



The Inn at Little Washington

Maryland's Eastern Shore, Virginia's Countryside: The Ultimate Sub- And Urban Escape

If you've been to the Washington, D.C., area in the last 10 years, there's plenty of evidence it has succumbed to a wretched case of suburban sprawl. So it's mind bending that just a two-hour drive due east is the Eastern Shore of Maryland with its grand estates and small waterfront towns, some dating back to 1684, dotting the maze of the Chesapeake Bay's tributaries. Or tacking southwest in less than that, lies the wee village of Washington, Virginia, the surprising home of one of the world's greatest dining extravaganzas. And traveling a little further into the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, as America's wine-loving

founding father Thomas Jefferson would have wanted, you'll find prominent historic structures and award-winning vineyards in peaceful coexistence.

Winding along the country roads of the Eastern Shore or Virginia's Piedmont on a sparkling summer or fall day—cracking blue crabs at St. Michaels' Crab Claw Restaurant, tasting a Cabernet Franc at Jefferson Vineyards, or relishing an unparalleled dining experience at The Inn at Little Washington—there's hardly a place on the planet that can beat this sub- and urban escape.

LODGING AND DINING

Incomparable surroundings call for incomparable accommodations and restaurants. Three of the region's inns, some of the finest in the world, also serve as luxurious bases for exploring.

[WATERFRONT RETREAT] The Inn at Perry Cabin, built by Purser Samuel Hambleton in 1816, is a white manor house with lawns and gardens stretching to the Miles River. Within walking distance to historic St. Michaels' shops, antiques stores, and outstanding eateries (the upscale 208 Talbot is a must-dine), it's also a waterfront retreat with docking facilities, a horizon-edge swimming pool and a high-end spa. The 80 rooms, some with fireplaces and separate sitting areas, are a modern take on the traditional inn with nautical touches like barge board and black-and-white photos of skipjacks setting a sense of place. The verandas and patios of the State Rooms are ideal for watching waterfowl skim the

river and sailboats pass by.

Sherwood's Landing, the Inn's more formal restaurant, which serves breakfast, lunch, dinner and afternoon tea daily, also has lovely waterfront views. Aaron McCloud has recently taken over as executive chef, succeeding Mark Salter, whose 17-year tenure made the restaurant's reputation. The Modern American menu is heavy on local meat and seafood, but while it's too early to assess McCloud's success, his credentials are certainly impressive.

The more casual **Purser's Pub** with its cozy fireplace in the winter, outdoor courtyard in the summer, and convivial atmosphere, draws locals, too. There's the requisite burger and crabcake sandwich on the daily lunch and dinner menu, but offerings also include interesting small plates like an oyster po' boy slider and fried duck drumsticks. 308 WATKINS LANE, ST. MICHAELS, MD., 866.278.9601, WWW.PERRYCABIN.COM

[GOURMET RETREAT] The Inn at Little Washington is not only a pilgrimage for gourmands, but also an exquisite inn that anchors the lovingly preserved town of Washington, Va., chock-full of boutiques and art galleries catering to the well-to-do. Joyce Evans, a London stage and set designer, has reigned over the décor of the 18 bedrooms and suites spread about the property, with gardens, open fields and tree-covered mountains for views. Her efforts reflect carefully selected antiques and works of art, some novel and many shipped from England. With a stone

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fireplace in the downstairs parlor, a loft bedroom from which to spy a foraging deer, and a private breakfast pavilion, the Gameskeeper's Cottage is particularly special.

But the raison d'être for visiting the Inn is the masterful creations of chef and proprietor Patrick O'Connell, who has won practically every accolade possible for an American restaurant. Out of necessity, O'Connell was a pioneer of the "eat local" movement, sourcing from local farmers and artisan producers because, in the early days, not many suppliers were willing to deliver to rural Rappahannock County. His skill means that his witty creations—Oyster Slurpees or Pepper Crusted Tuna Pretending to be a Filet Mignon—remain fully in the realm of culinary good taste while showing off their raw materials to best effect.

The Inn's magnificent kitchen, with two chef's tables flanking a baronial fireplace, makes the ordinary open kitchen look like a food factory,

while the décor of the dining rooms is a romantic fantasy of low light, warm colors, and soft fabrics. Their style of service has come to define superior Modern American service—knowledgeable and friendly but never obsequious. The distinguished wine list, particularly strong in Burgundies, and assuming you can resist Romanée-Contis, is quite reasonably priced, with dinner ranging from \$158 to \$188 depending on the night.

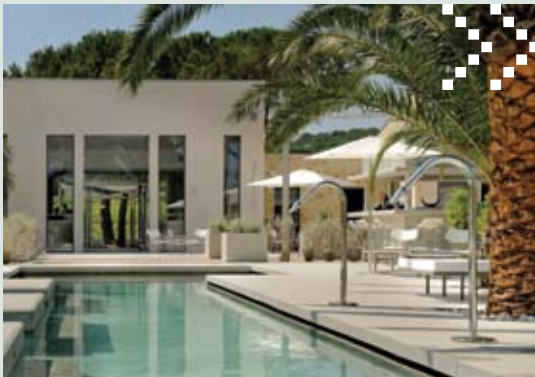
Unexpectedly, one of the treats of staying at the Inn is the continental breakfast, replete with house-made breads and pastries, jam and jellies from local fruit, and, for a small supplement, local eggs and Virginia ham. The Inn will gladly pack a lunch for a day of sightseeing.

MIDDLE AND MAIN STREETS,
WASHINGTON, VA., 540.675.3800, WWW.
THEINNATLITTLEWASHINGTON.COM

[WINE RETREAT] Keswick Hall, a Tuscan-style villa in Virginia's horse country, is akin to staying at a private estate. Elegant furnishings adorn the grand rooms, pleasant staff dart about keeping things spiffy, and 600 pastoral acres provide plenty of space for lounging. The 48 rooms and suites, each one individually decorated with antiques and lush fabrics, have views of either the formal garden or rolling fields. As for the aforementioned lounging, three pools, an 18-hole Arnold

Palmer signature course, a tennis center and a full-service spa are tempting reasons to stay put. However, with Jefferson's historic home, Monticello, just six miles away, and the aptly named Monticello Wine Trail to lead you, there's a good excuse to venture out.

Fossett's Restaurant, named for Jefferson's cook, is run by Executive Chef Dean Maupin, a native and a devotee to the region's culinary heritage. Maupin's menu shares enthusiasm for seasonal local vegetables and dishes inspired by his travels in France and Italy. With views of the mountains, and, in good weather, dining from the terrace, it is an elegant experience. The award-winning wine list includes a good selection of Virginia wines. BREAKFAST AND DINNER ARE SERVED DAILY; SUNDAY BRUNCH. 701 CLUB DRIVE, KESWICK, VA., 888.778.2565, WWW.KESWICK.COM



sandy beach, the Mediterranean's azure hues, and the pastel buildings ringing the Vieux Port, the real sex kitten is St. Tropez.

For a taste of living like Statham's man-of-style character, stay at one of the two private villas that opened at the modern but luxurious Hotel Sezz Saint-Tropez in June. The 1,000 square-foot loft interiors have two bedrooms and a lounge, with a large private terrace with a plunge pool and garden, providing a haven for enjoying the irrepressible sunshine.

An added bonus is the hotel's Restaurant Colette by P. Gagnaire, an outpost of renowned chef Pierre Gagnaire, whose restaurants are awarded Michelin stars like they're free for the taking. But with the sea on one side and vineyards on the other, must-do dining includes an al fresco lunch of fresh shellfish and French rosé at one of the private beach clubs and a simple plate of oysters baked with parsley, garlic and butter with house white at a bistro lining St. Tropez's medieval streets. +33.4.94.55.31.55, WWW.HOTELSEZZ-SAINTTROPPEZ.COM

Shrek-citing The dream deal between Gaylord Entertainment and DreamWorks Animation is sure to be a child's dream come true. This November, characters from DreamWorks' widely successful movies "Shrek," "Kung Fu Panda," and "Madagascar" will become regulars at the four Gaylord Hotels, taking part in character breakfasts, parades, and summertime pool activities. Shrek and his buddies will also play a key role in Gaylord's elaborate Christmas activities as well as being available for private birthday parties.

While each resort has its own brand of fun—the Grand Ole Opry at the newly restored Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tenn.; the capital's attractions at the National Hotel in National Harbor, Md.; and Walt Disney World at the Palms Hotel in Kissimmee, Fla.—the recently opened Paradise Springs western-themed 10-acre resort pool and lazy river complex at the Texan Hotel in Grapevine, Texas, is sure to be a hit with kids of all ages. WWW.GAYLORDHOTELS.COM



Putting in Pacific Paradise Tired of playing the usual suspects? For a test of your skills, as well as a decent assault on your senses, check into Bandon Dunes Golf Resort and check out Old Macdonald, the resort's fourth course and *Golfweek's* number one pick for "Best New Courses" in 2010. On a remote stretch of windswept coast in southern Oregon, the latest links are sure to cement Bandon Dunes' reputation. To quote George Peper of *Links Magazine*, "As an idyllic place to stay and play golf it has only two peers—the Monterey Peninsula and the town of St. Andrews."

The Old Macdonald, designed by Jim Urbina and Tom Doak, pays tribute to Charles Macdonald, who built the first 18-hole course in America modeled after Britain's great turn-of-the-century courses and holes. True to his spirit, the designers have used the seaside scrub and rolling dunes to create a challenging course of "vast greens," "myriad angles of play," and "fierce bunkers."



The wide range of accommodations includes the four-bedroom Grove Cottages. Each bedroom sports a king bed and private bathroom, and a communal parlor makes the cottages perfect for foursomes. 888.345.6008, WWW.BANDONDUNESGOLF.COM

From busty Brigitte Bardot in the 1956 movie "And God Created Women" to the buff Jason Statham in the recent action-packed "Transporter," St. Tropez has long been a launching pad for cinema sex symbols. Mais non, even these two hotties can't match the staying power of this French Riviera gem. Between the Baie de Pampelonne's three miles of white



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BARCELONA

[RESERVATIONS REQUIRED] 41° may call itself a snack bar, but fans of El Bulli, chef Ferran Adrià's acclaimed restaurant scheduled to close this year, are flocking to it to experience his greatest hits again. Adventurous tidbits may include pistachios wrapped in yogurt or Parmesan ice cream sandwiches with lemon marmalade. For the less so, there's an oyster and a caviar menu. Reservations made through the website are required.

SNACKS AND COCKTAILS TUES.-SAT., AVINGUDA PARALLEL 164, +34.934.543.672, WWW.41GRADOS.ES

OAXACA

[MEXICO MODERN] Pitona, housed in a restored colonial house in the historic district, may feel traditional in décor, but under chef José Manuel Baños Rodríguez, its cuisine is anything but old-fashioned. Trained at El Bulli in Spain, the young chef brings modern technique to Mexican cooking. His six-course tasting menu might include sopa de fideos with cheese dumplings or tacos of chicharrón (pork skin) and prawns. Each course may be accompanied by a different mescal. LUNCH AND DINNER MON.-SAT., 311 CINCO DE MAYO, +52.951.514.4707, WWW.PITONA.COM

SAN FRANCISCO

[JUST GOOD FOOD]

Frances, the new Castro venture from chef Melissa Perello, who made her name at the Fifth Floor, is a casual restaurant with a modern California menu, using locally sourced ingredients that change weekly. Perello brings the restaurant experience back to its essentials—comfortable atmosphere, friendly service, dependably good food. A two-month wait is not uncommon, so book ahead. DINNER TUES.-SUN., 3870 17TH STREET, 415.621.3870, WWW.FRANCES-SF.COM



DISCERNING TRAVELER



iPAD TRAVEL APP ALERT For \$1.99, adventurous and arm chair travelers alike can buy *National Geographic Traveler's* latest iPad app, "50 Places of a Lifetime: The World's Greatest Destinations." Breathing new life into old stories, the app is an updated version of the 1999 print magazine that featured short personal essays from that decade's erudite travelers, including newsman Peter Jennings on Jerusalem and paleoanthropologist Richard Leakey on the Serengeti. Divided into five categories—Urban Spaces, Wild Places, Paradise Found, Country Unbound and World Wonders—the essays are now digitally enhanced with photos, locator maps, fact boxes and videos. WWW.ITUNES.APPLE.COM

PERKING RIGHT ALONG If you shun chain hotels for one-offs, then chances are you've booked a place to lay your head with Tablet Hotels. With common sense options like "I Know My Destination," the easy-to-use online hotel reservations company offers a carefully selected portfolio of "unique hotels for global nomads." For perks at more than 350 hotels worldwide, including classics like Blakes in London and design meccas like The Setai in Miami, join The Tablet Plus Program. \$195 annually buys complimentary upgrades, as well as three additional free amenities, such as airport transfers, continental breakfast and spa vouchers. WWW.TABLETHOTELS.COM

BRIEFCASE

SWEET! In an airline first, passengers on **Delta Air Lines** can now track their luggage on Delta's website from check-in scanning to loading on their flight to arrival at baggage claim. >> Raise a martini: Strip legend and scene of the original Rat Pack movie, "Ocean's 11," the **Sahara Hotel and Casino** in Las Vegas has closed its doors. >> Dishing dining awards: Renowned restaurant guide **Zagat** and the prestigious **James Beard Foundation**—the former's "Best Restaurants for Power Lunches" in major U.S. cities predictably includes The Monocle in Washington, D.C., and Spago in L.A. while the latter crowns Eleven Madison Park in New York "Outstanding Restaurant" in the U.S.

Photo Courtesy Frances Restaurant

FAST TRACKS

2012 Maserati GranTurismo MC – Cheetah Looks and Speed

Put the 2012 Maserati GranTurismo MC in a lineup with the trident's other three marques and you'd be hard-pressed to pick their latest speed demon. From the front, the only hints of the cheetah-like power behind this luxurious machine are a more sinister looking fascia with dark, cat-eyed headlights and jet-black trim in place of the chrome on the other models.

But there's a reason for the "C" in MC: corse in Italian, racing in English. Inspired by the Trofeo GranTurismo MC racecar and a counterpart to the European street-legal GranTurismo MC Stradale, the GranTurismo MC offers race-bred aerodynamics, a tighter suspension, and 4.7-liter all-alloy V8 engine, which has undergone a "friction reduction program." The ferocious feline results? 444 hp and 376 lb-ft of torque—11 hp and 15 lb-ft of torque more than the same engine in the GranTurismo S—a top speed of 185 mph, and a 0-62 mph time of 4.9 seconds, just 1.86 mph slower than the Stradale.

In a nod to the U.S. luxury car market, the Stradale's sequential gearbox has been replaced with the smoother ZF automatic transmission from the standard GranTurismo, and the rear seats, lacking in the Stradale, are firmly in place. Purr. Price TBD.

WWW.MASERATI.COM



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