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Westerly, Rhode Island celebrates its 350th anniversary this year. The town, one of the most scenic in New England, is steeped in history, tradition and pride. Like many coastal villages, Westerly's history is intrinsically linked to the surrounding waters, the Pawcatuck River and the Atlantic Ocean, which conveyed the first settlers to the town's shores.

In 1661, the Misquamicut Purchase was made between the Niantic and a group of English colonists from Newport. That pact would pave the way for permanent settlement. The town was incorporated eight years later; at the time, about 30 families lived on the east side of the Pawcatuck River.

Local industry was closely tied to the town's shoreline location. Fishing was

Celebrate!



A MIGHTY MILESTONE



TOP LEFT: THIS HISTORIC POSTCARD, COURTESY OF WASHINGTON TRUST, SHOWS DOWNTOWN WESTERLY AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY.

TOP RIGHT: DOWNTOWN WESTERLY AS IT APPEARS TODAY.

LEFT: THE SCENIC PAWCATUCK RIVER WINDS THROUGH DOWNTOWN, CONNECTING WESTERLY, R.I. AND PAWCATUCK, CT.

provided sustenance, and supported the development of local industries.

Members of the Niantic and Narragansett tribes occupied the area for thousands of years before Europeans arrived in America. They fished Westerly's abundant waters, catching shad, salmon and other native species. In fact, Misquamicut, the Native American name for the area now called Westerly, means red fish, or salmon.

plemiful in the Pawcatuck River, with large quantities of fish and shellfish caught in the bay and at the mouth of the river. Slipbuilding became one of Westerly's most prominent trades. There were several active shipyards along the lower Pawcatuck by the late eighteenth century, and vessels were also built upstream at what is now known as Potter's Hill. The original town dock near Thompson's

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Cove and other docks along the river were critical for supply trade and transportation, with schooners traveling between New York, Providence and Westerly. By 1819, Westerly was home to some 50 dwellings, eight stores, a wool factory, two tanneries, two banks, two academies and a "social library."

The mid- to late-nineteenth century was a time of rapid growth. The construction of Westerly's first railroad station in 1837 greatly improved transportation between New York, Boston and Providence. Several large textile mills were built. And in 1845, the Smith Granite Company was

established. Founded by Orlando Smith, the business employed more than 300 workers during its heyday and became known for its Civil War monuments. The granite industry played a prominent role in Westerly's development, and the town still produces some of the finest granite in the world today.

The industrial growth fueled a building boom that led to the construction of some of the town's most prominent institutions, including Westerly Library (1894), Westerly Armory (1902), the current Town Hall and Municipal Courthouse (1912), Westerly Station on Rail-

road Ave. (1912) and the United States Post Office at Dixon Square (1913-1914).

To celebrate Westerly's 350th anniversary, the town is throwing a yearlong celebration with a full lineup of events, including lectures, exhibits, walking tours and back-to-back black-tie galas. Among the highlights:

- **The Westerly 350 Galas** take place at the Westerly Armory on May 17 and 18 at 6 p.m. Dance the night away at the formal affairs; \$75 per person, limited tickets available.
- **A time capsule opening** will be held in Wilcox Park on Sat., June 29 at 10 a.m. A time capsule buried during the town's 300th-anniversary celebration in 1969 will be unearthed to reveal its mysterious contents. A new time capsule will then be buried for future generations to unearth in 2069.
- **The Olde Tyme Fair** in Wilcox Park on Aug. 24 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. promises to be a fun, family-friendly experience. There will be swanboat rides in the pond, a trackless train ride around the park for kids, face painting, jugglers, food, and two stages of live entertainment, including local favorite Roomful of Blues. Sing Happy Birthday to Westerly as a giant, edible cake in the shape of the town is wheeled out. The towering confection is a collaboration between Westerly's Sunny Side Up and Vesta Bakery.

Additionally, the Westerly 350th Anniversary Committee, in partner-

LEFT: DOWNTOWN STREETS ARE GRACED WITH FLOWERS EACH SUMMER / SUBMITTED PHOTO

RIGHT: 84 ALEWORKS BREWING & TAVERN IN WESTERLY IS A FAVORITE SPOT FOR FRIENDS TO CHAT AND CELEBRATE / PHOTO COURTESY OF 84 ALEWORKS



ship with the Ocean Community Chamber Foundation, is sponsoring:

- **Free coloring books** of historical buildings with illustrations created by Westerly High School students
- **Free souvenir books**, which will be distributed in the Westerly Sun newspaper this spring
- **Historic lecture series**
- **A first-ever Westerly Light Parade**
- **Funds to pay for large, history-themed floats to be created by local high school students for the annual Columbus Day Parade**
- **The sale of commemorative items**
- **The production of a Babcock-Franklin documentary that will air on PBS**

For a full event calendar and details, visit westerly350.com.

- Jenny Quill



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WATCH HILL



ABOVE: EVERY SEAT AT THE OCEAN HOUSE BOASTS BREATHTAKING VIEWS / PHOTO COURTESY OF ANGELA GORA

LEFT: THE HISTORIC CAROUSEL AT WATCH HILL IS A FAVORITE AMONG FAMILIES / MADISON L. BURKE PHOTO

Since its early days, Watch Hill has been a refuge for families fleeing daily routine to enjoy shingle-sided beach cottages, day sails and sunset clambakes. Little has changed in this tightknit seaside enclave. The handsome cottages and estates are as Architectural Digest-worthy as ever, and the harborside village still oozes the town's particular brand of understated charm - its quaint shops, restaurants and vintage carousel set against a stunning backdrop of white sand beach and sparkling blue water.

A National Historic Landmark, the famous **Flying Horse Carousel** is the oldest one of its kind in the United States, dating back to approximately 1867. The 20-horse carousel was abandoned in Watch Hill by a traveling carnival in 1883. At that time, it was powered by a horse, and a hand-cranked organ provided the music. Having seen a lot of history on these shores, it's rather a shame the horses can't talk. The carousel was badly damaged during the New England Hurricane of 1938, but was successfully recovered

and repaired. Subsequent restorations have faithfully maintained the carousel's original beauty, retaining the hand-painted ponies' real horse-hair manes and tails and their unique agate eyes.

The carousel is located at the end of Bay Street, the main thoroughfare through town. Here you'll find **shops, eateries and a village green** where families picnic and bands play free summertime concerts. Pop into **St. Clair Annex**, a 130-year-old family-owned ice cream and sandwich shop that makes its famed small-batch ice cream on site. The main-street mainstay has made several modern, environmentally friendly upgrades, including a solar-power system and 100-percent compostable coffee cups, utensils and paper straws.

Around the corner, **Watch Hill Beach** is perfect for families seeking serene waters and soft sand. Sunbathers are treated to sweeping views of **Fishers Island Sound**, **Watch Hill Light House**, a spectacular seaside architecture.

Walk along the harbor and through the main parking lot to access **Napatree Point Conservation Area**, a 1.5-mile-

long peninsula in the Block Island Sound. Scale the sandy dunes, pausing at the top for a picture-worthy, 360-degree view. Then stroll the peninsula's length to the promontory or follow one of the narrow, brambly trails into the interior where you'll likely come across the ruins of Fort Mansfield, a coastal artillery installation that was in operation from 1901 to 1926. To learn more about Napatree's flora and fauna, join one of the **free guided nature walks** held every Saturday through Labor Day. The walks are led by Napatree

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RIGHT: DISNEY IS ONE OF MANY THEMED DINNERS OFFERED AT THE OCEAN HOUSE / REINHARD SOKOL PHOTO

BELOW: THE WEEKAPAUG INN SITS ON THE QUIET WATERS OF QUONONCHONTAUG POND / CHIP REIGEL PHOTO



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Point Conservation Area naturalists and last approximately two hours. Meet at the entrance to Napatree next to the Misquamicut Beach Club at 9 a.m.

East Beach, an undeveloped three-mile oceanfront property east of the Watch Hill Lighthouse, is a popular spot for fishing, swimming, boating, and camping (Twenty campsites are available by reservation only.) Here, crowds are thinner and there's plenty of room to spread out. To get there, walk down Bluff Avenue and proceed along the public right of way, an easy-to-miss, narrow path. Parking is limited; look for the paid lot on Larkin Road.

Standing at the tip of Watch Hill Point, the **Watch Hill Lighthouse** can be seen from most of the surrounding shoreline. Built of grey Westerly granite, the current lighthouse was constructed between 1855 and 1856, replacing an earlier 1807 structure commissioned by President Thomas Jefferson. It's accessible by foot only, as on-site parking is reserved for senior citizens and those with disabilities. To get there, walk along Larkin Road, then turn down a private street that runs



the length of the peninsula to the lighthouse. The lighthouse is open 8 a.m. to sunset throughout the year. An on-site museum is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons from 1 to 3 p.m. in July and August and through the week after Labor Day.

One of Watch Hill's most iconic structures is **Ocean House**, a luxury hotel known for its summery, yellow façade, picturesque views of the Atlantic, and for being a favorite hangout of local resident and famous musician, Taylor Swift. It's also the only hotel in Rhode Island to have earned the distinctive five-diamond rating from AAA Northeast. Open year-round, Ocean House plies guests with every conceivable amenity, from a championship croquet lawn to an al fresco **Secret Garden Champagne Bar**. There are five outstanding dining venues that are open to the public. And make no mistake, the resort is grand but not haughty;

its calendar is packed with community events open to both guests and visitors, including monthly cooking classes, wine seminars, family movie nights, and traditional New England lobster boils and BBQs on select Friday nights throughout the summer.

The red-cedar-shingled, Cape Cod-style **Weekapaug Inn** has the quintessential summer-resort feel, but with all

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go Westerly

RIGHT: EAST BEACH IS KNOWN FOR ITS SOFT SAND AND BEAUTIFUL VISTAS / MADISON L. BURKE PHOTO



the creature comforts of a luxury hotel. The historic inn overlooks **Quonochontaug Pond**, which serves as the backdrop to the property's many outdoor activities. There's the annual Kite Fly-Inn, which marks the launch of the summer season; a popular Fourth of July clambake; and, new this year, an al fresco, Disney-themed dinner featuring a musical performance, pirates, mermaids and festive fireworks. New this year is **The Brasserie**, a French and European-inspired dining experience, offering locally sourced ingredients. Look for special dishes as well as classics (coq au vin, cote de boeuf, bouillabaisse) at accessible prices.

For additional accommodations in Watch Hill, look to the **Harbour House Inn**, a 100-year-old, 12-room guesthouse; **Watch Hill Court**, with cottages and apartments overlooking the water; or the **Holdredge House and Cottage Rentals**, an ideally located, family-owned vacation compound consisting of a main house and two cozy cottages.

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2019 TRAVEL GUIDE

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LEFT: MISQUAMICUT STATE BEACH OFFERS MILES OF RELAXATION / FAYE PARENTEAU PHOTO

RIGHT: LOBSTER IS A MUST WHEN VISITING MISQUAMICUT / PEGGY FEIGENBAUM PHOTO

BOTTOM RIGHT: THE ATLANTIC BEACH PARK'S FAMOUS ICE CREAM SAND PAIL SUNDAE / PHOTO COURTESY OF ATLANTIC BEACH PARK

MISQUAMICUT



Generations of families have vacationed in Misquamicut, a classic New England beach district with a fine stretch of **sun-kissed sand, laidback clam shacks, cool beach bars and stylish waterfront hotels.**

One of the biggest attractions is **Misquamicut State Beach**, the largest public beach in Rhode Island. With more than half a mile of coastline, there's plenty of room to bask in the sunshine and enjoy the soothing rumble of crashing waves. With its moderate surf, the beach is an ideal locale for surfing and body boarding. You can also keep an eye out for a variety of marine life, such as seals and whales, just offshore.

Several events are held at Misquamicut throughout the year. On summer nights, visitors can spread out a blanket and enjoy a movie on the beach. The Misquamicut Business Association produces **festivals in the spring and fall** featuring music, carnival rides, petting zoos, and other fun attractions. Other events include **Fourth of July fireworks, classic car cruise nights** and a Guy Fawkes bonfire night.

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Steps from the beaches, local shops sell clothing, jewelry, and bait and tackle, as well as **Jet Ski and boat rentals**. Families can also explore Atlantic Avenue's many attractions, including **mini golf, water slides, go-karts, bumper boats and batting cages**.

Eateries range from high-end seafood restaurants to classic ice cream stands, while a number of beachfront bars let you enjoy sweeping views of the ocean as you sip a cocktail. One of those beachfront spots is the **Windjammer Surf Bar**, a lively sports bar located in **Atlantic Beach Park**, a Misquamicut landmark built in 1921. On summer weekends, the **Andrea, Maria's Seaside Cafe**, and **Paddy's Beach Club** are also places to kick back with a beer, grab a bite and listen to live music.

One summer dining must is **Sam's Snack Bar**, an iconic beachfront landmark. Another is **Two Little Fish**, a clam shack that serves up some of Rhode Island's best seafood, including perfectly fried fish and chips and lobster rolls. The eatery gets an A+ in environmental sustainability thanks to its initiatives to eliminate plastic waste for ocean health. They use 100% compostable plates, cups and utensils; donate cooking oil to be converted into bio-diesel; and give a portion of each sale to Mystic Aquarium's Animal Rescue Team, which rescues, cares for, and releases injured and stranded sea animals.



TOP LEFT: **BOOGIE BOARDING IS A FAVORITE FAMILY PASTIME AT MISQUAMICUT STATE BEACH** / FAYE PARENTEAU PHOTO

BOTTOM LEFT: **THE BRAND NEW HOTEL MARIA OFFERS SCENIC VIEWS AND STYLE** / PHOTO COURTESY OF HOTEL MARIA

RIGHT: **JULY 4TH FIREWORKS** / PHOTO COURTESY OF AMY MARTIRA

Bucking the chain-hotel trend, all of Misquamicut's lodging options are independent, family-owned affairs. A short stroll from the beach, the **Breezeway** offers 30 cheery rooms and suites, villas and a cottage all tucked away on five acres of mature trees and flowering gardens.

Hotel Maria is a brand-new beachfront boutique hotel with bright, stylish rooms and suites and a breezy beachside cafe. The spacious accommodations feature modern décor with charming, nostalgic touches set against views of the **Atlantic Ocean, Watch Hill Lighthouse and Winnapaug Pond**.

For more information, visit the *Misquamicut Business Association* website at misquamicut.org and oceanchamber.org.



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BELOW: FAMILIES ENJOY A DEMONSTRATION IN DONAHUE PARK DURING THE ANNUAL RUBBER DUCKY RACE HELD EACH APRIL / SUBMITTED PHOTO

RIGHT: BRIDGE RESTAURANT OFFERS RIVERFRONT DINING / FAYE PARENTEAU PHOTO

INSET: AUTHOR MICHAEL IAN BLACK HOSTS A BOOK READING FOR "I'M SAD" AT THE SAVOY BOOKSHOP / PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SAVOY BOOKSHOP

WESTERLY, RI & PAWCATUCK, CT DOWNTOWN

Historically, Pawcatuck, CT, and Westerly, RI, have always been closely associated; in fact, the two towns once shared a post office. Today, downtown Westerly-Pawcatuck is a model for main-street redevelopment, with a resurgent arts scene, bustling restaurants and small, family-owned businesses. Set against the picturesque backdrop of the Pawcatuck River, the

five-day **Bricks and Murals Festival**. The eye-catching frescoes celebrate downtown Westerly-Pawcatuck's history and culture, with murals dedicated to the town's Italian heritage, historic mills and more.

The **Artists' Cooperative of Westerly** is an artist-owned fine-arts gallery that hosts openings, exhibits, lectures, workshops and classes. The Cooperative



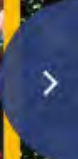
charming towns boast historic buildings (there are **55 structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places**), grand Victorian- and Colonial-style homes, and scenic parks.

Art enthusiasts will find much to enjoy in downtown's galleries, performance spaces, live music venues and one unique, town-wide art installation. In September 2017, skilled sign painters and artists created 15 original wall murals during

relocated to Westerly's **historic Amtrak train station** in the summer of 2018, breathing new life into the space. Renovations are under way for the historic **United Theatre**.

Built in 1933, the Knickerbocker Café, as it was then known, saw the likes of Stevie Ray Vaughan, Big Joe Turner, Leon Russell and Johnny Copeland play its stage. Today, the non-profit **Knickerbocker Music Center** preserves, culti-

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ABOVE: DOWNTOWN WESTERLY/PAWCATUCK IS A GREAT PLACE TO SHOP AND DINE / SUBMITTED PHOTO

BELOW: IT'S ALWAYS A GOOD TIME FOR BOARD GAMES AND BEER SAMPLES AT GREY SAIL BREWERY / PETER M. WEBER PHOTO



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vates and celebrates music by providing both a performance space and a center for music education. Performances take place throughout the week, with live concerts on the Knick's center stage, free jazz and swing dance lessons on **Let's Dance Wednesdays**, and acoustic and open mic nights in the Tap Room.

Other great entertainment venues include **Perks & Corks** (try the chafitini), a wine and coffeehouse that offers live music six nights a week, and **Allora Coffee & Comedy Club**, a coffeehouse and arts space that hosts weekly comedy shows, spoken word and film festivals.

If your sights are set on some retail therapy, you're in luck, as dozens of trendy shops line downtown streets. Shoppers can peruse everything from antique and consignment stores to jewelry and clothing boutiques, with quaint gift shops,

toy stores, purveyors of home goods and furnishings, and **The Savoy Bookshop**, a large, independent destination with an on-site café and frequent presentations, story hours and game nights rounding out the experience. A huge selection of modestly-priced books can be found across the street at **ReReads Bookshop**.

If you're hungry for more—or just plain hungry—there's no shortage of restaurants, cafés, pizzerias, wine bars and pubs. The newest offerings include **Hoof's Restaurant**, a stylish Italian eatery known for its housemade pasta, and **The Shallows Kitchen & Bar**, a great setting with a creative menu. For a tippie, try **Tapped Apple Winery & Cidery**, a farm winery that produces half a dozen apple wines and ciders. Get your game (and nostalgia!) on at **Flip Side**, a one-of-kind pinball bar that serves craft beer and cocktails.

To truly savor all the area has to offer, stay the weekend. The elegant **Margin Street Inn Bed & Breakfast** sits on 6.5 idyllic acres along the banks of the Pawcatuck River. Built in 1849, the Inn was the first of five houses in the historic Perry Homestead. Following an intensive, multi-year renovation completed in early 2018, it now offers 10 luxurious, modern guest rooms that are the perfect retreat from downtown adventures.

A cornerstone of the community, the stately **Westerly Public Library** was founded in 1892 in honor of the volunteer soldiers and sailors who fought in the Civil War. The library houses approximately 183,000 items, including books, magazines, CDs and DVDs. It hosts events for all ages, from book talks and writer's workshops to children's storytimes and

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chess clubs. The library's **Hoxie Gallery** features the work of local artists, with new exhibits every month.

Book in hand, or coffee from **Coy Cafe**, stroll through **Wilcox Park**, a serene, 14-acre arboretum with native and perennial gardens, lovely shade trees, fountains, a fish pond and gazebo. The park hosts numerous community events, including the **Virtu Arts Festival**, **Summer Pops** concerts and the **Garden Market Fair**.

Running through the heart of downtown, the **Pawcatuck River** provides a multitude of water-based activities, including fishing, kayaking and boating. A public boat launch can be found at the

Main Street Boat Ramp, located between Union and School Streets; and kayaks and small boats launch from Pawcatuck's Donahue Park on Mechanic Street. Don't miss the annual **River Glow** event in August, when floating bonfires illuminate the river and vendors and performers delight families and visitors alike.

THE NORTH END

In the north end of downtown Westerly/Pawcatuck, you'll find several hidden gems.

The **Jonnycake Center Thrift Store** is a popular destination for second-hand treasure seekers. The warehouse-sized thrift sells everything from gently used

clothing and furniture to children's toys, jewelry and more. Proceeds support the Jonnycake Center's mission to provide food, clothing, household goods and financial assistance to families and residents in crisis.

Continue your treasure hunt at the **Clad In** retail outlet, which stocks women's clothing, shoes and accessories from hard-to-find international and American designers.

Westerly Agway is a friendly, small-town home-and-garden store. The family-owned location carries a myriad of products for lawn and garden, as well as feed, pet accessories and pet food. It's also a great spot to check out two of the town's 15 wall murals honoring local history. One dedicated to Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Corporal James A. Barber, and another depicting the

Westerly Railroad Station can be found on the Agway building.

Westerly Packing Company has been a community staple since it first opened as a fruit and grocery store in the early 1900s. Owned and operated by the Trombino family, the butcher shop is renowned for its soupy, or *soppresata*, a peppery, dry-cured pork sausage. Everything is fresh and made in house, from the family's sausage recipes to the smoked hams and bacon. There's also a sizeable grocery stocked with imported Italian goods.

If you want to eat where the locals eat, follow them to **Hilltop Café**, a cozy neighborhood lunch-and-dinner spot on Canal Street that serves up comfort-food classics, such as soups, pizza, pastas, and sandwiches, and game-day fare like hamburgers and zesty wings.

Down the street in the former Westerly Macaroni Factory building, you'll find **Grey Sail Brewing**, which has earned a

reputation for producing well-balanced brews, including its Flagship Ale, Flying Jenny pale ale and Captain's Daughter IPA. Grey Sail also has launched a special "02891" beer in honor of Westerly's 350th anniversary. Open Wednesdays through Sundays for growler fills or to sample what's on tap.

Tucked behind the Westerly Train Station, the **Back Track Bar and Grille** is a good food, good drinks, good time kind of place. The family-owned bar and restaurant is an affordable, lowkey eatery that serves soups, salads, sandwiches, burgers, wings, chicken and steak. Stop by for prime rib on Wednesdays, plus dinner specials, a \$5 bar menu and daily all-day breakfast.

Sports and fitness enthusiasts will be thrilled to find sports nutrition prod-

ucts, supplements and snacks at **Innovation Fitness** on Canal Street.

To keep up on the latest downtown events throughout the year, visit oceanchamber.org.

LEFT: THE MARGIN STREET INN IS A QUINTESSENTIAL NEW ENGLAND BED & BREAKFAST / PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MARGIN STREET INN

BELOW: VOLUNTEERS STOKE THE FIRES DURING RIVER GLOW ON THE PAWCATUCK RIVER / PETER M. WEBER PHOTO



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ton Village Farmers Market. From 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the town docks, vendors peddle fresh, locally grown produce, baked goods, fresh-cut flowers, organic eggs, milk, meat and cheese and, of course, fresh seafood. From November to mid-May, the market moves indoors to the **Velvet Mill**.

Built by the town in 1888, the Velvet Mill was home to A. Wimpfheimer & Brothers, a velvet manufacturer that

closed its doors in the mid-1990s. A group of Stonington artists moved into the vacant building more than a decade ago and began converting spaces into **studios and galleries**. Today, dozens of painters, printmakers, photographers, sculptors and fiber artists maintain studios here, which are open to the public twice a year during the Mill's **Open Studios** events (many also keep weekend and by-appointment hours). Other small businesses run the gamut from a custom screen-printing shop to a Pilates studio. Bring your appetite, too, as there's an **artisan bakery, brewery, and Woodfelas Pizza and Wings** on site.

Nearby, the **La Grua Center** is Stonington's cultural hub. Named for former Stonington photographer Maurice La Grua, the non-profit center hosts concerts, lectures, art exhibits, dance and yoga in its intimate, light-filled space.

Just a 15-minute drive from Stonington, **downtown Mystic** is always abuzz. During the summer (or any other time of year, for that matter), Mystic's streets are brimming with locals and out-of-towners ducking in and out of shops and restaurants, taking in the views from a bench in **Mystic River Park**, and watching the boats sail under the famous bascule bridge.

From historic haunts to stylish bistros, there's always something delicious

on the menu in Mystic. The **Captain Daniel Packer Inn** is a favorite dining destination for special occasions or date nights. Built by Captain Daniel Packer in 1756, the inn served as a stopover for those travelling between New York and Boston. The building retains its historic charm, with wide wood-plank floors, period touches, and a cozy snug of a downstairs pub. The food is outstanding, with a special emphasis on fresh seafood and

lops and all manner of briny delicacies. During warmer months, S&P's patio is a prime spot for cocktails and Mystic River views.

Modeled after an 18th-century New England settlement, **Olde Mistick Village's** tree-shaded brick lanes wind between **more than 40 shops and res-**

taurants, manicured gardens and a duck pond. You'll find an eclectic mix of boutiques selling handmade gifts, souvenirs, toys, clothing, home décor and more. Once you've worked up an appetite, pop into one of the casual or fine-dining restaurants, including the **Jealous Monk**,

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ABOVE: BARN ISLAND MANAGEMENT AREA FEATURES WALKING TRAILS ALONG BEAUTIFUL SALT MARSHES / LISA KONICKI PHOTO

BELOW: THE DUCK POND AT OLDE MISTICK VILLAGE DELIGHTS VISITORS OF ALL AGES / LEE TRAFFORD PHOTO



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a German-style beer hall; **Steak Loft**, a traditional steakhouse; and **Go Fish**, an innovative seafood restaurant featuring a raw bar and sushi bar. Family-friendly events, including the **Cabin Fever Festival** and **Charity Chowder Cook-off** in February and the **Taste of Mystic** in June, attract a crowd.

For a wet-and-wild adventure, pilot

your own boat during **Mystic Boat Adventures'** guided tours. After a 15-minute training, you'll hop aboard one of the company's nimble two-seater watercraft for a one- or three-hour guided tour. You'll cruise down the **Mystic River**, passing **Mystic Seaport** and the famous draw-bridge, before hitting the throttle and heading out into the open water for stunning views of **Fishers Island Sound**, **local lighthouses, mansions, yachts and sea life**. You must be 18-years-old with a valid driver's license to operate

BELOW: JACQUES PERIN LEADS A DISCUSSION DURING AN APPEARANCE AT THE LA GRUA CENTER (PÉTER M. WEBER PHOTO)

BOTTOM: FIELDS OF FIRE ADVENTURE PARK IS A UNIQUE MYSTIC ATTRACTION, OFFERING AN AERIAL CLIMBING CANOPY AND ZIPLINING (PHOTO COURTESY OF FIELDS OF FIRE)



boats. Tours are available from the end of May through mid-October.

No trip to Mystic is complete without a visit to **Mystic Aquarium**, where you'll encounter beluga whales, seals, sea lions

and African penguins, as well as floor-to-ceiling tanks teeming with fish, turtles, sharks, stingrays and jellyfish. Don't miss the daily sea lion shows, a favorite with big and little kids alike.





Washington County, or South County, R.I., as the locals call it, occupies the southernmost tip of Rhode Island. For a small corner of a small state, there's an abundance of wide, open spaces, plenty of history and a wealth of community pride.

Outdoor enthusiasts are spoiled for choice, as the region is home to **26 forest**

remains of an old gristmill before arriving at Stepstone Falls, a delightful little waterfall that gently cascades over wide, flat ledges.

In 2014, Richmond expanded its open-space acreage with the addition of the **Hillsdale Forest and Wildlife Reservation**, an 1,825-acre property that was donated to the State of Rhode Island. The estate includes a section of the Beaver River and miles of accessible trails, from which you can see the stone remnants of a once bustling textile-mill village. A playground and relatively flat hiking trails make nearby **Beaver River Park** a popular destination with families, while the 2,375-acre **Carolina Management Area** is a scenic stretch of wilderness great for hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, hunting and fishing. In Hopkinton, you'll find an **18th-century settlement and Native American stone cairns** within the **Kenyon Crossroad** (aka Tomaquag Trail) property. Ask for an Instagram-worthy photo, head to **Horseshoe Falls** in the Village of Shan-



HOPKINTON & RICHMOND



TOP LEFT: A YOUNG FARMER COMPETES AT THE WASHINGTON COUNTY FAIR / SONJIA LEMOI PHOTO

ABOVE: HUCK FINN DAY, A FAMILY CELEBRATION AND FISHING DERBY, TAKES PLACE EACH JUNE IN ASHAWAY / PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ASHAWAY SPORTSMAN'S CLUB

INSET: TUREK KNOWLES MILL PARK IN RICHMOND FEATURES EASY KAYAK ACCESS / SUBMITTED PHOTO

and wildlife preserves, the largest of which is the 14,000-acre **Arcadia Management Area**, which spans the towns of Richmond, Exeter, Hopkinton and West Greenwich. Arcadia encompasses miles of gravel roads for mountain biking and horseback riding; a variety of hiking trails; excellent fishing, canoeing or kayaking along the Wood River; and boating at Breakheart Pond. One of the park's most popular treks is to **Stepstone Falls** via the Ben Utter Trail. The easy-to-moderate, approximately 3-mile hike meanders along Falls River, through lush forest, over bridges and boardwalks and past the

nock, where waters gush over a unique, U-shaped dam.

If it's summertime in Hopkinton, it's time to get your lines wet, and little anglers can do just that at **Huck Finn Day**, sponsored by the Ashaway Sportsman's Club. Held every June at Crandall Field (188 Main St., Hopkinton), the main event is the daylong fishing derby for kids 12 and under (bamboo fishing poles and bait are provided), with plenty of games and good eats to be had, too.

The high point of every South County summer is the **Washington County Fair**. What began as a humble agricul-

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LEFT: KAYAKING, BOATING AND FISHING ARE POPULAR PASTTIMES IN THE BEAUTIFUL WOOD-PAWCATUCK RIVER WATERSHED / LISA KONICKI PHOTO

TOP RIGHT: THE ANNUAL WASHINGTON COUNTY FAIR FEATURES MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT IN ADDITION TO FOOD, RIDES AND GAMES / PHOTO COURTESY OF SONJA LEMOI



contributions to the culinary world is the **Johnnycake**, a savory, pancake-like cornmeal cake. While some controversy surrounds the Johnnycake (everything from the spelling of the name to the proper preparation is up for debate), the one thing that's certain is the almost iconic status of the Johnnycake meal made by **Kenyon's Grist Mill** in Usquepaugh.

The oldest manufacturing business in Rhode Island, dating back to 1696, Kenyon's uses a vintage 1886 grist mill and original granite millstones quarried from Westerly to produce its stoneground white-corn meal. When combined with boiling water (or milk), a bit of sugar and salt and cooked on a greased griddle, the humble corn meal is transformed into a flavorful patty that is topped, South County-style, with a heaping pat of butter. In addition to its Johnnycake meal, Kenyon's makes a variety of stoneground flours, meals and mixes, including a popular clam cake and fritter mix. The mill hosts **open-house weekends with tours, cooking demonstrations and tastings** twice a year, one in July and another in October. An on-site shop is open Monday through Friday (hours vary seasonally).

Down the road, the **Hack & Livery General Store** in Hope Valley is another charming local business, rich in history. A black horse and the words "hack and livery" painted across the building's white façade pay homage to its early days

as a livery stable. Inside, it's a true, old-fashioned general store, but beautifully decorated with a little bit of this, and a little bit of that: games and books and clothing and accessories, to home goods and décor, gifts and toys. But the big draw is the **massive candy selection**. More than half a dozen shelves and multiple counters are lined with large glass jars filled to the brim with just about every sticky, sweet, gummy, chewy treat you can imagine.

For another trip down memory lane, visit the **Bell School House**, a historic landmark and home to the **Richmond Historical Society**. Built in 1826, the one-room schoolhouse features period furnishings, text books, artifacts and rotating exhibits. Open by appointment.

In neighboring Ashaway, great food is served with weekly car shows, live entertainment and cocktails by the fire pit at **Boneyard BBQ & Saloon**. Open since 1950, the **Hitching Post** in Charlestown is known for fresh seafood and beautiful gardens. Nearby **Wilcox Tavern** offers simple, classic American cuisine in a charming setting.



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Annual showcase in 1967 has become the **largest fair in Rhode Island**. And while it's all grown up, it remains true to its agronomic roots with vegetable and produce exhibits, livestock and dairy shows, and some good, old-fashioned farm competition, including scarecrow-building, rooster-crowing, and herdsman contests. Gearheads can get their motors running watching the **tractor and truck pulls, motorcycle rodeo, and even lawn mower races** (these are not your dad's lawn mowers!). There are carnival rides and kids' games galore, with pint-sized three-legged races and pie-eating contests. **There's live music and entertainment** throughout the 53rd Washington County Fair to be held Aug. 14 to 18.

For a fair with Gaelic flair, get thee to the **Rhode Island Scottish Highland Festival** on Saturday, June 8. Don your kilt for a full day of live music, dancing and sport. Scottish culture comes alive with Celtic harp workshops, kilt-mak-

ing demonstrations and country dancing, while might and muscles are put to the test as athletes hurl heavy objects (hammers, stones and pitchforks, among them) during the athletic competitions. But for a truly mesmerizing sight, don't miss the **pipe and drum competition**. Bands march in unison across the field, bagpipes wailing, drums beating, filling Richmond with Scottish song. Just try not to get goosebumps. The festival runs from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Washington County Fairgrounds.

Furry friends receive the red-carpet treatment at **Fetch RI**, a holistic pet boutique and supply store that sells safe, natural pet food, treats and toys for dogs and cats. The shop hosts rescue events and dog-training classes, as well as play dates in its 850-square-foot, indoor Fetch Room, a temperature controlled, rubberized play space for dogs equipped with agility equipment. The Fetch Room is BYOB (bring your own balls, toys and water).

One of Rhode Island's greatest con-

