

West Stockbridge

BY BENJAMIN LERNER // PHOTOS BY JIMMY IENNER, JR.

On the western border of Berkshire County, a tranquil and inviting town welcomes visitors looking to savor a truly unique vacation experience. Travelers who come to West Stockbridge will find a rich and diverse cultural scene, gorgeous natural sites, and a delightful assortment of shops, restaurants and boutiques. Get ready to discover one of the best kept secrets in the Berkshires—it's time to enjoy a remarkable trip to West Stockbridge!

FRIDAY

▶ 3PM

To reach West Stockbridge, Take Route 7 to Stockbridge, then head west on Route 102. After reaching the center of town, you will pass over the Williams River. If you make a left onto Oak Street, you will find the **Shaker Mill Inn** on the right side of the street. This child- and pet-friendly bed-and-breakfast offers luxe lodging for an affordable rate. Each of their nine rooms and suites features a private entrance, fireplace, and kitchenette, and is stocked with delicious breakfast goods that guests can enjoy at any time. Their Tanglewood Room on the ground floor is outfitted with music-themed décor pieces and a private patio that is perfect for outdoor dining. Their aptly-named Rockwell suite pays tribute to the countrified aesthetic

of Norman Rockwell's paintings. With antique barn board paneling, a queen bed and an additional sleeper sofa, this room is perfect for visiting families. Check in for the night, leave your cares behind, and take a moment to unwind and acclimate.

▶ 4PM

Now that you've adjusted to the relaxed local atmosphere, head out into West Stockbridge's downtown village for some shopping and sightseeing. Book lovers will delight in the literary treasures at **Shaker Mill Books** on Depot Street. Shaker Mill Books houses an impressive array of over 30,000 used, rare, and out-of-print books, including an exceptional selection of photography, art, and local history books. In the adjacent Shaker Gristmill Building, colorful illustrated books and visually arresting oversized books are juxtaposed

with eye-catching literary memorabilia displays, including a typewriter collection, a group of art pieces made from books by local artists, and a custom-built checkout counter made entirely of books.

To spice up your home décor with some country-chic flair, stop in at **Flourish Market** on Albany Road. Their eclectic assortment of painted furniture, antique lighting fixtures, cards, gifts, and home décor pieces is sure to appeal to the sensibilities of any stylistically-inclined homeowner. For additional home décor pieces and furnishings, head to Main Street, where a series of vibrant shops offer phenomenal furnishings, accessories, and bijouterie. **Sandy Klempner @ Home** features an extensive collection of mid-century modern, rustic, and internationally-sourced furniture and accessories. Sandy Klempner is a passionate home designer who also offers her services as a home stylist to visiting clients, and she encourages visitors to bring any funky, beau-



There are plenty of things to do in West Stockbridge, including, *clockwise from above*, staying a night or two at the lovely Shaker Mill Inn, shopping at Sandy Klempner @ Home, popping into Baldwin & Sons, staying a spell in the barn at Shaker Mill Books, taking a dip at Card Pond, and running into the likes of Bohr and Einstein at TurnPark Art Space (sculpture by Vladimir Lempert).





Exploring is the operative word in West Stockbridge. *Clockwise from bottom right*, Sandy Klempler is proud of all that her store has to offer. On Harris Street adjacent to The Foundry, SALA offers vintage and new clothing, original art, and Stephanie Iverson jewelry. Spice up your home décor with items from Flourish Market. Across the street is the newly opened Amici, a casual, authentic Italian restaurant.

tiful, and unique folk art, furniture and jewelry into the store that they are looking to sell. At **Anderson & Sons Shaker Tree**, patrons will discover striking handmade recreations of classic Shaker-era furniture. All of their works are commissioned by their discerning clientele, and are made to exacting specifications. **Serendipity Waterside** takes pride in providing a diverse assemblage of clothing, art, handcrafted jewelry, chocolate, organic soaps, candles, and art to their customers. This elegant shop also features vintage and contemporary accessories and furnishings, each of which is imbued with timeless character.

While walking down Main Street, be sure to pay a visit to the Old Town Hall building, which serves as the home of the **West Stockbridge Historical Society**. According to its president, Robert Salerno, the story of West Stockbridge has been defined by several distinct historical phases. In 1774, the General Court granted West Stockbridge a separate charter from Stockbridge. In the 1800s, West Stockbridge became a booming quarrying center when large deposits of iron, marble, and limestone were discovered. After the extractive industries died down in West Stockbridge in the late-19th century, the town transformed into a quiet and sleepy hamlet that was populated by longstanding families and second homeowners. In recent years, West Stockbridge has experienced a significant period of commercial and cultural rebirth.

Over the past decade, the historic Old Town Hall has been lovingly rehabilitated by the West Stockbridge Historical Society. It now serves as a community hub that hosts a wide variety of well-attended events. In an effort to promote

their ongoing fundraising efforts, the West Stockbridge Historical Society has recently hosted a series of lectures, concerts, and artistic performances at the Old Town Hall Building. Upcoming performance highlights include a concert featuring Yoko Miwa sponsored by the West Stockbridge Historical Society at The Foundry on August 27, and a concert with the Rick McLaughlin Trio at the Old Town Hall on September 24.

For additional educational enrichment, stop by the **West Stockbridge Public Library** on State Line Road. The West Stockbridge Public Library offers library cards free of charge to any Massachusetts resident with valid identification showing a current address. A striking statue of Abraham Lincoln made by the talented sculptor, Leonard Wells Volk, can also be found at the library.

The West Stockbridge Public Library hosts many events and community programs, which are overseen and promoted by the staff of the West Stockbridge Public Library and the Friends of the West Stockbridge Public Library. Programs and events include local artist exhibits, book signings and readings by local authors, and lecture programs. All programs sponsored are free and open to the public. The outdoor park behind the West Stockbridge Public Library is open to visitors and residents for recreational use, and features a large playing field, basketball hoop, tennis court, playground, and skateboard park. As your stimulating afternoon of cultural exploration and retail therapy comes to a close, head back to your room or suite, drop your bags, and get ready to enjoy a fabulous evening of food, festivity, and frolic!



At Anderson & Sons Shaker Tree, patrons will discover striking handmade recreations of classic Shaker-era furniture. Middle at right, SALA is Stephanie Iverson's latest venture, a boutique that features her jewelry along with a curated selection of clothing and other items.

▶ 7PM

After freshening up in your well-appointed room or suite, book a reservation at **Amici** on Albany Road. This casual, authentic Italian restaurant provides tasty comfort food and phenomenal service, and their large outdoor patio is ideal for guests looking to enjoy a scrumptious meal and satisfying cocktail during the summer months. Order an Aperol spritz or some house-made panna cotta for dessert, then head to **The Foundry** on Harris Street to enjoy an inspired artistic performance.

The Foundry is a groundbreaking multi-disciplinary performance venue that is housed at the former site of a glassblowing studio. Under the visionary oversight of Producing Artistic Director Amy Brentano and Managing Director Noh Bailey, The Foundry has blossomed into a creative haven that hosts a broad panoply of events, including educational workshops and thought-provoking theatrical, comedy, spoken word, and artistic performances. By providing a space for candid, courageous, accessible and relevant art and performances, The Foundry offers local residents and visitors the opportunity to expand their creative horizons through culturally-diverse programming. Upcoming performance highlights from the current season include The Big Takeover on Friday, August 12, at 7:30 p.m., Madame Pat Tandy on Saturday, August 13, at 7:30 p.m., Sonoro on Sunday, August 21, at 3:00 p.m., Billy Wylder on Friday, August 26, at 7:30 p.m., and a performance by Yoko Miwa on Saturday, August 27, at 7:30 p.m., hosted in collaboration with the West Stockbridge Historical Society. In

addition, their Emerging Artists series provides young and developing artists with a platform to showcase their creative talents. Performances take place on select Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m.

SATURDAY

▶ 8AM

Wake up and smell the coffee with an energizing trip to **No. Six Depot** on Depot Street. No. Six Depot is located at the former site of the historic West Stockbridge train depot. The owners of No. Six Depot travel the world twice a year to meet coffee farmers and bring back the best beans in the world to roast on-site. Their unrelenting passion for quality coffee is evident in the bold and rich tastes of their single origin roasts. No. Six Depot serves up small-batch hand-roasted origin coffee drinks, teas, lemonades, and smoothies, as well as freshly-baked goods.

▶ 10AM

Now that you've powered up with your favorite breakfast beverage and a delicious snack, it's time to seize the day and explore some of the best outdoor spots in West Stockbridge. Start your day out on the right foot with a trip to **TurnPark Art Space** on Moscow Road. Located at the former site of a historic lime and marble quarry, TurnPark Art Space features a sculpture park, exhibition venues, and a stone amphitheater that hosts outdoor performances. Founded by Igor Gomberg and Katya Brezgunova in 2017, this magnificent artistic oasis stands on 16 acres



of scenic land at the base of the Berkshire Mountains. TurnPark Art Space's permanent collection boasts sculptural artworks from celebrated Soviet Nonconformist artists, such as Nikolai Silis, Vladimir Lempert, and Nazar Bilyk, among others.

The TurnPark Art Space campus was designed by esteemed Russian architects Alexander Konstantinov and Ekaterina Vlasenko. Its diverse landscape is divided into two lower and upper levels, which are connected by a passageway underneath the Gatehouse building. The lower level features a large outdoor space that is paved with marble and limestone. The upper park is comprised of a network of meadows and fields, which are bisected by serpentine paths. The paths trace an outline around fields that have been purposely designed to be experienced as outdoor galleries. A well-stocked on-site shop features a wide range of unique products that make wonderful gifts for visitors of all ages. TurnPark Art Space also hosts a variety of seasonal art exhibitions and temporary

installations, such as their “Sergei Isupov Proximal Duality Exhibit,” which will be shown through October 31. In addition, many live music and contemporary theatre performances, film screenings, and events have been held at TurnPark Art Space. Notable highlights include their Healing Flames Summer Festival, which was held on June 11, and their recurrent Comedy Night performance series.

At the Healing Flames Summer Festival, a large ceramic sculpture created by the famed Estonian-American ceramist and sculptor, Sergei Isupov, was fired in a kiln on-site during the day and then revealed to the crowd several hours later at night. The firing of the sculpture was complemented by a fascinating experimental musical and visual performance that combined element of Tuvan throat singing, electronic music, psychedelic trance, and mythological costumes. The beautiful sculpture is now on view on the grounds of TurnPark.

Artistically inclined visitors and residents who are looking to spend an extended period in West Stockbridge should sign up to become a member of the **Guild of Berkshire Artists**. Formerly known as the Richmond/West Stockbridge Artists Guild, Inc, this nonprofit organization supports and promotes the artistic scene in the greater Berkshire region through a series of exhibits, community events, and educational workshops. Member artists work in a wide range of visual mediums, including painting, sculpture, photography, film, jewelry, pottery textiles, wood, stained glass, and many others. Notable member artists who serve on the board of the Guild of Berkshire Artists include Amy Pressman, Carolyn Abrams, Lori Bradley, Keith Emerling, Margie Skaggs, Karen Carmean, Adrian Holmes, and David Hagerty.

Members who join the Guild of Berkshire Artists are welcome to participate in seminars, art critiques, plein air painting workshops, exhibits, demonstrations, and other educational activities. The plein air workshops and drawing sessions are held at numerous cultural institutions



On Center Street, Hotchkiss Mobiles Gallery and Studio showcases the work of the acclaimed mobile artist Joel Hotchkiss.

and locations throughout the Berkshires, including Hancock Shaker Village, The Mount, Naumkeag, Berkshire Botanical Garden, and visits to West Stockbridge, Richmond, Lenox, Alford, Tyringham, and Stockbridge. Standout events from the Guild of Berkshire Artists’ current season include their Art on Main Show, which was held at the Old Town Hall in West Stockbridge, which took place in July, and their Studio Art Tours Series, one of which will be held on August 20 and 21 in studios in West Stockbridge, Lenox, and Great Barrington.

Those who wish to embark on outdoor adventures of a more athletic nature should make a beeline for the **Olivia’s Overlook** trails on Richmond Mountain Road. Located at the heart of the 734-acre Yokun Ridge Reserve, this six-mile hiking trail system is named after Olivia Stokes Hatch, who (along with her brothers Anson Phelps Stokes, Jr. and Isaac N.P. Stokes) donated the land for public use in the 1970s. The land was the first area owned by the Berkshires Natural Resources Council, which laid the foundation for their future conservation efforts. The Charcoal Trail section features views of Monument Mountain, Richmond, and West Stockbridge. It connects with the Brothers Trail, which leads to Old Baldhead Road and Monks Pond. The Burbank Trail is located directly across from Olivia’s Overlook. Visitors who hike the Burbank Trail will come across two historic farm homestead sites,

as well as the remnants of stone walls. Pine, oak, sassafras, and tulip poplar trees line the trails, and Yokun Ridge is also a well-known habitat for barred owls.

▶ 1PM

The time has come to treat yourself to a filling and toothsome lunch! **Public Market** on Main Street has a fantastic sandwich menu, with specialty selections that include the “Jerry Garcia” veggie burger with Sriracha mayonnaise, and their signature “P.M. Reuben” on grilled jalapeño cornbread. Dinner entrees are also available for takeout, as well.

Looking to secure the services of a trusted and renowned catering company for a large group event or celebratory reception? Look no further than **SoMa Catering**. Located on Albany Road, SoMa Catering has built a sterling reputation in the Berkshires, Connecticut, and New York state through their exemplary catering services, which incorporate seasonal farm-fresh produce and locally-sourced foods. Their wedding catering services offer personally-tailored menus that are sure to please the palette of any prospective client, and their mobile food truck services are ideal for corporate events, weddings, or large parties. Event planners who book one of their food trucks can choose between wood-fired pizza or authentic pit-smoked barbecue, which is prepared at events on-site in their food trucks by

their knowledgeable staff, complete with full-service catering. Their in-house bakery is well-known for their delectable desserts, which are sure to bring a much-needed dose of satisfying sweetness to any occasion.

Travelers who need some refreshing beverages for an impromptu afternoon picnic should stop in at **Queensboro Wine & Spirits** on Main Street. Visitors will find a wide assortment of hard-to-find wines, small-batch beers and artisan spirits, some of which are locally-made in the Berkshires.

▶ 3PM

After an outstanding mid-day meal, why not enjoy a second jaunty retail expedition? On Center Street, **Hotchkiss Mobiles Gallery and Studio** showcases the work of the acclaimed mobile artist, Joel Hotchkiss. His pieces have been featured in internationally renowned galleries and museums, including the Guggenheim in New York City and the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. The on-site gallery also sells art glass, ceramic pieces, and a broad array of jewelry, one-of-a-kind paintings, and gifts.

Vivian Outlaw gallery has moved to a new location on Main Street, where her bold and uncompromising portraits are on display every Thursday–Sunday from 11 a.m.–5 p.m. In addition to showcasing Vivian’s work, the gallery is hosting an exhibition by fiber artist, illustrator, and writer Denise Carbonell through August 31. Carbonell has returned to social commentary with her current body of works on paper, which perfectly complement the style and atmosphere of the gallery. Vivian is proud to be able to showcase her own work alongside the compelling artworks of other female artists, and she also offers commissioned portraits for her clients, which are available upon direct inquiry,

Homeowners looking to begin a renovation project should stop in at **The Floor Store** on Main Street. The Floor Store specializes in custom flooring of all kinds, ranging from ceramic tile and prefinished wood floors to carpeting, rugs, laminates and more. This multi-generational family business has been selling and installing high-quality flooring for over three-and-a-half decades, and is also well-equipped to handle custom ceramic work, and projects that involve walls, bathrooms, showers, and kitchen countertops. On Harris Street adjacent to The Foundry, **SALA** offers a curated selection of elegant and sophisticated jewelry with a raw and elemental edge. SALA’s product line includes vintage clothing, ethically-sourced new clothing and gifts, new and vintage original art, and Stephanie Iverson Jewelry.

In search of some beautiful handmade pottery? Take a trip off the beaten path and head down to **Hoffman Pottery** on Great Barrington Road. Owner Elaine Hoffman is well-versed in a range of different pottery techniques and creates compelling works with vibrant hues and creative color patterns. The gardens outside of Hoffman Pottery are well known throughout the West Stockbridge community. Quirky sculptures of friendly frogs and gremlins create a joyful atmo-

sphere of lighthearted whimsy.

For a wonderful afternoon hike with incredible sights, head to **Stevens Glen** on Lenox Road. After accessing the path from the trailhead, visitors can follow this carefully-designed trail to an observation deck, which overlooks the cascading waters of the Lenox Mountain Brook. The Stevens Glen trail system is named after the Stevens Family, which settled the area in the late 18th century and cleared the land for farming purposes. Over the next several centuries, the Stevens family hosted numerous dancing parties at a pavilion near the ravine. In the late-20th century, the property was donated to the Berkshire Natural Resources Council by Millard and Frederic Pryor. Dense glades with shifting light and lush greenery await hikers as they make their way towards the romantic waterfall, where the waters of the Lenox Mountain Brook have carved a craggy rock cleft in the deep and steep ravine. As the sun begins to fall over the majestic Berkshire mountains, there’s no better place to enjoy a moment of peaceful reflection.

Visitors who are spending the whole week in Stockbridge should make sure to clear their schedule on Thursday afternoon to visit the **West Stockbridge Farmers Market**. Held at The Foundry’s green every Thursday through October 6 from 3–6 p.m., the West Stockbridge Farmers Market brings together local farmers and vendors, who sell their locally-sourced products and produce, meat, baked goods, and artisanal cheeses to both area residents and visitors. This year, notable participants include Berkshire Cider Project, Berkshire’s Own Fudge, Blue Skye Wellness, Creature Bread, Cricket Creek Farm, Dandelion Farm, First Flower Farm, Harvey Mountain Alchemy, Honey Hill Farm, Lakshmi’s Garden, Les Petits Choux, Lion’s Tooth Farm, Mill Brook Sugarhouse, Naji’s Mediterranean Cuisine, Running Fox Farm, The Sweetish Baker, and Sweet Somerby Farm. Live musical performances are held throughout the season, including upcoming performances from Aimee Van Dyne (August 11 and September 15), Chris Considine (August 25), Linda Worster (September 1), Paula Bradley (September 8), and Nate Martel (September 29). The West Stockbridge Farmer’s Market is partially sponsored by the **West Stockbridge Cultural Council**, which promotes and funds a variety of local arts and culture programs.

▶ 7PM

A fabulous day of shopping, sightseeing and adventuring deserves a flavorful feast! During the warmer months, **Truc Orient Express** on Harris Street offers authentic Vietnamese cuisine for takeout only. Guests can enjoy exceptional dishes, such as Vietnamese egg rolls, Truc’s Special Shrimp Rolls or Vegan Spring Rolls, their signature “Happy Pancake,” and other vegan dishes at their comfortable outdoor tables. In addition, antique artisanal Vietnamese Pre-French War pottery pieces are on display outside of the restaurant. The pottery pieces were made using traditional techniques and glazes and were sourced directly from Vietnam. Pottery pieces are for sale through

direct inquiry, and are gorgeous decorative additions that will enhance the aesthetic of any home or garden.

SUNDAY

► 8AM

As the sun rises over the nearby mountain ridges, head back to Amici on Albany Road for some full-flavored Italian breakfast fare. Dig into their Caprese Omelet with arugula, fresh tomatoes, basil pesto and fresh mozzarella cheese, or try their signature Amici Sandwich with thick-sliced smoked bacon, farm-fresh egg, cheddar cheese, caramelized onion puree, garlic aioli and sriracha on a brioche bun. Pay a second trip to No. Six Depot on Depot Street for a strong cup of coffee or tea and prepare yourself for another memorable morning in West Stockbridge.

► 10AM

After a rousing breakfast, why not book a pampering and restorative acupuncture, massage therapy, or energy work session at **Boundless** on Albany Road? This serene and soothing wellness center is staffed by experienced, compassionate, and knowledgeable professionals who are well-versed in a variety of hands-on techniques, treatments, and methods. Their massage therapy and bodywork services can improve the symptoms of migraines, headaches, tendonitis, sciatica, and all manner of injuries. Their acupuncture, Chinese Traditional Medicine, Qigong, energy work, and health coaching services can help people at all stages of their wellness journey take their holistic health programs to the next level.

If you are visiting West Stockbridge in April or May, it's the perfect time to explore **Shaker Mill Pond, Cranberry Pond, Mud Ponds,** and **Crane Lake** by canoe. Travelers who bring canoes can launch them into Cranberry Pond by following Albany Road north of West Stockbridge. After passing by Mill Pond Trailer Park on your right, you will find a small gravel parking area on your left. Park your car and follow a trail from the parking lot for about fifty yards, then launch your boat at the small "Put In" at the shoreline of Cranberry Pond. To reach the other ponds, follow the shoreline south, then follow the Flat Brook to the other ponds. After traveling south through the Flat Brook, you will come across Crane Lake to the southwest. Crane Lake is home to **Crane Lake Camp**, a summer camp that is overseen by the Union for Reform Judaism. Campers who attend Crane Lake Camp become part of a tight-knit community that embraces kindness and personal growth, and are granted access to a giant water playground, kayaks, and fun water sports activities. Additional classes and activities include drama, ceramics, painting, dance, and outdoor training on their ropes course.

If you continue eastward from Crane Lake, you will pass

under Route 41 and come across a marshy creek that runs perpendicular to Flat Brook. To reach Mud Ponds, canoers will need to portage their boats to pass a beaver dam. Heading northeast, a long passage will open up to a large pond that is lined with marshy wetlands. After exploring Mud Ponds, you can follow the same path south and continue onward to Shaker Mill Pond. Visitors who choose to explore the ponds in the late summer should take heed that the water level will be low. The waters will likely be marshier, shallower and weedier in the late summer months, especially at Shaker Mill Pond.

A historical sign recently was installed on the grounds of what was once **Keresey Field** on Albany Road (Route 41), a quarter-mile north of the village. According to the West Stockbridge-based Local Yoke!, from 1934 to 1941, Keresey Field was the home of the Troy's Garage semipro baseball team, known as the "Garagemen," that hosted games against the Philadelphia Athletics, Cincinnati Reds, and Boston Braves, as well as the Negro League and other regional teams. Keresey Field is now part of the state-owned 290-acre **Flat Brook Wildlife Management Area**.

For additional family-friendly summertime fun, visit **Card Lake Pond**. Located just south of the Massachusetts State Turnpike Great Barrington Road, this old-fashioned swimming hole features a small, well-maintained beach that has

recently reopened after being refurbished with fresh sand and a new fence. Card Lake Pond is located just down the street from the **Pleasant Valley Motel** on Stockbridge Road, an affordable motel that offers continental breakfast, complimentary internet access, and has a guest barbecue area that is perfect for summer grilling.

► 1PM

As your stay in West Stockbridge reaches its conclusion, head back to Amici on Albany Road one last time for an Amici Burger or some Eggplant Parmigiana. Afterwards, pop into **Charles H. Baldwin & Sons** on Center Street and browse through their collection of retro candies, greeting cards, and toys while basking in the rustic general store ambience. Charles H. Baldwin & Sons is located directly across the street from **A W Baldwin True Value**, a dependable hardware store that has faithfully served the West Stockbridge community for many years. While at Charles H. Baldwin & Sons, make sure to pick up a bottle of their rich and flavorful Baldwin's Pure Vanilla Extract, which has been made using time-honored methods since 1888, and their tasty Baldwin's Table Syrup, which dates back to the 1920s. Their timeless taste and aroma will serve as a wonderful reminder of your West Stockbridge vacation. ■



Charles H. Baldwin & Sons is an 1800's general store famous for creating extracts such as vanilla other flavors, as well as featuring many nostalgic items.