

A PERFECT DAY  
IN MANCHESTER | HIDDEN FOLIAGE  
HOT SPOTS | SO YOU WANT  
TO RUN A B&B?

# YANKEE

NEW ENGLAND'S MAGAZINE

A  
SPECIAL  
EDITION

## Our Vermont

*Yankee's favorite stories of the people, places, and traditions  
that make southern Vermont an original*

# My Personal Vermont

A few years ago, a reader named Dawn left this comment on *Yankee's* website: "I'm one of those people who is 'homesick for New England' even though I've never lived there. I've dreamed of living in Vermont ever since I was little, even though I've never been. My favorite school librarian moved away to Weathersfield, Vermont, when I was a child and sent me a postcard, and ever since, I've felt that my heart belongs to a place I've never set foot in.... Please know how fortunate you are to live in such a beautiful corner of the world!"

What she expressed is felt even more deeply by those of us who live either in Vermont or close enough to feel its pull so that weekends invariably lead us to drive (in my case, exactly 30 miles west) across the border. In many ways Vermont defines New England: its rugged beauty, its ties to the land, its work ethic, the deep pride that its people take in what they make, whether it be cheese or ice cream, or maple syrup, or furniture from Green Mountain forests.

When I came to *Yankee* in 1979, Jud Hale, my editor, said, "Find the stories that mean the most to you and bring them back." Since the most memorable stories were about people who cared passionately about something—mostly about the land and their hold upon it—these stories often found me in Vermont. This state was where my boys became ski racers (Okemo)... where I learned about the mysterious hold that the Battenkill has on fly fishermen around the world... where I joined dozens of fellow photographers at the famously picturesque Jenne Farm... where I stood beside Robert Frost's grave... and where I spent four memorable days walking inn-to-inn, a journey that brought me into the heart of Weston, a village where someone like Dawn can still find the Vermont of her dreams.

Few other places possess such a sense of tradition and continuity, an identity so strong that no matter where you might be, if you say, "I'm a Vermonter," people understand who you are and where you come from. That singular Vermont sense of place is what *Yankee* has tried to capture with the words and photographs you'll find in this special collection of stories.

I hope *Yankee's* "Our Vermont" will give you a feeling that Vermont is home, even if you have yet to come here. One day, you will.

*Mel Allen*

—  
Mel Allen  
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# YANKEE

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**On the cover:** The town green in Weston, Vermont. Photo courtesy of The Vermont Country Store.

# Time to Daydream

*An inn-to-inn walking adventure lets travelers  
see Vermont at 10 miles a day.*



**P**ace settles like a mist over the grounds of the Weston Priory. The monks have restored the once-abandoned farm site with a pond, fruit trees, and lush vegetable gardens that they're watering by hand, a scene with the simplicity and beauty of a Millet painting.

After drinking it all in, I set off under a canopy of broad-leaved greenery. The road ambles along, and so do I, until a few miles later I hit Weston's shady village green. Here I pay a visit to The Vermont Country Store, where I fortify myself with a sample of fudge (and find crackers and jams to test, as well).

From there I stroll up Piper Hill Road, with its view of Magic Mountain in the distance. The scene is perfect—old Capes and farmhouses around me, a rolling field to my right, and two companionable horses parked head to tail—and I find myself falling into a daydream.

I have time to daydream because I'm walking. The day stretches out ahead of me like the slowest magic-carpet ride on earth.

"Travelers, there is no path; paths are made by walking," said the Spanish poet Antonio Machado. I'm walking in southern Vermont, making my own path—but

*A landmark in Weston since 1946, The Vermont Country Store embodies the timeless, laid-back feel of this little village, which is among the highlights of the Vermont Inn-to-Inn Walking Tour.*

in fact I'm also following a specific route carved out by four innkeepers. It's a walk designed to deliver the full Vermont experience: red barns, sunlit fields, babbling brooks, old Capes, and a bit of backwoods funk. Not to mention a broad spectrum of dining experiences and four unique inns.

This is what it's like on the **Vermont Inn-to-Inn Walking Tour** ([vermontinntoinnwalking.com](http://vermontinntoinnwalking.com)), a four-day, self-guided meander averaging 10 miles a day. The route is punctuated by four historic inns, all linked by their owners' shared love of Vermont and a commitment to their under-the-radar walking tour:

**Golden Stage Inn, Proctorsville:** Michael and Julie Wood's passion for innkeeping is evident in their loving restoration of this c. 1788 classic. They also share a



love of cooking, and at breakfast, guests are served honey fresh from the inn's hives.

**Colonial House Inn, Weston:** Located just south of Weston's picturesque downtown, home to The Vermont Country Store, this charming 14-room inn boasts mountain views and home-baked treats from the family bakery, Grandma Miller's.

**Inn Victoria, Chester:** Highlights include an artful sprinkling of Victoriana, with extras like a full-blown English tea on weekends, and friendly innkeepers Penny and Dan Cote (whose warm welcome may tempt you to forgo walking and just wait for afternoon cookies).

**The Pettigrew Inn, Ludlow:** Formerly the Andrie Rose Inn, this c. 1829 property was bought by Courtenay Dundy in 2017 and renamed in honor of a longtime Ludlow family, the Pettigrews. The move gave the inn new life while keeping its tradition of gracious hospitality.

The walking tour setup is simple and efficient. The innkeepers transport your bags door to door, Vermont Sherpa-style; greet you at the end of the day with a drink and a home-cooked meal; and, in the morning, send you on your way with a hearty breakfast, snacks for the road, a map of your route, and best wishes for a pleasant day.



*From top: Valley views and farmland vistas beckon in Chester; Weston's Old Mill Museum, home to one of New England's last functioning water-powered gristmills.*

You're on your own, so you can set your own pace. Walk alone or with friends; do as much or as little of the walk as you like, and at any time of year and in any order. Basically, the tour is as idiosyncratic as the state you're walking in.

—Annie Graves

# A Beautiful Refuge

*Is it possible that covered bridges speak to us in ways we haven't imagined?*

New Englanders are, above all, practical. Even if you arrive with fancy notions for buildings, the weather will swiftly veto the unfit roof and wall. That's why we really have only one kind of building, old and new, big and small: the shed. From woodsheds to barns, from houses and meetinghouses to covered bridges, they're all sheds. New England has never gotten much beyond the shed, and we're the better for it. It's the simple form that's adaptable, that thrives from generation to generation. In fact, it's what tourists respond to, though they certainly won't say, "We've come to see the sheds." But they love covered bridges, and the way that the houses lining the common seem like the little brothers of the bigger meetinghouse, or the way the connected sheds and barns trailing behind a house stand there like a third-grade class lined up for its photo.

Sheds are utilitarian. Sheds contain small things—wood and tools—and big: summers, winters, solitude, festivity. The smallest sheds can be liberating: a bob house on a frozen lake, a summer cabin. They can shelter dreams.

Sheds are flexible and fragile. They live in this paradox: They're strong enough to bend. If they break, they can be fixed with common knowledge and common tools. A shed is a simple form, easily rebuilt. Sheds are temporary, and yet they last. A shed is the shortest line between need and shelter. It's a trip from A to B. It's often built of found materials; it's built with a distilled practicality.

Of all sheds, covered bridges are the stars; spanning the water, they're beloved for the beautiful pictures they make. Devoted "bridgers," as enthusiasts are known, talk about the "prancing hoofbeats" on the wooden boards, "the fragrance of the aging wood," kids swimming under the bridge or fishing off the bridge, young swains stealing a kiss with their "best girls," and the ghosts that might be seen in the terrifying dark on moonless nights. Bridgers keep the nostalgia mills turning.

Covered bridges weren't built to star on calendars. They weren't built to be pretty. They were built with roofs to protect the bridge's support—the trusses you see on the side, scissoring by. At least 20 different truss designs, most of them patented, were used in the 19th century. Philadelphia built the country's first covered bridge, in 1805, at the insistence of a local judge who said, correctly, that the bridge would last much longer if its trusswork were protected from the weather. This innovation was quickly adopted across the country with great success. Bridges that once had to be replaced frequently now could serve for a century—or more, in the case of several bridges. Covered bridges are rudely practical.

But that's not why they have legions of protectors; about 850 covered bridges survive across the country, due in part to the vigilance of the bridgers. The strong appeal of covered bridges lies in the surprising feeling of shelter they arouse in people.

Passing into the bridge's shadows, a traveler is enclosed and suspended, and on many bridges, open to the water—looking through the trusses or windows, or down through the boards of the roadway. This sudden enclosure and suspension reawakens the senses.

Covered bridges are like treehouses in that way: You're high up, you're hidden, and you have a view. For a moment you're hiding out. The English geographer Jay Appleton says that people are drawn to shelters that offer "prospect and refuge." Evolving as hunter-gatherers, humans naturally sought out places where they could see without being seen. Passing through a covered bridge offers a quick taste of our old affinities. They're small moments of reunion with our younger selves. The bridgers' stories are tales of refuge.

—Howard Mansfield, adapted from his 2016 book *Sheds* (Bauhan Publishing), with photographs by Joanna Eldredge Morrissey





# No Better Cheddar

*Celebrating a slice of  
Vermont heritage.*

Truly fantastic cheeses of all types are made in the Green Mountain State, but cheddar is our choice for the most New England-y of the lot. Most of the credit goes to the fine cow's milk from which it's made, but also to the strong backs of the cheesemakers who do the "cheddaring." You see, *cheddar* isn't just a creamy and delicious noun, but a verb as well. Cheddaring is a British tradition by which fresh curds are shaped into large blocks, cut into slabs, stacked upon one another, and turned to expel moisture and, most crucial to the taste and texture of the final product, to reach the proper acidity. Once the correct percentages are reached, the cheese is milled, salted, pressed, and on it goes through the aging process, whether a few months or a few years. Products from the following cheese producers are available in local grocery stores and fine cheese shops. Or, for the freshest taste, visit their operations in person. —Annie B. Coppins

## Cabot Creamery

This nearly 100-year-old co-op buys milk from more than 1,200 dairy farms all over New England and upstate New York. From grocery-store staples to award-winning aged varieties and cave-ripened cloth-bound cheddars, fine cheese is a priority. *2878 Main St., Cabot (visitors center); 2657 Waterbury–Stowe Road, Waterbury Center; 5573 Woodstock Road, Quechee. 888-792-2268; cabotcheese.coop*

## Grafton Village Cheese

Since the 1890s, the cheesemakers of Grafton, sponsored by the Windham Foundation (a nonprofit dedicated to promoting rural Vermont living), have been crafting gorgeous, creamy, nutty-tasting cheddars. Sample them at the Grafton factory or the company's outpost in Brattleboro. *553 Townshend Road, Grafton; 400 Linden St., Brattleboro. 800-472-3866; graftonvillagecheese.com*

## Crowley Cheese

Made in small batches by hand since 1824, Crowley cheese is its own creation, which the company describes as tasting sweeter and creamier than a typical Vermont cheddar. We love serving Crowley cheese with apple pie and grating it for our mac 'n' cheese. Check the website to see when the folks there are cheddaring—they welcome visitors. *14 Crowley Lane, Healdville/Mount Holly. 802-259-2340; crowleycheese.com*

## Shelburne Farms

Hugging Lake Champlain, this operation is a working grower, as well as a dairy, inn, restaurant, and education center. Everything these folks do is top-notch, but their selection of cheddars—which have garnered multiple honors from the prestigious American Cheese Society several years running—is the thing that has us really hooked. *1611 Harbor Road, Shelburne. 802-985-8686; shelburnefarms.org*



*In a photograph from the 1992 book *The Private World of Tasha Tudor*, the artist washes dishes under the watchful eye of Captain Pegler, one of her parrots.*

# In Search of Tasha Tudor

*The iconic writer and illustrator's Vermont homestead offers a storybook escape for her fans.*

There's a quiet layer of dust on the drawing pad by the north-facing window. All is in readiness—a fistful of brushes, watercolors, a chair drawn up before a modest square table. Our small group, 20 tourists granted the privilege of visiting Tasha Tudor's private 200-acre sanctuary in Marlboro on an early-fall day, stands silent, drinking in our good fortune. To our immediate right is a buttery-yellow fireplace decked with the essential trappings of colonial living: antique rifle, candlewick snipper, and a rare, early tin kitchen, the open-hearth equivalent of today's barbecue grill. It looks familiar. A perfect still life, waiting.

By the time she died in June 2008, at the age of 92, Tudor had illustrated close to 100 books, including such children's classics as *The Wind in the Willows*, *The Secret Garden*, and *The Night Before Christmas*. She had also cut her own path through children's literature with original books such as *Corgiville Fair*, and she left behind a few cookbooks whose illustrations satisfy families hungry for a certain way of life (as well as for birthday-cake alternatives—see "Pink Pudding," from *The New England Butt'ry Shelf Cookbook*). For those raised on Tudor's lyrical images of bygone times, her illustrations can be more instantly relaxing than a cup of chamomile tea.

"I've always lived in a world of imagination," Tudor once said. "Maybe it's because I'm a coward and hide my head in the sand because I don't want to see the

real world. I don't know, but I can assure you it's a very delightful way to live. I'm an eternal optimist. I've never had a headache and I've never felt depressed.... My whole life has been a vacation."

How many of us can say the same? Who wouldn't admire or envy that?

So here we stand, a small group of admirers, on the threshold of Tudor's world. We're about to explore a house and a barn that many of us already know from the artist's many illustrations featuring scenes set here and there, scattered around the property like fallen leaves.

We've traveled a sun-dappled dirt road that wanders into the woods as aimlessly as a chicken, on a day that is a miracle of fall, cloudlessly blue. Fresh colors speckle the hills around Marlboro, and tucked into the woods are the house and barn that Seth Tudor built for his mother in 1972, using only hand tools. It's a copy of a 1700s house, and he made it look as old as the hills.

Our group splits into smaller groups so that we can fit into some of the snugger parts of the house and barn. As we move from room to room, and finally outdoors, we'll each spend time with all three guides: Seth; his wife, Marjorie; and their son, Winslow. All live nearby.

We pause, midway between Tudor's massive cookstove and the yellow fireplace, hovering near the table where she spent winters stoking the fire, absorbed in creating new illustrations. "This is the heart of the house," Winslow says. He cocks an ear. "The way things rattle—they've been doing that for 30 years. The house is just the way she left it. I'm always amazed when I go away and come back. It's like going back in time."

We listen, but there's more here than rattling cups and kettles. Many of us recognize our surroundings, even though we've never been here. Tudor painted these settings so many times that it's like standing in one of her paintings. Intimate, unnerving, and thrilling, all at the same time. She's here, and she's not.

—Annie Graves

*Tasha Tudor and Family offers a limited number of tours each year, which sell out quickly. For details, go to tashatudorandfamily.com.*



Daffodils and crabapple trees bloom below the Marlboro house that Tasha Tudor's son Seth built for his mother in the 1970s. "The first thing I did was plant daffodils—over a thousand," she said.



*The formal gardens at Hildene, the onetime home of Robert Todd Lincoln. Below: Green Mountain Falconry School owner Rob Waite, shown with a Harris hawk named Elmer.*

# These Hills Are Alive

*In the heart of the Green Mountains, Manchester beckons with hiking, fishing, farm-to-table eateries, and some of the best outlet shopping in New England.*



Sometimes beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Other times, it's simply there.

In Manchester—wedged between mountains and divvied up into two distinct communities—it takes a visitor only minutes to see how stunning the landscape can be.

Pristine **Manchester Village** is crisscrossed with white marble sidewalks—a seeming extravagance, except that the materials were handy (local quarry) and abundant. Mount Equinox, at 3,848 feet, dominates one side of Route 7A, which bisects the town; opposite, the Green Mountains shimmer with a mistiness that's practically Arthurian. A short distance away, **Manchester Center** kicks in: It's a local commercial hub, with a wonderful

COURTESY OF HILDENE (MANSION);  
MARK FLEMING (FALCONRY)

These Hills Are Alive



Left: In Dorset, one of the oldest marble quarries in the U.S. (established 1785) is now a popular—and picturesque—swimming hole.

Below: A Manchester Center landmark for more than 40 years, Northshire Bookstore devotes nearly a third of its space to its youngest readers, who can browse to their heart's content in a kids' section that fills an entire floor.

independent bookstore and a number of appealingly disguised designer outlets, from Ann Taylor and Armani to J. Crew (though just up the road there's a major nod to homegrown retailing in the form of The Vermont Country Store's corporate headquarters).

For pure beauty, there's the legendary Battenkill River. It has challenged trout fishermen for decades, and its location marks the epicenter of American fly-fishing (Orvis *lives* here, since its founding in 1856). Meanwhile, the mountains so entranced Abe Lincoln's son, Robert, who vacationed here as a boy, that he built his summer mansion, Hildene, high on a Manchester hilltop, still there for all to visit today.

Manchester is also famed for its fine country inns and resorts, including the elegant 1902 Wilburton Inn: With 21 rooms and five houses dotting 30 acres, this big-hearted estate run by the Levis family is widely considered one of the top mansion hotels in the country. Nearby, in the heart of Manchester Village, the posh Equinox Resort tempts guests with fly-fishing and a par-71 golf course.

And while the Battenkill's catch-and-release policy means you won't be fishing for your dinner, there's a rich assortment of eateries here, from New American cuisine to Mexican street food. "Wednesday Farm Night" at the Wilburton Inn enlists veggies from the Levis family's Earth Sky Time farm. At the Perfect Wife, Manchester native Amy Chamberlain relies on goodies such as Hildene Farm Havarti for her "freestyle" cuisine. Venture over to the Southern Vermont Arts Center, where sculptures dance across broad fields and paintings enliven a 28-room mansion, and you can even sample exquisite home-style Japanese cuisine at the seasonal Café Sora.

Designer outlets line up on Depot Street—Eileen Fisher rubs elbows with Ralph Lauren, Le Creuset nudges Bass. They're just a stone's throw from Northshire Bookstore,



an independent force majeure since 1976, which offers 10,000 square feet of books, gifts, a café, and an entire floor devoted to kids. At Orvis, over on Route 7A, master craftsman Charlie Hisey carries on the store's tradition of hand-making bamboo fly rods; next door, the American Museum of Fly Fishing offers insight into why so many are devotees of the sport.

For a uniquely Manchester experience, though, head to Boorn Brook Farm, once the home of famed Vermont painter Ogden Pleissner and now the headquarters of Green Mountain Falconry School. With the protection of a thick leather gauntlet and some instruction from owner Rob Waite, a master falconer who has worked with raptors for almost 40 years, you can truly go "medieval" as a captive-bred hawk swoops down from the sky to land on your outstretched arm.

—Annie Graves

# Picture-Perfect

*New England's most photographed farm is as irresistible as ever.*

The story goes that some 65 years ago, when Floyd Jenne Sr. traveled from Reading, Vermont, to New York City—a distance that can't be measured merely in miles—he arrived at Grand Central Terminal, looked up, and saw a massive photo of his farm spread across the walls.

His surprise can't be greater than the awe that a first-time viewer experiences when standing on the rising hillside above Jenne Farm—except that few who venture out here, 15 miles south of Woodstock, are completely unprepared. Most know exactly why they've come, and some even know precisely where they're going to stand.

Jenne Farm is the most photographed farm in New England, possibly in all of North America. In winter,

Floyd Jr. was the last Jenne to live on the farm; other members of the extended family reside here now as part of the family trust. Floyd Jr.'s sister, Linda Kidder, grew up here, and she remembers when the photographers first began to arrive, back in the mid-1950s, after students at a local photography school started snapping shots of the 1813 farm built by her forebears. The photogenic setting soon caught the eye of *Life* magazine, *Vermont Life*, and, of course, *Yankee*.

"It was pretty overwhelming," she recalls, standing beside an enclosure of Herefords wading in mud. Her eyes linger over a landscape that lives in her blood; Jennes have been on this land since 1790. "[People] would come by the busload and mill around," she recalls.

"We always had beagle puppies, and they'd ask me to hold one of the puppies, take my picture, and give me nickels, dimes, and quarters."

In the face of overtures from developers, the family members keep the historic farm going with a herd of beef cattle and a maple-sugaring operation. "I'm glad we can keep it," Linda muses. "It's still a beautiful place." Hundreds of photographers click their cameras in agreement each year, as the sugar maples around

the farm buildings burst with color.

And somewhere out there, tucked into a photo album, hanging on a wall, or hidden away in an old shoebox, are photographs of a 10-year-old Linda Jenne, holding a beagle pup, against this backdrop of unparalleled rural beauty. The world has moved on since then, but there's still a little corner of peace and tranquility at the top of Jenne Road that feels as though you've just drifted back in time, to a piece of heaven on earth. You can even take a picture of it.

—Annie Graves



*Despite the fact that Jenne Farm is tucked away on a dirt road with little by way of a sign, photographers from all over find their way to this Reading property when foliage season gets underway.*

spring, summer, and fall—the last most of all—photographers set up their equipment in the well-worn tripod marks at the top of the knoll. Cameras click, documenting the rise and fall of light on the idyllic scene. But despite the hundreds of calendars and postcards and bits of advertising and star turns in films like *Forrest Gump* and *Funny Farm*, nothing prepares you for the downward sweep of land and the tidy cluster of tumble-down red buildings burrowed into pillows of hills. In a landscape brimming with farms, Jenne Farm rises to the top like cream on fresh milk.



*Autumn colors light up the ski slopes of Mount Snow, one of the countless photo ops that await leaf-peepers along Route 100.*

# Driver's Delight

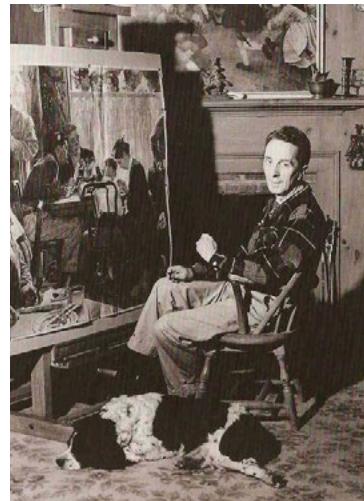
*Following Route 100 into the heart of Vermont's legendary fall foliage.*

**R**oute 100 is a restless road. As it salamanders its way through the mountainous middle of Vermont, it seems perpetually on the verge of decision, only to change its mind in a mile. One minute, it's slaloming along a rocky riverbed through dense cover of birch and maple; the next, it's soaring up to a sudden vista as if God has suddenly pulled away a curtain. There's a reason this stretch of highway—some 200 miles from Massachusetts to Lake Memphremagog—has been called the most scenic in New England. In some circles, it's known as the "Skiers' Highway," since it connects Vermont's giants—Snow, Okemo, Killington, Sugarbush, Stowe, Jay—like knots on a whip.

But the road really comes into its own in autumn, hitting the peak of fall foliage not once but many times as it traces an up-and-down course along the unspoiled edge of Green Mountain National Forest. When civilization does break through, it's in the form of some of Vermont's most quintessential villages: Wilmington, Weston, and Rochester, to name a few. Leaf-peeping, after all, is about more than just leaves. It's about the foliage experience—farm stands and country stores, craft galleries and hot cider—and Route 100, with its many off-the-beaten-path side trips, offers all of that in one long, winding package. And because the road never makes up its mind, you don't have to, either. —Michael Blanding

# Rockwell Country

*The artist's spirit lives on in the  
snug Vermont town he called home.*



*From left: This charming “cottage” in Arlington is in fact the former studio of Norman Rockwell, today part of the Norman Rockwell Studio & Inn; the artist at home in Vermont in 1951, with a study for *Saying Grace*.*

**L**ook out the front windows of the inn and there's the red covered bridge, the white Gothic-steepled church, and the Battenkill Grange, all lined up like something Norman Rockwell would have painted. Actually, he did—and this 226-year-old Vermont farmhouse is where Rockwell lived from 1943 to 1953, some of his most productive years. At one time, Arlington was a little mecca for artists and writers. It's remarkably unchanged from when Rockwell attended Town Meeting and swung his partner at the Saturday night dances.

There's no shortage of fine inns and B&Bs to choose from in Arlington. But the fact that Rockwell's spirit lives on here was appealing, so we made reservations to stay at the Inn on Covered Bridge Green (now the Norman Rockwell Studio & Inn). We chose to stay in Rockwell's big studio in the back. It remains virtually as he left it: pine-paneled walls, big open fireplace, wagon wheel chandelier, and an enormous window that lets in the artist's coveted north light. Out the studio's kitchen windows, we saw llamas, horses, and Scottish highland cows pushing for hay.

We had dinner reservations at the Arlington Inn, just down the road. The Deming Tavern, so alluring with its Victorian parlor furniture and hardwood bar, seemed just as hard to leave, once our table was ready. Chef and innkeeper Eric Berger provided a sumptuous, leisurely meal. Back at the studio, we were able to revive the fire and sit in its warmth for a few hours before turning in.

In the morning, breakfast was served around the dining room table at the inn's main house. The owner was from California and had never even visited New England

before she and her husband found this property for sale. “I flew out to see it and bought it that day,” she explained. Was she a Rockwell fan? “I didn't really know much about him at the time,” she said while setting platters of French toast and sausage in front of guests, “but now I'm such an admirer.”

The day was crisp. Other guests were headed for a day at Hildene, once Robert Todd Lincoln's home, now a museum outside Manchester. A lot of people, we discovered, like to stay in Arlington but go elsewhere to explore or shop. (Arlington is just seven miles south of Manchester—Vermont's answer to Fifth Avenue—and 17 miles north of Bennington.) We stayed close to home base, browsing local antiques shops and stopping at the Martha Canfield Library to see its small exhibit on another favored former resident, education activist and writer Dorothy Canfield Fisher.

After a quick bite at a downtown café, we were off to see the Norman Rockwell Exhibition at the Sugar Shack. The cozy country store and sugarhouse features countless examples of Rockwell's work (framed magazine covers, ads, illustrations) and screens a short film about the artist. Some days, Arlington residents who once modeled for Rockwell are on hand to offer anecdotes. Quotes collected over the years from town residents are also arranged here. “He was just common and ordinary,” said the postman who delivered his mail. “Just like one of us.”

Which is probably why we still cherish his work and the memory of the man. And the town he loved.

—Edie Clark

# The Monk in the Orchard

*Ezekiel Goodband thinks biting into a fresh apple should be a transcendent experience—and he's devoted his life to giving others that pleasure.*



*The Monk in the Orchard*

**T**he road to Scott Farm in Dummerston rises from a strip of Taco Bells and KFCs along I-91 in Vermont, quickly turning to dirt as it dives between forested hills. At the top, high above the valley floor, it opens onto a monastery-like enclave of packing barns and stone walls. There, you'll find Ezekiel Goodband and his apple trees.

I found "Zeke" in the 36-acre orchard, contemplating a Baldwin tree in the oblique light of a late September morning. Crickets played a steady dirge for summer in the surrounding fields. He plucked a brick-red apple from the tree. "Beautiful apple," he said, only half to me. "This is one of my favorites. So crisp, so hard. Such flavor! If I had to think of one apple to represent 'Apple Flavor,' I'd say Baldwin." At age 65, Zeke is slight of frame and soft of voice, with a Chinese sage's gray waterfall of a beard.

*Zeke Goodband,  
orchardist at Scott  
Farm, a 571-acre  
Dummerston estate  
that was once owned by  
Rudyard Kipling.*

## *The Monk in the Orchard*



He has a relationship of sorts with each of them, each of the masterpieces he has saved from the barbaric forces of industrial agriculture. He walked me through the rows like a curator, pointing out some of the apple genome's greatest creations. There's Blue Pearmain, Thoreau's favorite. And Belle de Boskoop, a strudel specialist.

Zeke grows 90 varieties of apples at Scott Farm, an estate once owned by Rudyard Kipling. Their names are romantic and arcane: Esopus Spitzenberg and Hubbardston Nonesuch, Lamb Abbey Pearmain and Cox's Orange Pippin. These were the regional stars of 19th-century England and New England, when an extraordinary flowering of apple culture brought thousands of varieties into use. Some crackled with citrus, pineapple, and walnut flavors that would be startling in a modern apple. Others made blue-ribbon pies. Most were lost during the Dark Ages of the 20th century, when the apple industry chose to concentrate on a handful of varieties—Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, Granny Smith—that produced massive crops of almost juiceless fruit that could survive international shipping and storage.

Who now thinks of a fresh apple as a transcendent experience? Well, Zeke does, and he's devoted his life to giving others that pleasure. —Rowan Jacobsen



*From top: A 100-year-old Melba apple tree stands near the orchard's sprawling storage barn, which was built in 1862; a cluster of Roxbury Russet apples, a variety that originated in Massachusetts around 1635.*

### **Visiting Scott Farm**

The stand at Scott Farm is open seven days a week from September until Thanksgiving. Zeke Goodband hosts an heirloom apple tasting day in early October, and there's an apple-themed harvest dinner in late October. The Landmark Trust rents out the property for weddings and other gatherings. There are five different National Register of Historic Places sites where you can stay on the property, including "Naulakha," Rudyard Kipling's home.  
*707 Kipling Road, Dummerston, VT. 802-254-6868; scottfarmvermont.com*

# Two-Wheeling Through the Color

*One of the most memorable ways to see foliage is from a bike, even if it's uphill (and raining).*



**M**idmorning in the Vermont countryside, and I am coasting on a bike along a twisting, turning road that—finally—points downward. For the last 20 minutes I've climbed an uphill stretch on aptly named Kingdom Road. My chest pounds, my thigh muscles burn, and I'm soaked from the morning's steady rain. Behind me are the cyclists I've traveled here to bike with; ahead lies a landscape ablaze with reds, yellows, and oranges.

It's Columbus Day weekend—here in southern Vermont, a three-day splurge of foliage and tourists—and I've come to see the leaves. But rather than do it from the comfortable (and dry) confines of a car, I've committed to mixing my sightseeing with 70 miles of cycling.

I'm here with **Peace of Mind Guaranteed** ([pomg.bike.com](http://pomg.bike.com)), a Richmond-based company that has offered bike tours of the Green Mountain State since 1995. The trip I've signed up for meanders through the back roads

## *Two-Wheeling Through the Color*



of the Plymouth/Woodstock region, through covered bridges and alongside rivers. It also offers its share of hills: Plymouth sits at the bottom of a gulch. The long weekend ends Monday with a morning hike up Mount Tom in Woodstock.

The seven riders in my group come from all over the country; except for me, everyone is a veteran of these trips. Going the distance is what all of us plan to do. Despite the rain, and despite the option of following shorter routes, we all commit to the 32-mile Ludlow-Okemo ride on Saturday and to Sunday's 35-mile loop through Woodstock.

Over the course of the weekend we make stops: a farm in Reading, the Calvin Coolidge homestead in Plymouth Notch, downtown Woodstock, and a quick breather at Buttermilk Falls. But the more miles I log, the more I want to stay on the bike. At times I ride and talk with other members of the group. Other times I drop back to ride on my own, craning my neck to marvel at the eye-popping color. Instead of tearing through the foliage in a car, it feels as if I am gliding straight into it. I have the road and the landscape virtually to myself. No cars. No other people. Except for the rain—and the smoke pump-

*Though mountain bikers often make tracks for the Northeast Kingdom's famous network of trails, road bikers can find wonderfully scenic routes—both grueling and laid-back—throughout the Green Mountain State. Even better, outfitters like Peace of Mind Guarantee can handle the logistics of longer tours, allowing cyclists to concentrate on enjoying the ride.*

ing out of the occasional farmhouse chimney—it feels as though I am the only thing moving.

On Monday, the day of our departures for home, the morning sparkles with sunshine and blue sky as we head up Mount Tom in Woodstock. The short hike offers beautiful views of the village, the surrounding color, and the farms that sweep away from town. We make it back to our inn in time to pack, say our good-byes, and take off for another journey—this one back home, by car. How boring. —*Ian Aldrich*



# Hidden Gold

*For under-the-radar, over-the-top fall color, look no farther than south-central Vermont.*

**T**here's no need to get in line to see Vermont's fall colors. You don't have to hop onto one of the state's main thoroughfares—Vermont's "foliage highways"—and leaf-peep with the crowd.

Having peeped at a leaf or two in the quarter-century I've lived in Vermont, I've found my personal favorites where there'll be fewer people, just as much color ... and maybe even a twisty little back road or an obscure historic site that few travelers know about.

Here's one that you will want to return to: **Ludlow**, in the midst of the lovely Okemo Valley region in south-central Vermont.

In choosing Ludlow and environs as my tour base, I knew I'd have to make a pilgrimage to nearby Healdville and the **Crowley Cheese** factory. "We just finished making," said a white-aproned woman as I walked into the modest shop in Crowley's 1882 headquarters, the oldest continuously operating cheese-making plant in the country. "There's just the four of us, and we're sitting down for a while." That gave me time to poke around the shop, where I saw that although jars of muffuletta and giardiniera had been added to the inventory since my last visit, the staple was still the honest unpasteurized cheese that Winfield Crowley once made.

After buying a chunk, I kept up the dairy theme by heading to **Buttermilk Falls**. Fallen leaves swirled in the pools that punctuate the falls as I made a lunch of cheese and smoked sausage I'd bought at **Singleton's General Store**, a must-stop in Proctorsville, on the other side of Ludlow, for anyone in need of picnic provisions.

I made my Ludlow-area fall foliage headquarters at **Castle Hill**, a resort that incorporates a grand stone



*Above: With sections dating from the 1790s, the 1800s, and the 1940s, the Moore-Blanchard barn complex presents a patchwork of farming heritage in Plymouth Notch.*

*Right: A visit to the Calvin Coolidge Historic Site might include tasty samples from the Plymouth Cheese factory, top, and a contemplative moment at the c. 1840 Union Christian Church.*



mansion built at the turn of the 20th century by Vermont governor Allen Fletcher. This “castle” stands in sharp contrast to the home of another, better-known politician, whose life journey took him from a quintessential Vermont hill town all the way to the White House. As I drove the dozen or so miles north to Plymouth Notch, I thought about young Calvin Coolidge walking this route for weekends home from Ludlow’s Black River Academy. Home, of course, was his ancestral village of Plymouth Notch, where his father farmed and ran the general store.

I’ve visited the **Calvin Coolidge State Historic Site** enough times to know his story well. His ascent from Plymouth Notch and his father’s administration of the presidential oath of office by lamplight after Warren Harding’s death still resonate, and still make it worthwhile to look in at that little inaugural parlor. Fall is somehow a good season for visiting Plymouth Notch; the leaves gather on generations of Coolidge graves, and there seems to be a reminder that Coolidge’s time was the autumn of an old Yankee era in life and politics.

**Mount Ascutney**, east of Ludlow, in Windsor, is one

of the peaks that Coolidge famously said moved him “in a way that no other scene could move me.” I finished my ramblings with a trip up the mountain’s state-run toll road, where a park ranger told me as I bought my ticket, “We have an undercast.” While I’d never heard the word, I quickly understood what it meant: I’d drive the lower part of the road surrounded by morning mist, but once up top I’d be rewarded with clear skies and a view of ... morning mist, down below.

I parked at the road’s end and hiked the last half-mile to the summit lookout tower, and, sure enough, I’d arrived above the clouds. But I was in no hurry, and it was wonderful to watch the mists lift, patchily revealing farmland and vibrantly hued forest and the New Hampshire hills beyond the broad Connecticut River. Over on that other shore, I recalled, painters such as Maxfield Parrish, members of the Cornish Art Colony, once treasured their views of Ascutney. Through the rising mist, I felt as if I were looking back at them. —*Bill Scheller*

*For more information on visiting Ludlow and the rest of the Okemo Valley region, go to [yourplaceinvermont.com](http://yourplaceinvermont.com).*



# So You Want to Run a B&B?

*What could be better than owning your own business while living in an idyllic setting? Yankee goes behind the scenes at a Vermont inn to see where dreams and reality meet.*

*So You Want to Run a B&B?*



**T**here's a saying in the B&B world that goes like this: *Walk into any inn and ask the owners whether their business is for sale, and you'll be invited to talk numbers.* For many, the pull of an idyllic *Bob Newhart* kind of life quickly morphs into the reality of long days, low profits, and little relief. It's why the average B&B owner lasts just six years on the job.

Dan and Penny Cote haven't hit that wall. In 2010 they bought the Inn Victoria, set in Vermont's Okemo Valley, in 2010, abandoning a pair of successful white-collar jobs to follow a dream of working together and build a business around helping others.

"Those first six months, we were just exhausted," Penny says. "No word for it. It was like having a brand-new baby. You don't know your name. *I'm alive and I'm walking, but I really don't know what else I'm doing.* At one point, we were going to the grocery store for, like, the 92nd time that week: We pulled into the parking lot, locked the doors, put the seats down, and fell asleep in the car."

Of course, when you're in the business of accepting complete strangers into your home, you have to welcome a divergent set of personalities into your life. Not everyone who walks through your door is likable, not even to



*Previous page: Inn Victoria owners Dan and Penny Cote, ready for action.*

*This page, from top: A discussion of the night's menu can happen anywhere, even in the laundry room; Dan helps guests get their bearings.*



*So You Want to Run a B&B?*

Clockwise from top: Dan does a little pre-dinner shopping; the Cotes go over the coming weekend's reservations with assistant innkeeper Jessica Knisley; Dan and Penny sharing a rare moment of rest (each November, after the rush of autumn visitors is passed, they'll go away for vacation to fully recharge).



a pair of accommodating innkeepers. In a desk drawer in their apartment, the Cotes keep what they call the "Jerk File," a short list of people they'd just as soon never see again. The two couples who bailed on trying to pay after spending a day drinking the Cotes' wine, watching television, and then ordering dinner? They're on the list. So is the guy who took over a second room and tried to get out of paying for it.

But the Cotes say they adore 95 percent of their guests: the doctor and his friend who entertained them late into the night on piano; the woman from the Netherlands recovering from cancer who "made everyone feel good about themselves"; and the ones who feel so relaxed that they're comfortable hanging out in the main room in their bathrobes. "Sometimes they'll fall asleep right on the couch," Penny says.

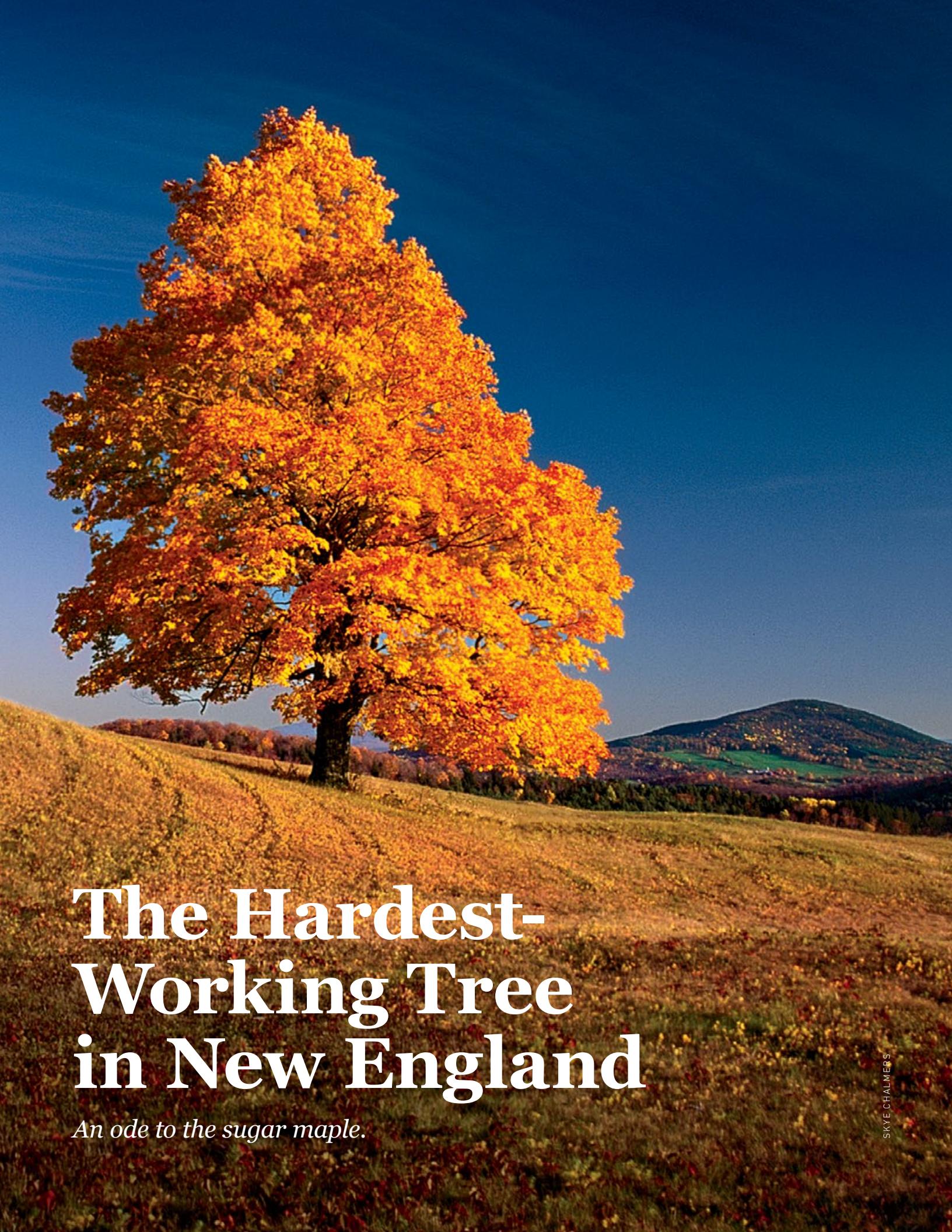
In all, they've spent close to \$200,000 in upgrades on their inn, everything from new linens and beds to renovated bathrooms and a redesigned backyard porch. They were ready for it. They'd done their homework. And yet, for all their planning, all their research, all their due diligence, the Cotes still had to adjust to their new reality. In their previous life the couple never looked at what something cost. If they needed it, they bought it, whether it was a gallon of milk, a case of wine, or a piece of furniture.

"We'd owned the inn for just a couple of weeks, and I remember

we went to a dollar store to pick up some things," Dan recalls. "I was walking down the aisles, saying to myself, 'Two weeks ago I was an executive. I never would have been caught dead in a store like this.' I was embarrassed by that thought. I got over it, but it was an odd experience for me. Suddenly there was a budget. When we were thinking about doing this, it never dawned on me that I'd have to change my shopping habits."

Most days don't wrap up until at least 10 p.m. The Cotes are exhausted, and when they climb into bed there's no issue falling asleep. Besides, they need the rest. Dawn and the start of a whole new day will arrive before they know it. —*Ian Aldrich*





# The Hardest-Working Tree in New England

*An ode to the sugar maple.*

A venerable sugar maple—perhaps like the glorious Vermont example shown on the previous page—is said to have inspired Robert Frost's poem "Tree at My Window" ("let there never be curtain drawn / between you and me").

**B**ecause rural New England is a well-watered and well-wooded region, people here live much with trees. They are familiar spirits—proprietary trees, so to speak—domesticated trees, trees that owing to their beauty, their history, their location, seem to have a special connection to the place and the people on it.

In the Green Mountain foothills of southern Vermont, where I live, favored trees of the kind I've described are apt to be sugar maples. I have one immediately outside the window of the room where I work. Maybe because it stands no more than a few feet from where I sit, this particular maple has come to be for me a kind of companion.

My window maple is probably 60 feet tall, maybe 75 years old. I can estimate its age with some confidence from the size of its base, and also because it has been a part of the setting here for not that much longer than I have. An old-fashioned black-and-white snapshot of this house, taken in 1961, shows the same maple as a young tree, little better than a sapling. Fifteen years later, when our family arrived, it had about the girth of a sturdy fencepost. Today it's a mature tree.

Our maple has been a good friend to our family over the years, and perhaps especially to me. How many hours, weeks, seasons have I spent looking out my window at this tree? I don't know; I can't count that high. Now, the job of writing is one that can honestly involve a certain amount of sitting and gazing out the window. Believe it or not, a writer's work can be accomplished that way—at least part of it can. Or so writers are pleased to let on. Perhaps only my window maple and I know how much of my own looking has accomplished nothing at all.

To be sure, the sugar maple has uses beyond furnishing matter for meditation to the easily distracted. No tree in New England works harder on man's behalf. It is by no means the biggest tree in our woods; the oldest pines and hemlocks regularly grow taller. It's not the longest-lived;



those same pines and hemlocks, and some oaks, go back further. Nor is it our most celebrated, or storied, tree, an honor that must go to the American elm, decimated by disease in recent decades, but whose survivors recall the beloved elms, of which every New England village formerly seemed to have had one, under which George Washington must surely have stopped to refresh himself once upon a time.

Lacking grandeur, antiquity, and legend, the sugar maple succeeds through industry. It is unsurpassed in the diversity and excellence of its utility. The

value of its sap in producing syrup and sugar is widely known. Less appreciated is the value of its wood. Hard and closed-grained, sugar maple makes flooring more durable than marble, hence its use in basketball courts and bowling alleys. Around the house it's ubiquitous—in tubs, bowls, cutting boards, rolling pins, wooden spoons—for the making of any implement subject to long, hard wear, not only kitchen implements, but baseball bats, billiard cues, bowling pins, drumsticks, gunstocks.

Since it can be cut with precision, and because of its rare birdseye and other fancy grains, sugar maple has been prized by woodworkers since the beginning of American cabinetmaking. In addition, again because it can be worked to fine tolerances, and also because of its acoustic qualities, makers of musical instruments often use it in violins, cellos, guitars, and other strings, in some woodwinds, and in drum shells.

Finally, however, the sugar maple's signal gift to our region is not a gift of use. It's not a gift of fanciful fellowship. As I write this, on a warm afternoon in early October, the leaves of the companionable tree at my window have turned a fine, translucent lemon-yellow. They seem lit from within. Up and down the road, sugar maples spread their scarlets and oranges in the sun, bestowing once again the gift of color, the gift of brightness, the gift of autumn. —Castle Freeman



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