a big deal,” Wilton said. “They’ve been here forever, and it’s a mainstay for Stockbridge. It has stood the test of time.”

But there are a lot of other businesses that people don’t think about or don’t see because they’re not necessarily store front or brick-and-mortar, she said. Those businesses have seen steady work while others businesses have struggled.

“I know a lot of our builders, our contractors, our tradesmen that have been very busy this past year and a half,” Wilton said. “And because of COVID, and because people have been home and taking inventory and therefore wanting to update and renovate, but real estate has been out of control, and with that comes a lot of business for these businesses. That’s good.”

Boudreau said that some bed-and-breakfast entities also have seen a boom in business.

“I know some of our businesses are seeing record-breaking summers, like our local bed-and-breakfasts, have had even better summers this year than prior to 2020’s COVID disruption,” she said.

As far as the area’s housing market, both Wilton and Boudreau said they hope the prices decrease soon so that those who left the Berkshires are able to afford to come back home. There also are people who would like to stay in the area but cannot afford to purchase a home here.

“The prices are through the roof,” Wilton said. “I would like to see a lot of our children be able to come home and build a life here. I would love to be able to see a lot of folks who grew up here come back home and raise their children.”
SEASON’S GREETINGS
from your Lee Bank family

LEEBANK.COM  413-243-0117

LEE  STOCKBRIDGE  GREAT BARRINGTON  PITTSFIELD  LENOX
Heirlooms Jewelry
The Mews
36 Main St.
Stockbridge, MA 01262
(413) 298-4436
https://www.heirloomsjewelry.com
info@heirloomsjewelry.com
https://www.facebook.com/HeirloomsJewelry
Affordable, unique treasures for all
Heirlooms Jewelry has unique and affordable must-have items for all visitors, with some pieces less than $20. Famous for their collections of Roman Glass, Firefly, and Baltic Amber jewelry, the shop has been open for 51 years and boasts an A+ rating with the Better Business Bureau.

Located behind the courtyard of The Red Lion Inn, in historic Stockbridge, Heirlooms Jewelry provides visitors a fun and friendly environment to shop. With specialty products from the Berkshires to all over the world, the shop has come to be known by some as “every woman’s favorite store in the Berkshires!”

Stockbridge Chamber of Commerce
50 Main St., Rm 001
Stockbridge, MA 01262
(413) 298-5200
https://www.stockbridgechamber.org
info@stockbridgechamber.org
https://www.facebook.com/stockbridgechamberofcommerce
https://www.instagram.com/visitstockbridgema
Rediscover the joys of the holiday in the Stockbridge area
While out of an abundance of caution the chamber-sponsored annual Stockbridge Main Street at Christmas events are canceled, there is no shortage of holiday activities for the entire family to enjoy.

In keeping with tradition, the town will still be transformed into a magical New England village, decorated with holiday wreaths and festive lights.

Come explore museums and galleries - including the original Stockbridge Main Street at Christmas and the “Home the Holidays” display at the Norman Rockwell Museum. Visit the magical Winterlights at Naumkeag, enjoy holiday events at the Red Lion Inn and be joyfully entertained by special popup offerings on Main Street.

Visit local restaurants and cafes. Explore opportunities for sledding on hillsides, ice skating and fishing on area lakes or cross-country skiing or snowshoeing on hiking trails. Ski Butternut, located 15 minutes from Stockbridge, provides hours of family fun. Check its website for a list of “What’s Happening Here,” during the holiday season.

Williams & Sons Country Store
38 Main St.
Stockbridge, MA 01262
(413) 298-3016
https://stockbridgecountrystore.com
https://www.facebook.com/stockbridgecountrystore/
Country store stocks surprises for everyone
Penny candy, jam, jellies, kitchen gadgets, toys without batteries, Polish pottery, puzzles and many, many locally made soaps and gifts -- Williams & Sons Country Store has something for everyone.

By taking shoppers back in time to the traditional one-stop country store, Williams & Sons is a favorite place to find stocking stuffers for everyone on a shopper’s list. And, like an old-fashioned five-and-dime store, it has affordable prices!
A DAY IN THE LIFE

During this holiday season, the store will continue its tradition of making a candy house to display in its window on Main Street -- for kids and grown-ups to enjoy. Looking for some holiday spirit? Come on down and take a picture in front of the candy house!

Nejaime's Wine Cellar
60 Main St., Lenox, MA 01240;
3 Elm St. Stockbridge, MA 01262
(413) 637-2221; (413) 298-3454
https://www.nejaimeswine.com
info@nejaimeswine.com
https://www.facebook.com/NejaimeWine
https://www.instagram.com/nejaimeswinecellar/

Seriously satisfying wine and spirits

Nestled in the center of the Berkshires, Nejaime's Wine Cellars has been a trusted purveyor of fine wines, beer, liquors and cheeses for over 40 years.

Nejaime’s offers “stupendous” spirits for all occasions, with its wide variety of potables.

And this year, Nejaime’s has dynamic selections of hard-to-find whiskey, organic wines, craft beers and ciders and artisanal cheeses. The store offers walk-in shopping, curbside pickup and delivery service at locations in Stockbridge and Lenox. And there’s no sales tax. Nejaime’s is second to none.

Lee Bank
75 Park Street
Lee, MA 01238
(413) 243-0117
https://www.leebank.com/
litrombly@leebank.com
https://www.facebook.com/LeeBankMA
https://www.instagram.com/lee_bank_ma/

Proudly serving all banking needs

Lee Bank has been proudly serving the Berkshires since 1852, providing all banking needs.

Currently, the historic banking institution encourages residents and visitors to learn more about the proposed significant expansion of IRS reporting requirements, which could infringe upon privacy. To learn more about privacy issues, financial planning and general banking needs, stop by the bank and speak to a knowledgeable customer service representative.

Peace, Love & Chocolate
36 Main St. (The Mews, adjacent to The Red Lion Courtyard)
Stockbridge, MA 01262
(413) 298-0020
http://peaceloveandchocolate.biz
picstockbridge@gmail.com
https://www.facebook.com/plicstockbridge/
Peacful store offers Chocolate & more

Peace, Love & Chocolate is a woman-owned business that has been part of the Stockbridge community for more than eight years.

When visitors walk through the Rockwell village-esque doors of the shop, their senses are overwhelmed by chocolate, chocolate and more chocolate! Showcases are filled with truffles, turtles, chocolate-covered gummy bears and peanut butter cups. Shoppers will find grab-and-go bags of dark chocolate wasabi peas, peanut butter and dark chocolate nonpareils, milk chocolate sea salt caramels and more.

The shop also carries Raaka Chocolate, Tavernier, Mariebelle and
Moonstruck brands, to name a few. And coffee from No. Six Depot and teas from Tea Forte are a few of the specialty items. Some have dubbed the shop's hot chocolate as the "best in the Berkshires." There are no high-fructose or partially-hydrogenated oils included, and many products are vegan-friendly.

**Stockbridge Coffee & Tea**
6 Elm St.
Stockbridge, MA 01262
(413) 931-7044
https://www.stockbridgecoffeeandtea.com
https://www.facebook.com/stockbridgecoffeeandtea
https://www.instagram.com/stockbridge_coffee

Coffee shop offers beverages, books, art & live music
Stockbridge Coffee & Tea provides much more than its name suggests. This cozy coffee shop also serves as a bookstore, providing a great selection of used books and local artwork.

The shop offers both indoor and outdoor seating and regularly hosts readings, art receptions and live music. Their coffee selections include an organic and fair trade bold house coffee, along with medium and lighter coffees from a local roastery, Six Depot. There also is espresso and specialty beverages, as well as pastries and quiche from SoMa Catering of West Stockbridge.

**The Red Lion Inn**
30 Main Street
Stockbridge, MA 01262
(413) 298-5545
https://www.redlioninn.com/
info@redlioninn.com
https://www.facebook.com/TheRedLionInnBerkshiresMA
https://www.instagram.com/redlioninn/

Landmark Red Lion Inn carries on tradition
The Red Lion Inn is an iconic landmark with warmth and character that express timeless tradition and a vibrant personality that brings luxury to the Berkshires.

Many charming village houses are located on the property, along with several unique options, such as the turn-of-the-century Firehouse and Maple Glen, a 17-room guesthouse that features unexpected twists on modern country.

The Red Lion also hosts four dining choices, ranging from the famous Main Dining Room to the Alfresco Courtyard, which is open during the summer. Come enjoy the outdoor year-round heated pool and hot tub and gift shop loaded with unique options. Visitors will find fun, modern experiences in an historic setting. During the holidays, there is always something going on!

**Casablanca**
Fashion in the Berkshires
9 Elm St., Stockbridge, MA 01262
90 Church Street, Lenox, MA 01240
(413) 637-2680
https://casabgroup.com/Stores_casablanca/
https://www.instagram.com/shooz_lenox/
https://www.facebook.com/lenox.shooz/

Luxury fashion takes center stage at
Stockbridge boutique
For 35 years, Casablanca has brought the best designer clothing and accessories for women and men to Massachusetts, featuring Margiela, Issey Miyake, MaxMara, Escada, Robert Graham Planet and more!
A DAY IN THE LIFE

And now you can visit Fashion in the Berkshires at its new location, 50 Church St. in Lenox.

Come treat yourself to personalized service and one-of-a-kind fashion finds. A knowledgeable staff will make sure shoppers leave satisfied and equipped with the best-looking luxury styles and fashion accessories.

Main Street Cafe
40 Main Street
Stockbridge, MA 01262
(413) 298-3060
tjonsinini@aol.com
https://www.facebook.com/Mainstreetcafe40

A place to go for all seasons

Located in the Stockbridge General Store building, you can find anything and everything you want for breakfast and lunch -- and the eatery serves breakfast all day.

A family-owned business, Main Street Cafe is your place to go for all seasons. The restaurant offers indoor and outdoor seating and take-out. There are daily specials, along with cappuccinos, lattes and desserts.

Seven Arts Gift Shop
36 Main St.
Stockbridge, MA 01262
(413) 298-5344
sevenarts44@gmail.com
https://www.facebook.com/7ArtsStockbridgeMA

7 Arts gift shop offers vintage sounds and style

Seven Arts Gift Shop offers gifts to satisfy all the human senses -- including vinyl records, artwork, candles, soaps, board games, posters, hats, calendars and so much more.

Its “Vintage Sounds and Styles” Shop, within the store, has the best deals on unique vinyl, CDs, vintage clothing and accessories. Shoppers may take an unexpected trip down memory lane, after entering the store and finding items they used to have or that Janis Joplin album they used to listen to many years ago.

In case you missed it, as regular customers know, the store recently moved, just mere steps from its former location. Find the store now at 36 Main St., in The Mews. Visit soon and find all the treasures to treat all your senses.

Sidetracks
8 Elm Street
Stockbridge, MA 01262
(413) 298-5100
Sidetracksgifts@aol.com
https://www.sidetracksgifts.com/
https://www.facebook.com/Sidetracksgifts
https://www.facebook.com/Sidetracksgifts

Sidetracks offers unique gifts for all ages

Shoppers in need of a unique gift for Halloween or Thanksgiving or Christmas don’t have to travel far.

If you need a unique gift, you need Sidetracks! The store offers a wide array of unique items and apparel -- and it provides facemasks for your shopping convenience.

Looking for a special gift for Mom? They’ve got it. Looking for accessories or baby gifts? Got it. Accessories, apparel, bath & body, kitchen & home goods, games & puzzles -- Sidetracks has gifts for all ages and all occasions. Shop in person, or online.

Contributing editor: SL Doyle
Independent Spirits

Kate Dodge, a founder of Putney Mountain Winery, in Putney, pours a glass of wine. 

Kristopher Badder — UpCountry Magazine

These women help lead the way in Vermont in wine, specialty cider, distilled liquor industry

By Victoria Chertok
UpCountry Magazine contributor

BENNINGTON — Even though Mimi Buttenheim, president of Mad River Distillers, began working in the beverage industry in 2004, she still experiences assumptions about her role in the business.

“There is an old-fashioned bias that women in the alcohol industry only work in the sales and marketing realm. That is not the case anymore,” Buttenheim says.

Mad River began distilling in Warren in 2013 and sells in eight states, and has a flagship tasting room in Burlington. It mashes, ferments, distills and bottles whiskey, rum and brandy from local and fair-trade grains, sugar and apples.

With her business surviving lockdowns and surges, Buttenheim is one of several Vermont women finding success in wine, distilling and specialty ciders, a field predominated by men. According to the most recent data, nearly one third of private businesses are operated by women in the Green Mountain state.

UpCountry spoke with several women in the industry, each of whom are credited with an increase in glass-clinking in New England and beyond.

Mimi Buttenheim, president of Mad River Distillers.

Deidre Heekin, of La Garagista Farm + Winery, in Barnard.
Sustainability at the heart

For Deirdre Heekin, of La Garagista Farm + Winery in Barnard, winemaking is nothing short of a direct connection between herself, the industry and the land.

“I love making wine in Vermont, and I love living in Vermont. We are at the frontier of so many aspects of wine here,” Heekin says, “and the farming and fermentation that is happening here is leading the way in a current and crucial dialogue in wine that concerns the climate crisis.”

Heekin’s winery cares for its land using permaculture, a resilient form of farming that uses natural ecology and biodynamics, which is holistic, ecological and ethical farming, to guide the plantings and regeneration of the soil.

“Vermont can be a model of how we move forward with thoughtful and regenerative care of the land and how that translates into beautiful wines that speak of their landscape,” says Heekin.

Vermont vineyards and their individual landscapes make the wines here unique, Heekin says.

“The grapes we grow and the wines they make speak so clearly about the heart of this place.”

The taste of the place!

Charles and Kate Dodge of Putney Mountain Winery & Spirits.

Kristopher Radder — UpCountry Magazine

Kate Dodge, co-founder of Putney Mountain Winery & Spirits, explains that she and her husband Charles go straight to the farmers, several from fourth-generation farms, for their fruits.

What started as a hobby in the mid-1990s grew into brisk sales to the public in 1998, Dodge recalls, beginning with four different kinds of sparkling apple wines. The varied fruits of the region provided opportunities for invention and growth.

Since opening in the Basketville building in Putney, Putney Mountain Winery & Spirits has tripled its footprint, and now includes a large tasting room and production space. It makes six wines and six liqueurs, and a non-alcoholic sparkling cider, each benefiting from more than 10 different kinds of local fruits and other local ingredients.

“The area where we live has such a plethora of fruits, apples, berries, rhubarb, black currants and others, that we source our ingredients here,” Dodge says. “We seek to make wines and liqueurs that reflect the richness and freshness of this area.”
Putney Mountain’s Vermont Cassis, made with black currants, blueberries and raspberries, won Best in Show at the New York World Spirits Competition in 2019. Its Northern Spy sparkling apple wine was used to christen the USS Vermont, a Naval submarine, and in 2021 was awarded Best Fruit Wine at the Atlantic Seaboard Wine Association annual competition.

“We believe that the best wine is made from produce of the region. The Connecticut River Valley is home to world-class fruit production. What makes our wines special is ‘the taste of the place,’” Dodge says.

**Keeping Vermont landscapes working**

Eleanor Leger, co-founder of Eden Ciders in Newport, notes that it’s the mission of her business to work with small, local orchards.

“We want to keep Vermont landscapes working, and supporting small family farms is one way to do that,” says Leger, who owns Eden Ciders with her husband, Albert.

Leger points out that a bottle of Eden cider consists of 95 percent Vermont fruit.

“So when you buy our product, you are not only supporting a small local producer, like Eden, but small local orchards, as well,” she says.

Eden Ciders has been buying apples from Scott Farm in Dummerston since 2007, Leger says, ranging from 50 to 100 bins of apples per season.

Leger adds that “the cider industry was pretty small until 2011,” and that there are quite a few women cider makers in Vermont and nationally.

“There are four women cider makers on the board of the American Cider Makers Association out of 11 members,” she notes. “We have the whole spectrum of the cider industry represented in our little state of Vermont.”

To learn more about these independent spirits, visit lagaragista.com, edenciders.com, putneymountainwinery.com and madriverdistillers.com.
Drink & Dine in Southern Vermont

Photo by Sebastian Coman Photography
Sponsored Content
River Garden Marketplace heating up for holiday season

Step inside the newly renovated space and partake of the triple crafts: craft beer, craft food and crafts

BY UpCOUNTRY Magazine

Like other famous marketplaces in Seattle, New York and Boston, River Garden Marketplace is already becoming a community hub, focused on keeping everything it offers local and fresh.

The glass ceilinged space on the Connecticut River in the heart of downtown Brattleboro is dedicated to the triple craft approach: craft beer, craft food and “craft” crafts. Since opening in September, it’s already becoming a popular destination.

The marketplace is inspired by places such as the Chelsea Market in New York City, where a variety of items are available under one roof.
“That was kind of the vibe for us,” co-owner David Hiler says. “Changing menus, changing crafters, changing beers, changing events so there’s always something new. We love the concept of it being a community-minded space that attracts everybody who visits town and everybody who already lives in our town and celebrates our community.”

The owners are no strangers to running successful businesses. Starting with the Whetstone Station Restaurant and Brewery about a decade ago, their collection now also includes Kampfires Campground and Inn in Dunmerston and the Rollin’ Stone food truck.

They bought the River Garden from the Strolling of the Heifers in July, breathing new life into a focal part of downtown with renovations and exciting plans for the space. Feeling the space was previously under-used, Hiler says his hope is to give it more exposure as customers can grab a drink or bite to eat while they check out live music and items made by local crafters.

Hiler says the goal is to keep the food menu “fairly fluid.” Several staples of the menu will include chicken gyro, hummus, cheese plates and special meatballs. The rotating chef program will feature some chefs from the Whetstone Station and neighbors who might not have a brick-and-mortar location.

Octoberfest was last month’s theme. Comfort food is up in November, highlighting what Hiler calls “the Thanksgiving home-cooked meal vibe.” And he says “holiday-flavored” foods will be on December’s menu.

Many of the beer selections are made in Vermont and New England. The bar has 20 beers on draft — 18 are from guest breweries and two are from the Whetstone Station — and more than 100 bottles and cans.

Other options include wine, seltzer, ciders and a variety of malt beverages. A soda fountain allows for a virtually unlimited number of non-alcoholic drinks and flavor options.

With the Bottle and Can Club, customers can earn a customized tumbler after purchasing 99 beers.

Hiler says the Whetstone Station is sunsetting its mug club, capping it at 500 lifetime members, creating an opportunity for a new program at the River Garden. The new spot enables his group to again highlight beer from all its favorite breweries and provide an educational drinking challenge.

Also, the space allows for more live music and events. Open mic is hosted by Brattleboro musician Kevin Parry every Monday night, and music is being scheduled for Friday nights.

A downstairs space will host events such as anniversaries, baby showers and rehearsal dinners. River Garden Marketplace also has three televisions and a drop-down screen showing sports and special events.

Hand Built Market leases the space where crafts created by local artists are shown and sold. Like the bar and restaurant, it’s open from noon to 8 p.m. Sunday and Monday, and noon to 9 p.m. Thursday through Saturday.

Seating is available inside and outside.

So far, open mic night has been a huge success.

“We had to go overtime in the past few weeks because so many people have signed up,” Hiler said. “We’re starting to get a good local crowd coming through and a lot of visitors are finding us.”

Below: The deck overlooking Wantastiquet Mountain.

Right: Chef Julius Caballero pairs a peanut butter stout with his craft pickle plate.

Richard Lolatte photos — UpCountry Magazine
At Madison Brewing Company Pub & Restaurant on Main Street in Bennington, guests will enjoy ambiance, food with local flair and a friendly atmosphere, not to mention 14 rotating-taps, currently including 13 beers and one cider.

Caroline Bonnivier Snyder — UpCountry Magazine

Madison’s: Come for the beer, stay for the food

Distinctive, in-house craft brews and original takes on meals with local ingredients make this Bennington hotspot a must-visit

By Brooke Geery
Sponsored content contributor

BENNINGTON — The town’s first brewery and brew pub has been crafting unique and delicious beers since the early 1990s and that tradition continues with brewmaster Mike Madison at the helm.

Guests will enjoy 14 rotating-taps, currently including 13 beers and one cider, served up in a converted storefront right on Main Street. For the beer enthusiast, Madison Brewing Company Pub & Restaurant is a little slice of heaven — whether you prefer IPAs, something light, stout or seasonal, such as the guest-favorite chocolate peanut butter or its award-winning pumpkin ale, you won’t want to stop at just one. But there’s more to Madison’s than just beer.

“The beer could be good, but the food’s gotta make you come back!” Madison laughed.

Because of the pandemic, the brew pub has refined its food
offerings to one all-day menu that includes a variety of small and sharing plates, soups, salads and hand-held items. Don’t pass up “No Bones About it” — the pub’s ale-battered chicken tenders, topped with cheese and served with your choice of sauces. The fish and chips are also a guest go-to, and you can’t miss with Madison’s burgers.

If you’re looking to use a fork and knife, the delicious “Chicken Vermont” is smothered in Vermont cheddar, local caramelized apples, a maple-whiskey demi-glace and served with mashed potatoes and a seasonal vegetable. They also offer a kids’ menu, making the pub a destination for families and business people alike.

You never know who you might run into at Madison’s, as its consistent quality and longevity have made it a popular stop on many capital-district brew tours.

The above is paid sponsored content

Madison Brewing Company
Pub & Restaurant
428 Main St, Bennington
Street parking on Main Street; parking lot accessed on Pleasant Street
madisonbrewingco.com
madisonbrewingcompany@gmail.com
Facebook: MadisonBrewingCo
Instagram: madisonbrewingco

421 brings global, metro food and flair to the country

Bennington’s newest and coolest bar, bistro is ready to put the social back in your life

BY BROOKE GEERY
Sponsored content contributor

BENNINGTON — Looking for that perfect place in Bennington? Check out The 421 Craft Bar and Kitchen. The trendy-yet-quaint social house is now open after five and half years of renovation, and is a go-to for locals looking for a

The 421 is going to make any winter night feel special with culinary and drink originals.

Caroline Bonnivier Snyder — UpCountry Magazine
At The 421, basic is not on the menu. When you check out The 421 Craft Bar and Kitchen for the first time, you’ll soon realize that you’ve finally found your regular spot. The bistro is now open and is a go-to for locals looking for a special night on the town. There’s an ever-evolving menu of creative food items and specialty craft cocktails, and no stock recipes to be found.

Caroline Bonnivier Snyder — UpCountry Magazine

special night on the town.

“It is a true craft bar with prices very reasonable,” said owner and chef Mel Madison. “This place just screams fun. Our mission statement is ‘drink, eat, talk’ — we try to bring back the social aspect of being in a really cool bar.”

That fun includes an ever-evolving menu of creative food items and specialty craft cocktails ($12 each). At 421, they focus on freestyle cooking, meaning all the items on the menu are 100 percent original — no stock recipes here.

Madison trained as a chef in New York City and Italy, and brings his own take on ethnic cuisines to the Green Mountains. Alongside executive chef Jason Battis and sous chef Phillip Malinowski, he prides himself on his authentic brick-oven pizzas (which have some surprising toppings).

Our can’t-miss items include Kofta lollipop meatball kebabs and hand-crafted Peruvian-style empanadas. Tapas go great with a unique cocktail, such as one of 421’s seasonally correct beverages. If you prefer, there’s also a rotating-selection of wine, beer and kombucha on tap.

Food and drinks are just part of the experience at 421, where there are no TVs and, according to Madison, no shortage of good people — from business associates, friends, travelers and family.

Here are a few of 421’s rave reviews already …

“Our server was a treasure for your operation and guests. I have only visited Bennington once in 71 years, but will recommend to friends.”

“Nice patio with heat towers, plants and fresh air. Food was great and we felt comfortable eating there. What a great idea.”

“Phenomenal! We own several restaurants in Philadelphia, a town known for our outstanding food, and I am happy to report the outstanding and talented chefs here could show any one of our snobby Philly chefs a run for their money! You must give it a try ASAP!”

Says Madison, “We take pride in our level of service from kitchen to bar to dining. It is a great team of knowledgeable people that truly care about the level of service and quality of product. And the quality of people here is hard to come by.”

The 421 Craft Bar and Kitchen
421 Main St., Bennington
Street parking on Main Street
the421craftbar.com
421craftbar@gmail.com
Facebook: The-421-Craft-Bar-Kitchen-109010118038175
Instagram: the421craftbar
Ryan & Casey Liquors

We are Open 7 days a Week: M-Th 8am-10pm, Fri & Sat 8am-11pm, Sun 10am-9pm
55 Main Street, Greenfield, MA - 413-772-6585
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Get your orders in before Thanksgiving to be able to give for Dec 1st.
24 Beers of Christmas

New add on surprise - Beer Explorer Package +$25
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LIMITED & THE HARD TO FIND SPIRITS
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Andrzej Mikijaniec
Owner Chef

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Above: Around 750 marijuana plants are ready to be harvested in the greenhouse at The Pass dispensary in Sheffield, Mass. Specialized grow lights automatically turn on to supplement the amount of the light that the flowering plants need each day. 

Right: A Canna Provisions staffer holds some freshly trimmed flower.

By Brooke Geery
UpCountry Magazine correspondent

Vermont is known for its green — license plates, mountains, and of course, cannabis. But while many Vermont farmers have perfected their own buds, for the general consumer, the ability to stop and shop for them is still about a year away. Until the first recreational retail outlets open in October 2022, visitors to the high hills of the Green Mountains should plan to come prepared. Luckily, neighboring Massachusetts has already cultivated a thriving marijuana market, with no shortage of locally grown products to choose from.

We’ve put together a guide with a few of the best locales on each route to make sure you’re fully prepared with herbal refreshment for whatever adventures you might enjoy. (Don’t forget your government-issued ID proving you’re of legal age.)

**The Pass**
1375 N. Main St., Sheffield, Mass.
413-644-6892
9 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week
thepass.co

Surrounded by cornfields and next to a spirits tasting room, The Pass is the closest dispensary to New York, making it a convenient first stop if you just can’t wait to start your vacation. Open since July 2020, The Pass is a “vertically integrated” company, which means they do all of their cultivation, processing, lab testing and retail right on site at the Sheffield campus. All the flower you’ll find there was literally grown next door. If smoking isn’t your thing, The Pass also offers a large edible menu, including chocolates, gummies, mints, sours and toffee-like consistencies, and its bud tenders are armed with knowledge to make sure consumers know as much as possible. In addition to its own homegrown products, The Pass curates third-party goods from around the state. The Pass also offers pre-orders on its website, which will get you in and out as quickly as possible. There’s no shortage of parking, and you can’t miss the large blue building right on Route 7.

Theory Wellness
394 Stockbridge Road, Great Barrington, Mass.
413-650-5527
8 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week
672 Fuller Road, Chicopee, Mass.
413-595-2011
9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday
theorywellness.org

Much like the canna-biz itself, Theory Wellness is ever-growing and changing, since being established in 2015. At the Great Barrington location, customers are encouraged to snap a selfie on their way out, and the small room is layered with polaroids, featuring visitors from near and far, proof that those normalization efforts are working. All the products offered at Theory are all closely controlled and monitored in-house, from seed to sale. Theory’s latest venture is Hi-5, a cannabis infused seltzer that has zero calories. Theory offers both medical and recreational shopping opportunities across its three Massachusetts locations. The Great Barrington location is located right on the main drag and is open to all customers; Chicopee is just off the Massachusetts Turnpike at Route 291 and offers a convenient drive-up pick-up window. If you’re in a hurry, pre-orders are available at all locations, with 24-hour-a-day ordering, and same day pick-up for orders received before 8 p.m.

Canna Provisions
380 Dwight St., Holyoke, Mass.
413-650-2500
8 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week
220 Housatonic St. Lee, Mass.
413-394-5055
8 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week
cannaproservationsgroup.com

With two unique locations in Holyoke and Lee, Canna Provisions has lots to offer you on your journey. CEO Meg Sanders is truly a stand-out in the male-dominated world of cannabis, with over a decade of experience in the industry before bringing her expertise east to Western Massachusetts. Unlike most dispensaries, visitors are treated to an immersive shopping experience, with creative displays and access to view products before purchasing. One of Canna Provisions’ other claims to fame is its partnership with legendary grower Greg “Chemdog” Krzanowski. It is the only dispensary in Massachusetts where Chemdog’s Smash Hits strains, including the highly popular Chem 91, are available. For drive-thru purposes, Lee is especially convenient, located a mere 300 yards off the Mass Pike, with ample parking and a spill-over lot. Canna Provisions in Holyoke is located downtown along the canals, about 10 minutes off highway I-91, with no shortage of lot and street parking. Pre-orders are available in both stores.

Elev8 Cannabis
243 Main St., Athol, Mass.
978-830-1420
10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday, noon to 6 p.m. Sunday
elev8cannabis.com

Elev8’s first location in Athol is just the start for the burgeoning brand founded by Seun Adebiji, a DACA dreamer who started his first retail dispensary in Eugene, Ore., at 25. This made him the youngest African American ever to do so. Now focused on the market in Massachusetts, Adebiji fought hard to secure three licenses and has set his sights on border towns — Athol, Orange and Williamstown — to provide an inclusive experience with his diverse, hard-working and talented staff at the helm. Elev8 brings diversity to an industry that is unfortunately led by rich, white men. The Athol store is open for business about 5 minutes off Route 2, while the crew readies the forthcoming locations in Williamstown and Orange. Visitors will find a large variety of wholesale products from companies such as Curaleaf, Resinate, Holistic Industries, Levia, Cantrip and Freshly Baked. Elev8 is also one of the only retailers in Western Massachusetts to carry all Airo Vape pods. Jerry Garcia’s “Hand Picked” cannabis brand, B-Nobel pre-rolls and EOS farms flower (one of the first outdoor grows in Massachusetts). Elev8 customers are able to order ahead from elev8cannabis.com, iheartjane.com or leafly.com, but are encouraged to stop in to the store to interact with the knowledgable budtenders.

Silver Therapeutics
238 Main St., Williamstown, Mass.
413-458-6244
5 South Main St., Orange, Mass.
978-633-4225
10 a.m. to 8 p.m., seven days a week
silverthera.com

In April 2019, Silver Therapeutics in Williamstown became the second adult-use retail shop to open on the East Coast. It has since expanded to Orange and has plans to open additional locations in Boston and Maine. Its motto “always take the high road” makes it a fitting location to wrap up this piece. At the OG location in Williamstown — directly on Route 2 — visitors will find a clean and cozy location in Colonial Plaza with lots of parking, but more important, the finest flower available in Massachusetts. Products are sourced from GTI, Holistic Industries, RevClinics, Gibby’s Garden and The Pass, just to name a handful. The majority of Williamstown locals choose to pre-order before stopping in, and it’s recommended for visitors, too.
Evolution of an industry: Recreational cannabis market growth exceeds expectations

By Arlinda Smith Broady
Sponsored content contributor

PITTSFIELD, Mass. — Much like the repeal of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution that prohibited the manufacture, sale, and transportation of alcoholic liquors, new laws enacted state by state legalizing the recreational use of marijuana are creating a booming industry.

To date, cannabis consumption is legal in 19 states, Washington, D.C., and Guam.

A growing majority of Americans believe that recreational marijuana should be legal. A Gallup poll conducted in October 2019 found that 66% of U.S. adults think the drug should be legal. A Pew Research Center survey and the General Social Survey conducted by the nonpartisan and objective research organization NORC at the University of Chicago found similar levels of support for marijuana legalization.

With the change in attitudes, The Herbalist was born.

“The goal was to make some sense of this frantically expanding new industry, offering a look into cannabis culture for old hands and curious newcomers alike,” wrote editor Kimberly Kirchner, in the debut issue. “With the Herbalist, we had two primary objectives: providing a safe place to advertise for dispensaries, which didn’t have many choices back in 2019; and to educate readers about the ‘finer points’ of legal cannabis so they felt confident enough to visit a dispensary themselves,” she added in a recent interview.

But the ever-increasing demand for products and information surrounding the new industry made administration at The Herbalist realize that cannabis wasn’t just a niche product, or an interest shared by a limited audience.

“To that end, we focused both the magazine and website contents on basic information that was accessible to casual users, in contrast to the existing hobby magazines that were oriented towards a much savvier audience,” said Kirchner, who is also special products editor for New England Newspapers Inc.

“We quickly realized that there’s a much wider scope to this and we decided to give the people what they want,” said Letty Acosta, regional director of digital strategy & revenues for New England Newspapers.

That evolution is now Home Grown New England, a news and information platform that uses print, digital, video, social media and electronic outdoor advertising to feed the needs of a growing consumer base.

“In terms of branding, our goal was to draw on retro design (acknowledging that, based on the age demo in the Berkshires, most of our readers would have been young adults in the ‘60s and ‘70s) while maintaining a modern, classy look that didn’t lean too far towards ‘dark, questionably-smelling head shop.’ The general tone in our promotional material and social media was conversational and just a little irreverent,” Kirchner said.
The Herbalist publication provided a forum for reliable information about cannabis and also a safe place for cannabis businesses to advertise.  Photo by Berkshire Eagle

Without abandoning its core concept, Home Grown New England will be present in a wide variety of media not limited to a quarterly magazine. Legislative news, lifestyle trends, cannabis tourism, product development and myriad areas of interest will be explored.

"Today’s cannabis offerings are more plentiful, more diverse and more specialized than ever,” said Kirchner. “Instead of settling for whatever your cousin’s boyfriend’s roommate happened to have stashed in his sock drawer, consumers can now pick and choose their perfect marijuana experience from form to flavor to potency. That amount of choice is exciting, but it also can be intimidating.”

Another area that will be a factor is the boundary-less reach.

“Although we’re based in Massachusetts, we’re not limited by geography,” added Acosta. “With so many more states, cities, territories and countries enacting legislation that allows for recreational use of cannabis products, we can reach them all.”

Retail sales from dispensaries either are, or are in the process of, making them allowed in all states where the drug is legal except for Vermont. Retailers there will start receiving licenses in October 2022. The District of Columbia has not yet established a regulatory agency for recreational cannabis, and officials in Guam were still making changes to their policy on ownership of a cannabis business as of June 2021, according to U.S. News and World Report.

"UpCountry Magazine, Vermont News & Media and New England Newspapers are media partners who know their audiences like no one else. With VNM, we know our readers have cannabis questions, and UpCountry and New England
Newspapers have the answers, helping to make that key connection between Vermonters and the green they want and need in the Green Mountain state,” said Vermont News Media executive editor Noah Hoffenberg.

In the decade since the first two states — Washington and Colorado — legalized recreational marijuana use, the topic has become prevalent in political, social and ethical conversations.

Although cannabis is still federally illegal, nationwide support for the federal legalization of cannabis has grown every year. The 18- to 34-year-old age group has the biggest advocates with 78% supporting marijuana legalization, according to a 2018 survey by Statista, a national research and marketing company.

Maintaining its previous audience while appealing to new points of view, Home Grown New England has plans to be that much more diverse.

“The erosion of the stigma surrounding cannabis has brought about a lot of change,” said Morgan Fox, media relations director of the National Cannabis Industry Association. “It’s legal and more socially acceptable than ever before and consumers are involving it in their lifestyles.”

Fox warned that painting all cannabis aficionados with one brush is a mistake.

“You still have the ‘stoner image,’ but that’s just one type of person who enjoys marijuana,” he said.

The evolving market is bringing about experts who judge contests to journalists with a specific cannabis beat.

“You still have the ‘stoner image,’ but that’s just one type of person who enjoys marijuana.”

Morgan Fox

“It’s more comparable to the craft beer market,” Fox said. “There are growers and product manufactures who appeal to consumers looking for a certain flavor, aroma, potency, etc.”

Fox suggested that a successful publication will treat this burgeoning industry like any other.

“Know your audience and target your demographics,” he said. “Use research to get a sense of preferences and utilize other fields to incorporate those lessons.”

Just like publications focused on food and wine, cannabis has boutique retailers, professionals, connoisseurs, and industry insiders.

Acosta agreed.

“When it comes to market reach, whether considering geography, demographics or consumer attributes the New England Newspapers, Inc. Digital Cannabis Solutions are unrivaled. For example, our recently deployed Herbalist digital widgets deliver 3 to 4 million qualified impressions per quarter to participating advertisers. There’s one example of New England Newspapers’ reach!”

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The art of cultivation

Meet the green thumbs behind Canna Provisions’ craft cannabis

BY CANNA PROVISIONS

Cannabis. It doesn’t just grow itself. Well, actually, it can and will because it’s a plant. But if you really want cannabis to thrive and shine it requires what all other beautiful living things need: Love, care, and know-how.

With that in mind it’s worth shining a bright LED light on the faces working in a lush, thriving legal Massachusetts craft cannabis cultivation looks like in the Berkshires. In this case, the talented team behind Canna Provisions proprietary cannabis line: Smash Hits. Helmed by industry icon Greg “Chemdog” Krzanowski and Johnny Greenfingerz, their talented team of trimmers, pruners, water-ers, nutrient gods, compliance wizards, and one happy cannabis buddha (Chemdog), the Canna Provisions cultivation crew oversees thousands of plants in constant cycle, as well as a room of prized clones and mother plants (some that are 30 years old).

In the end, it’s about producing the best legal cannabis for consumers.

CEO Meg Sanders smells the flowers. Ensuring proper rooting of the babies. Phil Leahey watering compliance, smiling.

When you love your job and your crew is all smiles. Zoe Elwell from compliance smiling.
Hand pruning to ensure optimal growth and plant health.

Harvest time.

The cultivation team hard at work.

The son of generational apple farmers inspect his own crop.

Johnny Greenfinger, Greg Chemdog Krzanowski, Larry Munoz, and Zoe Elwell.

Careful and perfect hand-trimmed Smash Hit buds.

Weighing out the packaged Smash Hits in Sheffield, Mass.

Eyeballing the buds during trimming in Sheffield, Mass.

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Berkshire Roots is more than just a supplier of other people’s products when it comes to providing top-quality cannabis for its recreational and medical users.

The majority of products you will find at this cannabis destination are grown and carefully crafted right onsite, and this team recently expanded their state-of-the-art cultivation, processing and laboratory cannabis campus in the heart of Pittsfield.

Berkshire Roots has an incredibly clean facility, and officials pride themselves on continuous innovation. One of the ways they do this is by continuing to review new strains or cultivars, a recent “pheno hunt” led to a release of the newest product on the store’s menu, 10th Planet, which is a hybrid strain (indica-dominant) that has flavors and aromas of grape and citrus notes, with undertones of gas and spice.

How Was 10th Planet Cultivated and Created?
“People use cannabis for different reasons,” said Graham Brutsch-Mason, fertigation manager at Berkshire Roots. “From medicinal purposes or relaxation or to loosen boundaries at a social event. It may be therapeutic in ways people don’t realize.”

“Everyone has an endocannabinoid system, which is a complex lock set that is unlocked by the various ratios of cannabinoids, terpenes and flavonoids. These same Keys will help to unlock the potential of this plant slightly differently for each individual user. This is why it is important to find what works best for the individual and why there are a multitude of strains and products to choose from.”

Different strains and profiles mean that consumers can realize their varying effects. Of course, cannabis will affect each person differently. Plus, each strain has different characteristics that may vary effects based on cannabinoid and terpene profiles. Cultivators choose a variety of strains to achieve those effects. Having an assortment of strains or cultivars allows customers to select the strain that suits them.

So how do these new strains come about?
Berkshire Roots uses a process called “pheno-hunting” when cultivating by seed to develop new strains right in their facility at 501A Dalton Ave. in Pittsfield. (They have a second retail-only location at 253 Meridian St. in Boston.) Employees select the physical expressions they want from a particular plant and then produce that plant to make it available for sale.

In pheno-hunting, cultivators breed female and male cannabis plants to create a new strain of plant. When the female plant produces seeds, those are pheno types, which basically is different genetic information that growers can use to create specific effects.

Each phenotype has a unique combination of physical traits related to smell, color, potency and other factors. Cannabis growers such as Brutsch-Mason and Dennis Gibbons, senior director of cultivation for Berkshire Roots, will select the most desirable traits to mass produce. For 10th Planet, the cultivation team germinated more than 100 seeds into baby plants, which were then narrowed down to the four expressions that best suited their desired outcome.

The whole process can take months or years, as each phenotype is grown from seed and copied by cloning, harvested, dried and cured before growers can determine whether the strain meets their quality expectations.

“Pheno-hunting isn’t necessarily creating new strains,” Gibbons said. “It’s selecting physical expressions of genetics you’re deriving from a seed source, so it’s not creation so much as it is selecting.”

Once growers find the best phenotype,
they’ll clone it in order to get exact genetic copies and then produce clones. Different phenotypes are used for smoking, eating, vaping or tinctures. Gibbons and Brutsch-Mason likened a pheno-hunt to human siblings. A set of siblings may have the same set of parents, but each one of them varies in different ways, whether it’s their physical attributes or personality traits. In cannabis even though there are 100 seeds with the same mother and father, all 100 of those seeds will show expressions from their parents in varying amounts.

“Within those 100 seeds, we saw six different expressions, and we really only liked four of them,” Brutsch-Mason said.

**Berkshire Roots** named each pheno, and growers are cultivating all four and collecting feedback from their customers on which version of 10th Planet they liked best. The four phenos of 10th Planet are named 10th Planet, 10th Planet X, 10th Planet Nibiru and 10th Planet Eris.

“We are always looking to gather customers feedbacks to continue to innovate better products for our guests. We often include QR codes on our packages so that our guests are able to scan, fill out a feedback form and give us their thoughts. This is happening right now with the 10th Planet Pheno Hunt,” said Holly, Berkshire Roots’ senior marketing director.

Not all pheno-hunts are successful, however. Finding and creating the right genetics can be a time-consuming affair. If Gibbons and Brutsch-Mason want to bring in new genetics in the form of a very early rooted clone, they have to put it through a quarantine process. Then the plant has to be adapted to their style of growing, their soil and nutrients before it is fine-tuned into a production-worthy plant.

Certain strains may run into issues, such as being mold-prone or having poor structure. There may be some strains that consumers love, but they require more care and attention than is worth it. And there may be some that are easy to grow but are not consumer-friendly.

“We want to grow what’s most efficient and productive. It just so happens that Berkshire Roots’ best-known and most-popular strain happens to be a very production-worthy plant,” Gibbons said. “And, ultimately, we want to put out a clean product.”

**The Importance of Clean Cannabis**

When it comes to producing a clean product, that means more to Gibbons and Brutsch-Mason than just preventing mold. They want to make products that will pass testing for microbes, yeasts, molds and pesticides, so they will appeal to the health and safety of their customers.

To that end, **Berkshire Roots** requires that everyone who walks into their cultivation facilities to change into clean uniforms and shoes, to avoid bringing in outside pests, pathogens or other fungi. They also use no pesticides or anti-fungals or PGR’s themselves. This is partially because of their strict Integrated Pest Management program, which helps to stop any would-be problems, another benefit of growing indoors and requiring absolute cleanliness.

**Berkshire Roots** also goes through a two-step cleaning-and-sanitizing process that involves cleaning all walls, floors, benches and other equipment. There’s no all roads in the corners, all plant waste is removed, and there’s even a flush at the end of each growing cycle to cleanse the inside of their irrigation lines and remove any biofilm or buildup.

One of the big concerns for the cultivation team is the possibility of pollen from a male/hermaphrodite flower contaminating their all-female plants. “You don’t want pollination because then you get seeds,” Gibbons said. “We only grow female plants, but sometimes under a stressful situation, a plant will revert and throw out a male flower, which could then lead to some seeding through pollination. This is why our attention to detail and the care that these plants receives is important. We’re continually monitoring their growth at all stages.”

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IN THE GREEN MOUNTAINS

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Keep your green in the Green Mountain state

Make this holiday season extra special for your loved ones — and your greater Southern Vermont community — by shopping local

By Brooke Geery
Sponsored content contributor

Did you know that, for every $100 spent at small businesses, $48 is put back into the local economy?

This year, instead of shipping your hard-earned dollars overseas, brighten up the region by showing some love for your local businesses.

UpCountry reached out to some of our local business partners to get their take on shopping locally and what it means to them.

Local dollars don't go far

Robert "Woody" Woodworth has spent the majority of his 72 years in Brattleboro, and the past 30 years working at Burrows Specialized Sports. He said he's especially thankful for the locals that have kept the bike shop afloat.
HOLIDAY SHOPPING

"That’s literally survival," he said. "We’ve been in business for 85 years and a good share of it has been because of the support of our local folks."

Those local dollars coming in don’t go far, said Woodworth.

"I try to shop local whenever I can, which is 90 percent of the time," he said. "We also support all the organizations that are looking for help, of which there are many around here." He specifically noted Brown and Roberts Ace Hardware and the Hotel Pharmacy as trusted businesses that he frequents and supports.

The local network of businesses benefits everyone, he said, with each filling the need for niche services and products. Burrows Specialized Sports helps people stay out and active with both winter and summer sports, Woodworth noted, a point of pride, especially so during the pandemic.

Catching up with friends

At Christmas Days, second-generation owners Linda and Andrew McKeever have been providing the local community in Sunderland with holiday cheer since 1987, when they bought the Arlington shop.

As the holidays approach, they know that shopping locally means a chance at reconnecting with old friends.

“We love it when our neighbors shop local!” Linda McKeever said. “It’s always fun to see people from around the local towns — plus it’s a great chance to catch up on what’s been going on.”

This season, they’re especially excited to provide products from a local candle maker. "Icy Palmer candles are great and make outstanding products. There have been others from time to time, but right now Icy Palmer is our local go-to," she said.

‘It keeps us here’

Elizabeth Wilwol worked at The Gift Garden for 27 years before she and her husband, Dwain, purchased it from the previous owners in 2015. Just this year, they bought the building that houses the shop.

“We are here to stay,” Wilwol said, thanking her local customers for making it all possible. “Instead of going to the big box stores, we appreciate locals supporting local business because it does keep us here.”

Beth and Dwain Wilwol support local organizations and events in kind, sprucing up sports team events, dance recitals, and other community fundraisers with distinctive, fresh and meticulously sourced flowers from near and far.

‘Shop small, not at the big box stores’

Mike and Carla Mansfield are the third-generation owners of Howard’s Leather. They get customers from all over, but make it a point to spend their money locally at places such as Davis Oil — also family-run. Mike estimated that nearly 85 percent of their revenue goes back into the local community.

“We like to say ‘shop small,’ not at the box stores,” Carla Mansfield said. “Whether I’m buying clothes or a gallon of gas, it’s nice to know the money is going to stay in the local community.”

Mike Mansfield noted how, when local businesses thrive, it adds jobs. Howard’s Leather employs 10 women, and their success allows for business contributions to nonprofits, such as the Monadnock Humane Society, Mike Mansfield said.
HOLIDAY SHOPPING

“It really does help the community.”

**Businesses thrive together**

At Pownal View Barn, you can shop American-made furnishings, decor, and gifts, and enjoy some native Vermont charm, as well.

Howard Armstrong’s family has run the business for 64 years, and he’s spent all of his own 58 years in the Green Mountains.

He loves providing locals and visitors alike with an authentic experience and being able to use the dollars they spend at his shop to support local jewelers, dine at local restaurants and even make necessary purchases at the convenience stores in town.

“Basically supporting a local business is supporting the community, which puts money back into the local economy, which makes every other business thrive,” Armstrong said.

**It means jobs, too**

It’s hard to outsource working out, so since 1985, Jon Valles of Total Fitness Equipment has been happily providing a local shopping option for those looking to get or stay in shape.

“We love to have local support for our product sales,” he said. “It means that the local population is staying healthy both mentally and physically, which is more important today than ever.”

Support from the community in turn allows him to employ many local people that have families in the community.

“They buy locally and pay their property taxes, which helps the towns to provide services,” Valles noted.

Total Fitness Equipment also uses several local business services, such as printers, office supplies, gas stations and more, and it is all made possible thanks to his customers.
Here’s how you can reach some of our generous sponsors. Don’t forget to check them out in person and online as you whittle down your Kwanzaa, Christmas, Hanukkah and pagan ritual gift lists …

Burrows Specialized Sports

105 Main St., Brattleboro
802-254-9430
Park on Main Street or
In the Harmony parking lot
rgwoodworth@burrowssports.com
Facebook: Burrows Sports or @BurrowsSpecializedSports

Burrows Specialized Sports on Main Street in Brattleboro is a full-service bicycle and winter sports shop, with the best gear for all-season outdoor fun. Since 1935, Burrows has been selling the top brands in outdoor wear to keep the whole family warm and dry in the winter and cool in the summer. We have a full-service ski, snowboard and bicycle shop with professional repairs to all brands. Cross-country skis and snowshoes, with both sales and rentals. We offer a full line of accessories for year-round outdoor fun. Whether you’re 3 years old or 83, we can outfit you. Our technicians all have over 30 years experience in bicycle and winter sports service and repairs. We are all outdoor enthusiasts, and we love to share our excitement for the slopes and trails. Come check us out Monday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Christmas Days

6279 Route 7A, Sunderland
802-362-2516
xmasdays.com
christmasdays69@gmail.com
Facebook: Christmas Days or @christmasdays69
Instagram: @christmasdaysinvpt

Christmas Days is where the spirit of Christmas lives year-round. At 6279 Route 7A in Sunderland, midway between Arlington and Manchester, the shop offers an array of Christmas ornaments of many styles, from classic glass to more contemporary themes. Family-owned and operated since 1969, the shop also features decorative items, some of which can be personalized; collectibles; nativity sets; and giftware. Byers’ Choice Carolers, Heritage Villages by Dept. 56, nutcrackers and Santa figurines are just a few of the selections you’ll find at the shop. You can view some of the shop’s offerings online at xmasdays.com. Or you can follow its Facebook and Instagram pages. The shop can also be reached by phone at 802-362-2516, or by email at christmasdays69@gmail.com.
The Gift Garden

431 Main St., Bennington
802-447-7222 and 800-441-4763
Parking on Main or Union streets
Thegiftgardenvt.com
Garden33@myfairpoint.net
Facebook: The-Gift-Garden-136610576436248
Instagram: thegiftgardenvt

About: The Gift Garden offers a unique experience, not like those found at a supermarket. It’s a full service florist and gift shop, serving Bennington and surrounding areas since 1976. We offer unique gifts for everyone and holiday specials. We also offer Draw Your Discount (10 to 50 percent off) and Men’s Night. We offer many gifts under $20 for Yankee swaps or Secret Santa events in the workplace. “We buy quality. We have access to wholesalers, who come every day, and we pick and choose. We buy the freshest quality flowers there is to buy,” say owners Elizabeth and Dwain Wilwol, who own and operate The Gift Garden together.

Howard’s Leather Store

1651 Route 9
Spofford, NH
800-427-4038
howardsleathernh.com
howardsleather@gmail.com
Facebook:
Howard’s Leather Inc.

There’s nothing like real leather! Howard’s Leather Store is the best source for quality leather goods, apparel, Western wear, jewelry and gifts. We provide the finest selection of products and are proud to back every purchase with superior customer service.

Howard’s is a third-generation family run business that was established in 1952 by founder Howard Small as a Horse Supply and Western Wear store. Howard’s daughter, Jane, and her husband, Joe Plante, opened the Spofford, N.H., store in 1966, where it is still going strong under the guidance of Howard’s granddaughter, Carla, and her husband, Mike Mansfield.

We carry jewelry, wearable art handcrafted in Vermont, the Southwest and the Pacific Northwest; hats made of leather, sheepskin, fur and wool felt, oilskin and straws in all styles. There’s ladies’ and men’s outerwear in different lengths in multiple styles, and motorcycle wear and accessories. Of course, there’s head-to-toe Western wear.

Please browse our site and learn about us and the products we sell. Feel free to email, call or stop by and visit our store today. Phone, email and special orders are welcome.
Pownal View Barn
3827 Route 7, Pownal
802-823-7345
Pownalviewbarn.com
povbt@yahoo.com
Facebook: Pownal View Barn

A family-owned business for over 60 years, the Pownal View Barn offers an eclectic selection of American-made furniture, decor and gifts. We take great pride in our local Vermont roots and good, old-fashioned, friendly customer service. Originally, we started out as a small Vermont souvenir stand, and today our building stands on the same location. As you drive along the Route 7 corridor, there is no arguing about the breathtaking views along your way through the Berkshires and Southern Vermont. One stop along the way should always be the view from Pownal View Barn, just 10 minutes from the Massachusetts-Vermont border. Pownal View Barn offers three floors of quality home furnishings, all American made — including handcrafted furniture from Amish makers from Ohio. At the Pownal View Barn Decor and Gift Shop, in the same building, featured are thousands of items, including maple syrup, Vermont Cheese, stain glass, clothing and accessories, and much more. If you need to find the right furnishing, the perfect gift or finishing touch to your home, visit Pownal View Barn in Southern Vermont.

Total Fitness Equipment
464 Putney Road, Brattleboro
802-579-1276
4964 Main St., Manchester; 802-367-3088
294 West St., Keene, N.H; 603-354-3437
totalfitnessequipment.com
jvalles@totalfitnessequipment.com
Facebook: Total Fitness Equipment or @ TotalFitnessEquipment
Instagram: @totalfitnessequipment

The right equipment, the right people. Trusted since 1985. Total Fitness Equipment carries only the highest quality brands for your home, office, corporate or lodging exercise and workout needs. Names like Precor, Matrix, Vision Fitness, Landice, Inspire Fitness, TRX and more; we also have certified, pre-owned, used gym equipment. As a local, family-owned business, Total Fitness Equipment is committed to becoming your lifelong “fitness partner.” Our fitness equipment stores carry everything from treadmills to ellipticals, to rowing machines and lateral trainers, to indoor cycles and recumbent exercise bikes, and everything in between. Together, we will set up goals, establish a realistic and achievable plan, and decide on the right fitness equipment for your home or commercial facility. Your health and fitness is our customer support team’s highest priority, as we create the solution designed to fit your life, your home and your budget.
Great Home Workouts.

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Sun noon-5p
431 Main St., Bennington, VT 05201
Delivery always available

The Shoe Tree
135 Main Street • Brattleboro, Vermont
802-254-8515 • shoetreevermont.com
Thanksgiving on Putney’s Artisan Trail

Don’t worry about delayed gifts for the holidays: Putney Craft Tour studios are stocked up with fine crafts and open for business.

PUTNEY — The annual Putney Craft Tour, the oldest continuing craft tour in the country, grew out of the happy confluence of a number of trends, including the back-to-the-land movement and the rise of American craft.

No doubt Vermont’s agrarian heritage created a culture of craft and an appreciation of the hand-made, which continues to this day.

This year the tour is celebrating its 43rd anniversary Thanksgiving Weekend, Nov 26 to 28 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., giving shoppers, visitors and collectors another reason to be thankful.

One of the founders of the Tour is potter Ken Pick, who arrived in Putney in 1969, after receiving a master’s degree in arts and teaching from Antioch-Putney.

Clare Adams inside her Grafton studio. Adams has worked in oils and watercolors and prints, and has become interested in glass painting.

Photo provided by Putney Craft Tour

STRENGTHEN

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Thanksgiving Weekend, Nov. 26 to 28, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Graduate School. Pottery was never far from his heart, and in about 1973, Pick began to earn his living from his craft.

"There are 19 artists on this year's tour, including two new-comers. It's never been more than 28," Pick said.

Connections are what it's all about, both for the artists and the people who visit their studios. Tour-goers will get to move through the studios of glass blowers, potters, jewelers, weavers, painters, artisan cheesemakers and winemakers. Over the course of the three days, visitors can engage with the artists, the real draw of such tours, as well as browse the distinctive, original pieces for sale.

Silver jeweler Jeanne Bennett, who has been on the tour for over 16 years, appreciates the feedback she gets.

"It's nice to get the work out in public. I'm up in the woods, and I love hearing everyone's feedback," she said.

In addition to first-timers, Bennett, like most of the artists, has repeat customers that come back "to see what's new and add to their collection."

For the last five years, the tour has partnered with other cultural entities in Putney, including Sandglass Theatre and Next Stage Arts, to put on special performances during the tour weekend.

This year, Putney's Next Stage will present "Zoo Story," Edward Albee's one-act masterpiece that catapulted him onto the world drama scene, Nov. 26 and 27 at 7:30 p.m. Find more details at Nextstagearts.org. Sandglass Theater is also cooking up an event for the weekend. Check its website — sandglasstheater.org — as Thanksgiving approaches.

The Putney Craft Tour is great entertainment. Driving the back roads and finding the studios is an adventure in itself — although the studios are well-marked and maps provide clear directions. Most studios do demos, as well. Visitors can start at Putney Mountain Winery and Spirits for information, maps, and a preview exhibition of the artisans' works. See more at putneycrafts.com.

Note to visitors: The studios are open, but the artisans respectfully request that tour-goers wear masks while visiting.
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