

The Washington Post
TRAVEL

SUNDAY, AUGUST 7, 2022 · SECTION F

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PHOTOS BY LIZA WEISSTUCH FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Ferry tales in the Pacific Northwest

It was about 2 p.m. Pacific standard time, but I was still on East Coast time, so I ordered a beer at the bar at Friday Harbor House, an elegant but informal hotel overlooking a marina on San Juan Island. Two women beside me were having coffee, and one turned to me and asked, “Do you want to see whales?” She grabbed a big camera bag and motioned me to come with her.

She seemed trustworthy, so I ditched my beer and followed her to her car. As we sped down an open rural road, her phone kept dinging. She was getting alerts from a local Facebook group: There had been a spotting. We pulled into a parking lot and stepped over craggy rocks toward the water.

“There he is!” shouted Sara Hysong-Shimazu, my ad hoc guide, pointing at Stanley, a Bigg’s killer whale that she identified by his dorsal fin and saddle patch (the gray-and-white pattern on his back). She’s a naturalist, photographer and captain with Maya’s Legacy Whale Watching. She told me that Stanley travels with his mom and two younger sisters. “It’s a really cool family.”

More people arrived with tripods and binoculars. Orcas are as integral to the lifestyle on the San Juan Islands as vineyards are in Bordeaux, France.

San Juan Island is the second-largest and

Washington state’s vast system is the key to unlocking your island-hopping adventure

BY LIZA WEISSTUCH



TOP: A ferry leaves the dock at Friday Harbor, San Juan Island’s main town. **ABOVE:** A lighthouse built in 1935 sits on Cattle Point at the southern end of San Juan Island.

the most populated of the San Juan Islands. (A ferry deckhand compared the nomenclature to that of Hawaii: Hawaii is one of the Hawaiian Islands.) It was my third stop on a five-day journey I took this spring through the Puget Sound and beyond by public transportation, a trip compelled by my obsession with ferry travel.

Why ferries? Despite the assorted nuisances of airports, it’s hard to deny that flying is a marvelous mode of transport. Driving across the country is a luxury if you have the time. But still, whether land or sky, you’re enclosed. On the water, every sense is activated, and you can take it all in at a comparatively easy pace.

Washington state’s ferry system, the world’s second-largest, is part of the Washington State Department of Transportation. It dates to 1951, when the state took over operations from the Puget Sound Navigation Co., one of the surviving companies from the early days of Puget Sound’s privately owned mosquito fleet. Its 21 auto-carrying vessels convey about 23.4 million customers, including commuters, tourists and day-trippers, to and from 20 terminals on 10 routes. And a few days of traveling a handful of those routes left me with the impression that I’d journeyed far beyond a single U.S. state.

The islands draw academics who come to
 SEE SAN JUAN ON F4



NECEE REGIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

In West Stockbridge, Mass., Charles H. Baldwin & Sons has been making extracts since 1888.

In the Berkshires, smaller attractions pack a big punch

BY NECEE REGIS

The first day of summer. The first things I do, after turning off the highway onto the rolling back roads of the Berkshires, are crank the car windows open and inhale the perfumed air. No matter that I’m allergic to almost everything: resinous hemlocks, sweet clover, vanilla-scented bedstraw and almondy meadow-sweet. The sneezing is worth the heady rush in this bucolic region of Western Massachusetts.

In addition to lush greenery, there are more than 100 cultural attractions throughout the Berkshires, a geographic region that spans the northern and southern borders of the state. Most savvy travelers have heard of Tanglewood, the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra,

and Mass MoCA, one of the largest contemporary art museums in the United States. But what of the area’s smaller, equally interesting destinations?

On my trip in late June, I set out to explore some venues that could easily — but shouldn’t — be missed. I opted to stay in Lenox for its interesting hotels, shops and restaurants — and because it’s centrally located and would make the ideal home base. It’s one of many towns in the area where the words “quaint” and “picturesque” leap predictably (but accurately) to mind.

In a region of narrow, winding roads, finding Chesterwood requires navigating the narrowest and most winding. (Thank you, GPS.) The 122-acre property in Stockbridge is the former sum-
 SEE BERKSHIRES ON F6

NAVIGATOR

Resolving disputes during a tough summer for customer service. F2



COLORADO

A revelatory white-water rafting trip down the Yampa River. F3

TRENDS

For travel-loving runners, far-flung marathons top the itinerary. F5



JACOB'S PILLOW/CHRISTOPHER DUGGAN PHOTOGRAPHY

A little art, a little dance — and so much more

BERKSHIRES FROM F1

mer home and studio of Daniel Chester French, a sculptor best known for the “Minute Man” in Concord, Mass., and the seated Abraham Lincoln at the Lincoln Memorial, which is celebrating its centennial year in D.C. Chesterwood’s historic home will be closed until next year for extensive renovations, but visitors can peruse informative exhibits at the visitor’s center, tour the formal gardens, stroll woodland trails and enter the studio, designed in 1897 by French’s colleague Henry Bacon, a Beaux-Arts architect whose final project was the Lincoln Memorial.

Stepping into the studio, with its soaring 26-foot-high walls and views of the gardens and Monument Mountain, feels a bit like entering a sacred space. Diffused natural light bathes plaster models that span the artist’s career, including poignant studies of his wife’s, his daughter’s and his own hands, as well as the final seven-foot-high plaster of the seated Lincoln, whose rugged visage is an inspiration at any scale. An unfinished marble sculpture, Andromeda, lies supine, as if waiting for the artist’s return.

About a mile down the road, stone pillars mark the entrance to the sprawling campus of the Norman Rockwell Museum, home to the world’s largest collection of Rockwell’s art. The museum collaborated with Chesterwood to produce “The Lincoln Memorial Illustrated,” on view through Sept. 5. Inhabiting two of the museum’s galleries, the exhibit focuses on the work of contemporary and historical illustrators, cartoonists and artists who have used the monument as a symbolic element in their work, complemented by archival photographs, sculptural elements and artifacts. Rockwell’s illustrations and paintings of the 16th president are in the mix; indeed, no other national figure appears in his work more frequently than Lincoln, whom he publicly called “the greatest American.” Allow time to visit additional changing exhibitions and Rockwell’s studio, tours of which need to be booked in advance.

From the museum, it’s a quick drive to West Stockbridge, an area often overshadowed by its larger neighbor, Stockbridge. What this community lacks in size it more than compensates for with its one-of-a-kind offerings. Two of the main streets in town are populated by mom-and-pop shops selling antiques, fine art, Shaker furniture and books. The Hotchkiss Mobiles Gallery is full of colorful sculptures — created in the sprawling adjacent studio — hanging amid pottery, glass, jewelry and other crafts.

On Center Street, Charles H. Baldwin & Sons has been manufacturing pure vanilla and other

fine extracts since 1888, following the same recipes as the founders — using only Madagascar beans — and the same copper percolator and aging barrels. Visitors are apt to find ebullient owner Jackie Moffatt, whose husband’s great-great-grandfather founded the shop, overseeing the space crammed with baking ingredients, old-fashioned toys,

candles and retro gifts.

For food, the Public Market serves specialty hot and cold sandwiches to go, or stop by No. Six Depot for hand-roasted, small-batch coffees; tea; smoothies; and sweet and savory snacks. The Truc Orient Express Restaurant, owned and operated by the Nguyen family for 44 years, serves authentic, traditional Viet-

namese food for takeout, including the hands-on locals’ favorite, “Happy Pancake,” a rice-flour crepe stuffed with vegetables and your choice of shrimp, pork and chicken.

The nearby TurnPark Art Space, created by Igor Gomberg, a Ukrainian immigrant, and Katya Brezgunova, a Russian immigrant, showcases contemporary

architecture and sculpture on the 16-acre site of a former marble and lime quarry. The landscape of hills, woods, meadows and lake is designed to be a place of exploration for adults and children. Indeed, there’s an “Alice in Wonderland” feeling to walking its paths and discovering fantastical art — a colorful, glazed ceramic village sprouting in the underbrush; a life-size golden figure floating in the quarry — in unexpected places. Other works pack an emotional punch, such as photographs by Gomberg’s son, Dmitry, of Ukrainian refugees (displayed inside Shami Shinogi’s “Eyeball,” a round structure made of wood and sticks) and Victor Melamed’s “Collateral Damage,” which documents victims of the current war with portraits and stories printed on fabric that flutters in the trees.

About 25 miles east, the area around the tiny town of Becket seems even more rural than the rest of the region, making it an unlikely candidate to host a pre-eminent dance festival each year. Yet it does just that. After turning off Jacob’s Ladder Road and taking a long, bumpy drive along George Carter Road, I arrived at Jacob’s Pillow, a dance center, school and performance space that is celebrating its 90th-anniversary season this summer. Set on 220 acres of towering forest and resting on the traditional lands of the Agawam, Nipmuc, Pocumtuc and Mohican tribes, the rustic venue (affectionately called “the Pillow”) feels like a step back in time.

Aware of the pedigree of the dancers past and present who have performed here — including Alvin Ailey, Dame Margot Fonteyn, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Twyla Tharp, Ronald K. Brown and Kyle Abraham — I was expecting a manicured campus with steel-and-glass architecture. What I found instead was a charming collection of weathered barns, sheds, dirt paths with lights strung between trees, and wood posts with signage directing visitors to performance venues, including the newly expanded and renovated Ted Shawn Theater, named after the dancer and impresario who purchased the land and subsequently founded what would become the festival in 1933.

For a sublime dance experience, nothing beats settling onto benches in a forest and watching a performance at the Henry J. Leir Stage. With its stunning backdrop of mountains and trees rustled by perfumed breezes, it perhaps best embodies the merging of pastoral wilderness and the creative spirit found in the Berkshires.

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For more of the author’s suggestions on what to eat, where to stay and what to do, head to washingtonpost.com/travel.



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The Berkshires’ gems include, from top, Jacob’s Pillow, which has an outdoor stage; Chesterwood, which displays the works of Daniel Chester French, including models of his seated Abraham Lincoln, which were used in designing the one at the Lincoln Memorial; and the TurnPark Art Space, which showcases contemporary architecture and sculpture.

If You Go

WHERE TO STAY

The Whitlock

16 Church St., Lenox
833-797-0713

thewhitlocklenox.com

Located in the heart of town, this former 18th-century farmhouse is a newly rehabbed boutique inn offering 30 rooms with non-fussy, modern interiors, and dining inside or alfresco. Rates from \$167 per night.

WHERE TO EAT

Public Market

8 Main St., West Stockbridge
413-232-8595

weststockbridgepublicmarket.com

Locally owned, go-to spot for build-your-own and specialty sandwiches, hot dogs and pulled pork on buns; available daily for takeout. Snag a seat at the outdoor picnic table or pack for a picnic. Sandwiches from \$4.99.

Truc Orient Express Restaurant

3 Harris St., West Stockbridge
413-232-4204

facebook.com/trucrestaurant

Family-owned Vietnamese restaurant offering spring rolls, BBQ pork on rice noodles, five-spice whole Cornish hen and its signature “Happy Pancake.” Vegan options available. Order ahead and dine on the outdoor deck or take it to go. Dinner Friday through Sunday, 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. Entrees from \$20.

The Pillow Cafe

358 George Carter Rd., Becket
413-327-1064

jacobsillow.org/pillow-dining

Full-service dining and cocktails in a tent on the grounds of Jacob’s Pillow. Two- or three-course prix fixe menus, with selections such as corn chowder, a miso salmon bowl and steak frites. Reservations required. Open Wednesday to Saturday, 4 to 9 p.m. for dinner, and Saturday to Sunday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for brunch. Prix fixe two-course dinner, \$50 per person; three-course dinner, \$65 per person. Brunch items from \$12.50.

Ophelia’s

16 Church St., Lenox
413-881-4139

bit.ly/ophelias-restaurant

This restaurant and bar at the Whitlock inn serves healthy breakfast offerings and tasty entrees. Open Wednesday and Thursday, 5 to 9 p.m., for drinks only at the bar; Saturday and Sunday, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. for brunch; Friday to Sunday, 5 to 9 p.m. for dinner. Cocktails from \$12, brunch mains from \$13 and dinner mains from \$19.

WHAT TO DO

Chesterwood

4 Williamsville Rd., Stockbridge
413-298-2023

chesterwood.org

The site of the former summer home and studio of sculptor Daniel Chester French, who created the seated Abraham Lincoln for the Lincoln Memorial. Open Thursday to Monday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., through Oct. 24. Guided tours available. General admission: \$20 per adult, \$18 seniors, \$15 military, \$10 college students and young adults, and those under 13 are free.

Charles H. Baldwin & Sons

1 Center St., West Stockbridge
413-232-7785

baldwinextracts.com

Makers of pure vanilla and other extracts since 1888. This is the place to stock up on baking ingredients, retro toys, candles, greeting cards and sundries. Call for hours.

TurnPark Art Space

2 Moscow Rd., West Stockbridge
413-232-0275

turnpark.com

Outdoor sculpture park in 16-acre former marble and lime quarry founded by Igor Gomberg and Katya Brezgunova. Includes small indoor gallery and gift shop. Open Wednesday to Monday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Entry is \$10 per person, and those under 12 are free.

Jacob’s Pillow

358 George Carter Rd., Becket
413-243-9919

jacobsillow.org

A 220-acre National Historic Landmark and summer attraction for dance with performance venues. It’s also a school showcasing world-premiere performances, workshops, exhibits and community events. Season ends Aug. 28. Ticket prices vary.

INFORMATION

vistma.com