

SundayTravel

WITH: NEW ENGLAND DESTINATIONS

BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE APRIL 16, 2023 | BOSTONGLOBE.COM/TRAVEL



MATTHEW GIBBS

A cocktail on the menu at Offsuit, a speakeasy in Boston's Leather District.



JAMES SULLIVAN

CodeX in Nashua, N.H.



JAMES SULLIVAN

Phone booth at the door to 815 Cocktails and Provisions in Manchester, N.H.

Like cocktails and *secrecy*?

Speakeasies are popping up across New England

BY JAMES SULLIVAN | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Celebrated on March 24 each year since the 1980s, National Cocktail Day this year fell neatly on a Friday. Since you're reading this after the fact, not to worry: World Cocktail Day is just around the corner, on May 13.

For those who require an excuse, there's no shortage of opportunities to put your favorite mixologist to work. Later this year, Dec. 5 will bring us the 90th anniversary of Repeal Day, marking the ratification of the 21st Amendment, which ended the prohibition on alcohol established in 1920.

Inside the murky Manchester, N.H., watering hole known as 815 Cocktails and Provisions, one wall is devoted to a frequently repeated explanation about why Repeal Day is worth celebrating: because it marked, in part, "the return of the craft and the legitimacy of the American bartender."

Located up a set of unassuming stairs overlooking the main drag of New Hampshire's biggest city, 815 is one of a surprising number of speakeasy-style barrooms waiting to

be discovered behind unmarked doors and camouflage entrances around New England. From Boston and Salem to Amherst and Portland, Maine, whether the theme is 1920s flapper or 1990s Gothic, hidden dramshops have proliferated over the last several years, as cocktail culture chases the allure of secrecy.

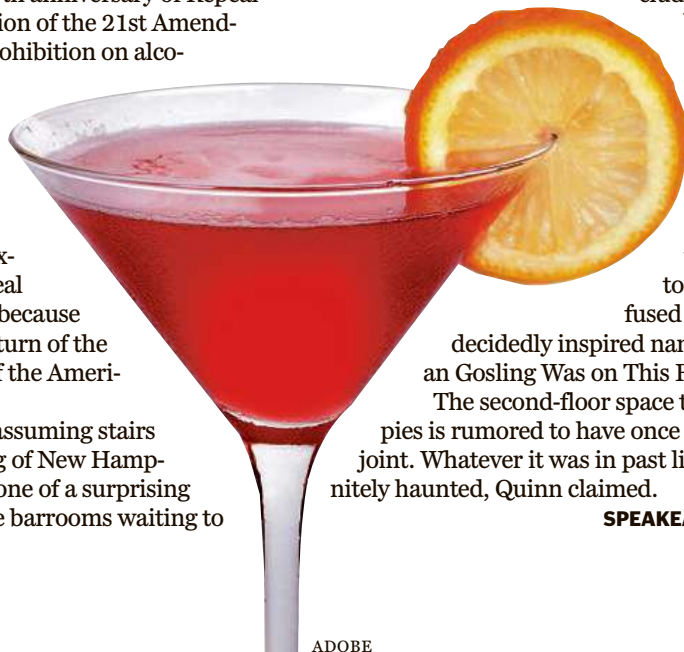
"It's kind of cryptic, kind of a vampire dungeon in here," said bartender Sian Quinn at 815 one night in early March. She'd just finished mixing an Old Fashioned for a visitor. The bar menu at 815 includes an elaborate

brandy cocktail amusingly called the Overpriced and Uninspired and a cockamamie concoction featuring cotton-candy-infused vodka and a

decidedly inspired name, I Wish Ryan Gosling Was on This Ferris Wheel.

The second-floor space that 815 occupies is rumored to have once been a strip joint. Whatever it was in past lives, it's definitely haunted, Quinn claimed.

SPEAKEASIES, Page N13



ADOBE

Know a mom who travels? We've got gift ideas.

By Necee Regis
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

With Mother's Day just around the corner, you might be scrambling to find the perfect gift for the special woman in your life. Flowers and chocolates are nice tokens of affection, but why not up your game this year with some of these travel-inspired gifts?

SUNCATCHER CARRYALL AND BEACH TOTES

The go-anywhere totes by Sidney Byron are light multifunctional travel bags mom can take from home to airport to hotel to beach. Made from natural jute and cotton, the totes feature a drawstring closure and zippered interior pockets to keep everything secure. A roomy velvet or terrycloth interior (depending on model) will hold all daily essentials; exterior strapping can secure a brimmed hat. The trolley sleeve slides easily over a suitcase handle for racing from check-in to a flight. A matching zippered take-along pouch, sold sep-

GIFTS, Page N14



SIDNEY BYRON

Suncatcher Carryall and Beach Totes by Sidney Byron.

Inside

THE VIP LOUNGE

A DREAM COME TRUE

Actor Jonathan Grunert stars as Henry Higgins in a touring production of 'My Fair Lady'

N12

WESTERN US

MONUMENTAL TREASURES

The three newest ones can be found in Colorado, Nevada, and Texas

N13

A haven for bookworms in the Catskills

By Betsy Groban
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

I declare after all there is no enjoyment like reading!" — Jane Austen, "Pride and Prejudice"

HOBART, N.Y. — Book towns, which are exactly what you'd expect, are located mostly outside the United States — in the United Kingdom, Norway, New Zealand, Japan, India, etc. According to Alex Johnson, author of "Book Towns," the definitive book on the subject: "A book town is simply a small town, usually rural and scenic, full of bookshops and book-related industries ... it started with Hay-on-Wye in Wales in the 1960s, picked up speed in the 1980s, and is continuing to thrive in the new millennium." The success of book towns is very good news for those of us who revere the printed word.

Luckily for local bibliophiles, Hobart Book Village, the only book town east of the Mississippi River, is not too far away, in the northern Catskills. It's a bucolic, blink-and-you-miss-it hamlet of fewer than 500 souls that was reinvented as a book village in 2005 through the efforts of local entrepreneur, Don Dales. Dales is Hobart Book Village's prime mover, unofficial mayor, and, as it happens, an accomplished pianist. He sought to revive a faded and economically depressed community and, after hearing about Hay-on-Wye, hit upon the idea of using books to do so. He bought up a few key buildings on Main Street and rented them to bookshops at drastically reduced rates (initially zero dollars). And it worked. Now, according to Dales, "instead of tumbleweeds, we have pedestrians walking down Main Street." He adds, somewhat emphatically, that the name of the

BOOKS, Page N14

Mother's Day gift ideas for traveling moms

► GIFTS

Continued from Page N11

arately or as part of a set, holds keys, ID, wallet, and smaller items. Tote \$115; pouch \$40; set \$140. <https://sidneybyron.com/collections/natural-jute-bags/products/copy-of-suncatcher-beach-tote-herringbone>

CARRY ON LIGHT

There's nothing like a new suitcase to inspire dreams of travel. At just 3.9 pounds, the new Carry On Light suitcase is perfect for moms who pack light and travel lighter. Made by July, a buzzy Australia-based luggage brand, this product features a twin-bar, three-stop telescopic handle; polycarbonate shell; zip closure with integrated TSA lock; and double spinner wheels. This super-lightweight bag will allow mom to pack more items while keeping within airline carry-on weight limits. Available in a variety of colors. \$245. For an additional \$50, customized bags with text are available in 10 fonts and 19 colors — you can even add emojis. <https://july.com/us/luggage/carry-on-light/>

TRAVEL BELT

Cincha Travel Belts offer an easy way to secure an additional bag to a luggage handle, allowing mom to maneuver hands free when racing for a connecting flight, checking into a hotel, or waiting in line for a rental car. Made of vegan leather with elastic accents and quick-release buckle, the belt is adjustable to 45 inches, and can accommodate most bags including totes, backpacks, messenger bags, purses, and more. Available in more than a dozen colors and patterns. \$40. www.cinchatravel.com/products/travel-belt-waffle

BLITHE SUNSCREEN

Send mom on her next resort vacation with two indulgent sunscreens crafted by minimalist beauty brand BLITHE. For sensitive skin, Honest Sunscreen offers SPF 50 with pH5.5 to protect the skin barrier from environmental factors. Six natural ingredients, including antioxidant components rose and prunus, help to hydrate, nourish, and relax skin. For tone correction and oil control, Airy Sunscreen offers eight kinds of plant extracts to reduce enlarged pores, and mild zinc oxide for a



JULY



HONEYDEW SLEEP



BLITHE



CASHMERE MOON

Clockwise from top: Carry On Light suitcase, Cincha Travel Belt, Maui Wrap, Cashmere Moon Cream and Oil minis, BLITHE sunscreen, Scrumptious Travel Pillow.

wide range of UV protection. At 1.69 ounces, throw in a carry-on and sail worry-free through TSA checkpoints. \$26. www.blithecosmetic.com/collections/sun-care

PACKABLE HATS

Bringing a favorite brimmed hat along on a trip can be problematic, especially when trying to keep it from being dented or squished. Fashionable moms might swoon over the packable straw and wool chapeaux crafted by LA lifestyle brand Janessa Leoné. Designed to make traveling easy, this collection of 12 stylish models will bounce back to

their original shapes after being folded and packed in luggage, beach bag, or purse. From \$237. <https://janessaleone.com/collections/packable-hats>

SCRUMPTIOUS TRAVEL PILLOW

Picky-pillow moms will enjoy sweet dreams on the road with Honeydew Sleep's Scrumptious Travel Pillow. Designed slightly larger than typical travel pillows often used in transit, these 21-by-12-inch models can also be used at your destination — be it hotel, campsite, or grandma's home. Comes with custom fitted pillow case, and carrying bag with handle that doubles as a suit-



CINCHA TRAVEL



ALICIA ADAMS

case strap. Made with certified copper-infused foam, said to be more effective at cooling than gel-based memory foam, with antibacterial properties that keep the pillow fresh night after night. \$129.99. <https://honeydewsleep.com/collections/pillows/products/the-scrumptious-travel-pillow-by-honeydewsleep>

PRIORITY PASS

For a travel gift that keeps on giving, consider surprising mom with a year-long Priority Pass membership. This independent program offers access to a network of more than 1,300 airport

lounges across the globe, providing a quiet place to relax with pre-flight bites and drinks away from the bustling crowds. Depending on frequency of travel, sign up for a standard membership (\$99 allows access at \$32); standard plus (\$299 allows 10 free visits; \$32 for subsequent visits); and prestige (\$429 allows unlimited free visits). One guest visit is allowed in each category for an add-on \$32. Additional membership benefits include discounts across a range of airport experiences, including participating spas, dining, and retail establishments. www.prioritypass.com/en

CASHMERE MOON CREAM AND OIL MINIS

Long flights and road trips can be tough on the skin. Consider pampering mom with the travel-size, skin-renewing duo of products offered by indie and beauty care company Cashmere Moon. A 2-ounce jar of hydrating whipped skin cream, a light blend of shea butter, cocoa butter, and aloe vera, is available in four aromatic scents: peppermint eucalyptus, jasmine vanilla, mango comilk, and watermint clementine. Each cream is paired with lavender rose glow oil, for amplified collagen production. Cashmere Moon products are natural, vegan, and cruelty-free. \$20. <https://shopcashmeremoon.com/products/cream-oil-minis>

MAUI WRAP

The versatile Maui Wrap by Alicia Adams is sure to become mom's must-pack travel essential. Made from baby alpaca wool that is sustainably farmed in New York and then crafted by artisans in South America, the featherweight wrap with an eyelash fringe can be used as a shawl, scarf, or lap-warmer. The alpaca fibers (70 percent) are blended with silk (30 percent) for an extra luxurious feel. Takes little to no space in a suitcase and dresses up any outfit for every occasion. Available in more than 20 colors. For 50 percent discount, readers can use code: MAUI50. Pre-discount price \$295. <https://aliciaadamsalpaca.com/collections/shop-women-alpaca-capes-wraps/products/portofino-wrap>

Necee Regis can be reached at neceeregis@gmail.com.

A Catskills haven for bookworms

► BOOKS

Continued from Page N11

village is pronounced "Hobart." So now you know.

The book-loving booksellers of Hobart are mostly from elsewhere and were drawn to the town for its pastoral setting and strong sense of community. Most are professionals, including a doctor, several lawyers and scholars, an artist, and a poet, who left or retired from impressive positions to move to Hobart. They form a cohesive and congenial group and cooperate closely with one another, gathering monthly to discuss matters of mutual interest. They even share the keys to each other's shops for safekeeping. The pandemic was very good for business in Hobart, according to Dales, "because lots of people fled the cities and moved or bought weekend homes in places like Hobart." Also, according to bookseller Kathy Duyer, "it helped that we kept our shops open throughout."

Hobart Book Village experienced a big boost in 2021 when a TikTok post by a visitor went viral and was viewed more than 5 million times. This led the booksellers to engage "digital native" Rio Caban — part of the family of artists who run one of the shops — to manage social media for the village. According to Caban, the TikTok video attracted "visitors from all around the world and continues to this day." He has created unified Instagram and Facebook presences for the village and is working on TikTok.

This year, book signings, classes, workshops, lectures, tea parties, and other events have returned to Hobart. The biggest event is the annual Festival of Women Writers, run by Barbara Balliet and Cheryl Clarke of Blenheim Hill Books (see below). The Festival will take place June 16-18 and more than 20 writers will participate. There will be public readings, writing workshops, a book sale, and an art exhibit.

Before she opened her bookshop, Duyer was advised by established bookseller Diana Adams that running a bookshop in Hobart "changed my life and it will change yours." And so it has. The two former lawyers agree that "owning a bookshop is so much more fun than practicing law. We wish we'd done this years ago." Randi Sussman-Kim, the proprietor of LionEyesBooks, sums it up for everyone in Hobart when



Signs abound in Hobart, N.Y., letting visitors know that books are the main attraction in this town in the northern Catskills.

she says: "This is heaven on earth."

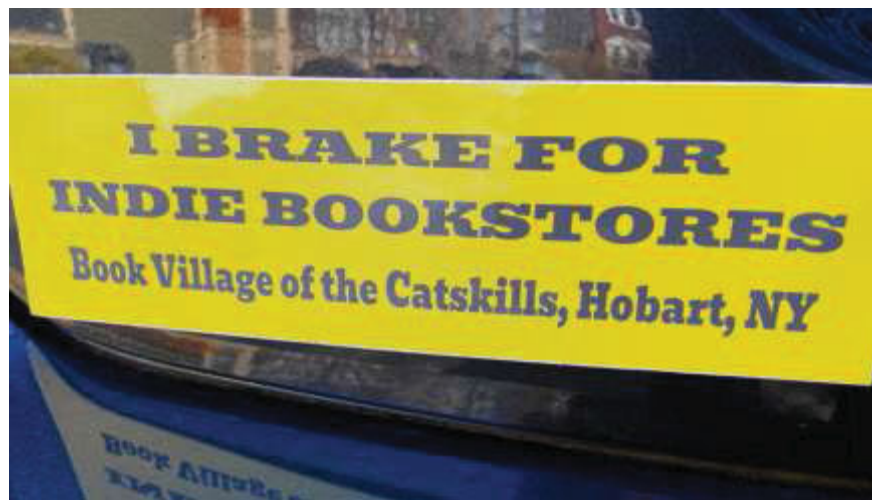
There are eight bookshops in Hobart Book Village, each with a distinctive flavor and focus.

Wm. H. Adams Antiquarian Books ("Uncommon Books at Reasonable Prices"). Proprietors: Diana and Bill Adams. The first bookstore to open in Hobart in 2002. It started with three bookcases and now includes an impressive three full floors of books. The wide-ranging categories of books include ancient (Greek and Roman) classics, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, art, architecture, theology, poetry, music, and local history. Not all the books are antiquarian, though many were printed before 1850. The basement features 20th- and 21st-century fiction and nonfiction. The Adams's make several trips to England each year to replenish their impressive inventory.

Creative Corner Books and New York Books and Ephemera. Two adjoining shops run by proprietors Kathy and George Duyer. Creative Corner is a charming and aptly named shop full of new, used, and vintage cookbooks, craft books, and other hobby books, including a collection of vintage kitchen items. New York Books and Ephemera offers a tightly focused collection of new, used, and vintage books about New York — history, architecture, folklore, biography, arts and culture — as well as maps,



PHOTOS BY BETSY GROBAN



magazines, travel brochures, postcards, and newspapers. A separate section called Made in New York, offers local farm products and gift items "made with love in the Catskills."

Liberty Rock Books, LLC. Proprietors: John and Jim Mahoney and Tom Liotta. At 5,000 square feet, the largest shop in town. It's chock-a-block with an eclectic array of used books that the owners have assembled over 45 years, including fiction, nonfiction, vintage children's books, and music. It includes a consignment shop called Hobart Bookseller Emporium, an art gallery (John Mahoney is an artist), and space for workshops, readings, etc. The shop has 40,000 vintage postcards and has room for 50,000 books. The proprietors consider themselves "broad generalists" with room for specialty collections as they become available.

Blenheim Hill Books. Proprietors: Barbara Balliet and Cheryl Clarke. In addition to being the home office for the upcoming Festival of Women Writers, this inviting shop offers a wonderful se-

lection of new and gently used children's books (including young adult), contemporary fiction, womens' studies, lesbian studies, poetry, short stories, essays, gardening, cooking, nature, and biography.

LionEyesBooks. Proprietor: Randi Sussman-Kim. This compact shop offers art books by artists, well-known and not, as well as books of philosophy, psychology, and spirituality. According to the "head huntress," Sussman-Kim, "the carefully curated and handpicked inventory is arranged and priced according to my attachment to the art/artist/text." LionEyesBooks will be moving soon to a much larger space in Stamford, N.Y., a Hobart-adjacent town a few miles down the road where Sussman's inventory of more than 50,000 books will have room to breathe.

Quarry Books is run by the aforementioned Don Dales, the founder of Hobart as a book village. It focuses on mysteries and science fiction/fantasy. Because the bookshop is not staffed, you've gotta love that payment is on the

"honor system." Local lore has it that not a single person has yet been caught stealing a book.

Sharing space inside the rather grandly named Historic Hobart Inn are:

The Book Nook. Not a bookstore, but an unusual free and independent community lending library run by Julie Rockefeller. It started as a series of summer reading programs for kids. But, according to Rockefeller, "within a week, bags and boxes of books started appearing on the doorstep labeled as donations for my 'library.' It seemed simpler to start a library than to keep trying to explain that I wasn't starting a library." The number of patrons and circulation has increased each year and Rockefeller adds that "We have no residency requirement and charge no fees of any kind. Local community groups and a host of caring individuals have generously contributed to the library's development over the years." Just what you'd expect from a book village.

More Good Books, which focuses on well-priced books about what could loosely be called "hobbies" — railroads, ships and boats, cars, games, sports, pets. It's run by the proprietors of Adams Antiquarian and Blenheim Hill.

CabanCompany, opened in 2022 and run by Susana Caban and her husband and three sons, all artists. The shop sells Caban family art as well as a nice selection of vintage clothing and music.

The Hobart Exchange and Country Store ("Artful, Playful, and Useful and Things"), opened in the last month by Julie Rockefeller and Susana Caban. It offers home goods, jewelry, art supplies, wood pieces, bird and botanical illustrations, and hand-painted furniture. It also has a refreshment stand where you can get a welcome cup of coffee.

In the winter months, the bookshops are open only on weekends and hold huge sales — with discounts up to 50 percent — over Memorial Day and Thanksgiving weekends. From Memorial Day through Columbus Day, the shops are open seven days a week. If you make the trip to Hobart Book Village looking to scoop up the latest best-sellers, you may be disappointed. Nearly all of the books in Hobart's shops are used, and besides, there are plenty of other ways to buy brand-new bestsellers. In Hobart you have the chance to discover and fall in love with newfound, unusual, and unexpected literary gems to add to your shelves or, even better, to give to a book lover who will treasure them. And buying books in Hobart Book Village helps support a unique place for people who really love books.

Betsy Groban can be reached at betsy.groban@gmail.com.