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SPORTS

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Unique art of the weekend in Stockbridge

By Neece Regis | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT SEPTEMBER 27, 2014

Tucked into the Berkshire Hills, Stockbridge maintains the rural village sensibility it had back in the 1950s when Norman Rockwell moved to town and painted his iconic images reflecting small-town life for covers of *The Saturday Evening Post*. Including neighboring West Stockbridge, four miles away down Route 102, one can easily fill a weekend with historic home and museum tours, boutique shopping expeditions, hiking excursions, and fine and casual dining. Located 130 miles west of Boston, the area is a fall foliage hot spot but worth a visit any time of year.

FRIDAY

3 p.m.: Check into one of 125 rooms and suites at the **Red Lion Inn** (30 Main St., 413-298-5545, www.redlioninn.com, seasonal rates \$105-\$548), one of the nation's oldest continuously operating historic inns, dating to around 1773. Antique furnishings complement upscale amenities.



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The Blue Steps in Naumkeag's gardens.





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Shops on Main Street in Stockbridge.

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3:30: Stroll the shops in Stockbridge. The exterior of **Williams & Sons Country Store** (38 Main St., 413-298-3016) looks much the same as when Rockwell painted his portrait of the strip, “Main Street at Christmas.” Owner Alan O’Brien describes the emporium as “a good old-fashioned country story with a little bit of everything.” Scented candles galore plus art glass, candle holders, incense, and accessories can be found at **Yankee Candle Co.** (34 Main St., 413-298-3004, [www.yan](http://www.yankeecandle.com)

[keecandle.com](http://www.yankeecandle.com)). Walk down a paved alley to a small courtyard — The Mews — to find these boutiques tucked back from the street (36 Main St.): **Mutability in Motion** (413-298-3215) features a curated selection of handcrafted gift items, including paintings, jewelry, handbags, and pottery; **Heirlooms** (413-298-4436, www.heirloomsjewelry.com) specializes in an eclectic selection of fine antique, estate, and contemporary jewelry; **Peace, Love & Chocolate** (413-298-0020, www.peaceloveandchocolate.biz) offers artisan chocolates from around the globe, along with biscotti, desserts, pastries, gelato, and coffee.

7 p.m.: Dine in cozy and casual style at **Once Upon a Table** (36 Main St., 413-298-3870, www.onceuponatablebistro.com, pasta/entrees \$15-\$29). Reservations are recommended to snag one of 11 tables. The small but satisfying menu features local, fresh cuisine such as Maine-style crab cakes, pecan-crusting rainbow trout, and oven-roasted half duck with raspberry demi-glace.

9 p.m.: Tap your feet to live music — from acoustic folk to R&B, from reggae to the blues — and enjoy an après-dinner cocktail at the **Lion’s Den Pub**, the below ground-level bar at the Red Lion Inn with an old-time speakeasy vibe. No cover.

SATURDAY

10 a.m.: Stone pillars mark the entrance to the sprawling 36-acre estate of the **Norman Rockwell Museum** (9 Route 183, 413-298-4100, nrm.org, adults \$17.50, children ages 6-18 \$5), which presents the world’s largest collection of Rockwell’s art in a series of changing exhibits. An unusual show pairing Rockwell (1894-1978) with realist Edward Hopper (1882-1967), “The Unknown Hopper: Edward Hopper as Illustrator,” runs through Oct. 26. You can also visit the artist’s studio where paintings, books, and knickknacks remain in place, as if Rockwell had just stepped outside and would return momentarily.

Noon: At Chesterwood, tour the former summer home, studio, and gardens of Daniel Chester French (1850-1931), a sculptor best known for the Minute Man in Concord and Abraham Lincoln in the Lincoln Memorial in Washington (4 Williamsville Road, 413-298-3579, www.chesterwood.org, adults \$16.50, ages 13-17 \$8.25). Don't miss the studio that displays plaster models for French's monumental sculptures. Closes for the season Oct. 13.

2 p.m.: Head to the village of West Stockbridge for a late lunch at **Six Depot Roastery & Cafe**, a casual eatery housed in the town's historic train station (6 Depot St., 413-232-0205, www.sixdepot.com, lunch \$8-\$11). All coffee and teas are sourced from small farms and roasted on site. Creative panini options (roasted pig with truffle oil; pulled chicken with salsa; tempeh with pickled cabbage), salads, and fresh baked desserts are guaranteed to satisfy carnivores and vegans alike.

3 p.m.: You'll find many interesting, less-touristy shopping options in this very-walkable village. There's a well-curated mix of mid-20th-century treasures, country antiques, folk art, and a smattering of vintage and designer clothing at **Sandy Klempner @ Home** (38 Main St., 413-232-0022, www.sandyklempnerathome.com). To order handmade re-creations of classic Shaker furniture, visit the **Anderson & Sons Shaker Tree** showroom (24 Main St., 413-232-7072). **Donald McGrory Oriental Rugs** sells antique and handwoven carpets plus Navajo, and American hooked rugs sourced from New England estates (22 Main St., 413-232-4100, www.donaldmcgroryorientalrugs.com). For an eclectic collection of antiques, American folk art, jewelry, artifacts, pottery, and vintage clothes from around the world, stop by **Equator** (20 Main St., 413-232-4100). At **Stanmeyer Gallery and Shaker Dam Coffeehouse** (2 Main St., 413-232-7707, www.stanmeyergallery.com), peruse the photography collection of John Stanmeyer — showcasing his work for National Geographic magazine — while enjoying a perfectly brewed espresso, cappuccino, or French press coffee in a homey setting of upholstered chairs, Oriental carpets, masks, and other objects collected on Stanmeyer's worldwide travels.

8 p.m.: With its decorative rose wallpaper, crystal chandeliers, and white Damask tablecloths, the main dining room at the **Red Lion Inn** is a throwback to a more formal era. Call it Victorian shabby-chic. However, the food — created by executive chef Brian Alberg — is decidedly contemporary (entrees \$24-\$42). Treat yourself to his taste sensations crafted from locally sourced, seasonal ingredients rooted in the region's history. Recent swoon-worthy offerings included sweet corn puree with seared diver scallop; faro risotto with local mushrooms, asparagus, and Cricket Creek cheese; and braised, whey-fed pork shoulder with hominy. Sommelier Dan Thomas is happy to help choose the perfect wine from over 400 old and new world selections.



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The Stanmeyer Gallery and Shaker Dam Coffeehouse in West Stockbridge.

SUNDAY

9 a.m.: Belly up to the counter for breakfast with local folk at the **Elm Street Market** (4 Elm St., 413-298-3634, www.elmstreetmarket.com, breakfast \$1-\$8). Enjoy sizable portions of French toast, pancakes, omelets, and egg-any-style with bacon, sausage and ham. Early risers can show up at 6 a.m.; late sleepers can order till 11:30. Too full from dinner last night?

Stockbridge Coffee and Tea

(6 Elm St., 413-931-7044, www.stockbridgecoffeeandtea.com, \$2-\$6) offers organic, fair-trade coffee, espresso drinks, loose leaf tea, and locally made pastries.

10 a.m.: **Naumkeag**, the 44-room summer cottage of the Choate family, offers guided tours of its Gilded Age mansion filled with original furnishings and art (5 Prospect Hill Road, 413-298-3239, www.thetrustees.org/places-to-visit/berkshires/naumkeag.html, adults \$15, ages 6-12 free). Or opt for the self-guided audio tour of the extensive gardens including the Blue Steps, a series of deep blue fountain pools flanked by four flights of stairs within a white birch grove. Closes for the season Oct. 15.

Noon: Before heading home, get outside and enjoy the rural beauty of the Berkshires. Three

hiking trails in **Laurel Hill Park**, maintained by the Laurel Hill Association, are easy to reach from Stockbridge, and are suitable for all levels of ability (www.nps.gov/nr/travel/massachusetts_conservation/laurel_hill.html). For an easy walk in the woods along the Housatonic River, the **Mary V. Flynn Trail** is a 1.2-mile round-trip stroll on a wide, packed gravel trail. Moderate hikers may prefer Laura's Tower Trail, a 1.5-mile round-trip ascent through a quiet wooded area of old-stand pine and hemlock. A metal tower at the summit offers panoramic views of the Berkshires, including Mount Greylock. For a difficult challenge, climb over, around, and under giant boulders in a glacial ravine on the **Ice Glen Trail**. This hike is one to two miles long, depending on your return route. Download a map at www.stockbridgechamber.org/things-to-do/laurel-hill-association-trails.

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