

SPECIAL  
NEW YORK STATE  
ISSUE

# TRAVEL

MAY 2, 2004 • DAILY NEWS

## Get out of town

Upstate New York is  
a natural choice for  
a spring getaway

By LISA ARCELLA



**PEAK SEASON** Hikers enjoy  
Ausable Lake in the Adirondacks.

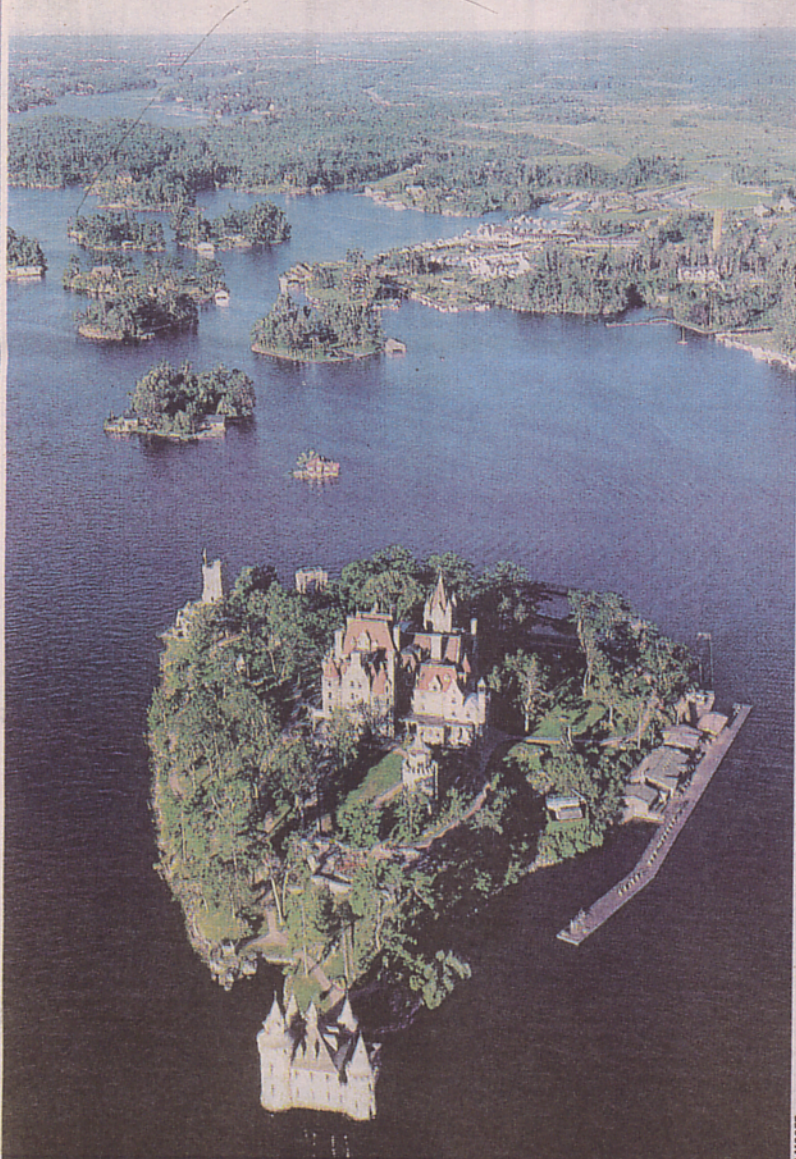
DARREN MOGEE

KNOW IT ALL Snoopy sightings in Minnesota | LIVING HISTORY WWII memorial opens in Washington | STEAL AWAY Umbria



# N.Y.'s top outdoor

*It's an ideal time to explore the many natural wonders upstate*



**DON'T LET THE NAME FOOL YOU** There are actually nearly 2,000 islands, including Heart Island, in the Thousand Islands.

**D**orothy was on to something. Sometimes you don't have to go farther than your own backyard to find your heart's desire. As spring settles in for New Yorkers and summer beckons, it's time for urban dwellers to get back to nature.

Spring and early summer are great times to explore upstate. There are smaller crowds, prices tend to be off-season, roads are less crowded and flowers are in full bloom.

"I can't think of a better place to be in the spring," says Allen Benas, the owner of The Thousand Islands Inn. "There's not a crush of tourists, everything is blooming and it's clean and safe. I never lock my house or take my keys out of my car!"

We wouldn't suggest leaving your keys in the car, but we can recommend a number of ways to take in the sights and commune with the great outdoors.

## THE FINGER LAKES

The Iroquois Indians believed that the Finger Lakes region came about when the Great Spirit placed his hand in blessing on the favored land. That's easy to believe. From Syracuse to the east and Rochester to the west, The Finger Lakes are just about a six-hour drive from Manhattan, but they are truly a world away. Of course, the most famous attractions in the region are the many wineries that surround the six major lakes with Indian names: Skaneateles, Owasco, Keuka, Seneca, Canandaigua and Cayuga. May is the time when most of the local wineries begin to open their doors to the public.

"We are seeing more and more people specifically coming up to see the wineries," says John Sullivan, the owner of the Morgan Samuels Inn. "A lot of Europeans are coming to buy wineries and a lot of them are saying the countryside here reminds them of Switzerland."

Locals have their favorites, but Skaneateles — about 45 miles west of Syracuse — is perhaps the most scenic lake. As the weather gets warmer, the sailboats will begin to appear and the picturesque town of the same name will welcome tourists into its antique shops and restaurants along Route 20.

At Keuka Lake, near the town of Dundee, there are a number of small Mennonite communities and at the Windmill Farm and Craft Market on Route 14A, you can often find quilts, crafts and produce for sale.

History buffs will find a feast to rival the wine in the Finger Lakes. The Seward House in Auburn is the Federal-style former mansion of statesman William Seward and houses everything from Seward's letters from Abraham Lincoln to tea from the Boston Tea Party. Nearby is the home of Harriet Tubman, who rescued countless slaves through the Underground Railroad. Elmira was once the summer home of Mark Twain and



**DRINK IT IN** Knapp Winery in Romulus is one of n

his study is still on the campus of Elmira College.

Other pleasures of the Finger Lakes can be found outdoors. Near Trumansburg, there's Taughannock Falls State Park, where swimming, fishing and boating are overlooked by a 215-foot waterfall. And Ithaca might be best known as the home of Cornell University, but on the outskirts of the city, at Buttermilk Falls State Park and Robert H. Treman State Park, you'll find a series of stunning waterfalls among the hiking and bike paths.

Some of the best trout fishing in the state can be found in Seneca Lake, near Watkins Glen, and Watkins Glen State Park has a gorge trail that will take you in past nearly 20 waterfalls. There is also an Olympic-sized swimming pool in the park and camping facilities.

Canandaigua, on the lake of the same name, is a busy resort town with lots of fun shopping and good restaurants, and it's not far from Letchworth State Park, off Route 19A in Castile, on the border of the Niagara region. The views here are dramatic and beautiful, and a must-see is the Gorge, often described as the "Grand Canyon of the East."

## THE THOUSAND ISLANDS

Water is the name of the game in the northernmost part of the state in Thousand Islands. At the source of the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario, New York State shares this waterway with Canada and it is arguably one of the most beautiful locations on the East Coast. In fact, Native Americans called this place the "Garden Place of the Great Spirit."

Because so much of the land along the shoreline is state park, canoeing and sailing are pristine and anglers will discover many great spots to reel in muskie, pike and bass. Pulaski likes to call itself the "Salmon Capital." You can't fish for them, but you can see where more than 4 million trout and salmon are raised at the Salmon River Hatchery in Altmar.

One of the best ways to take in the scenery is to drive along the New York State Seaway Trail, which follows the

# escapes



any opening this month in the Finger Lakes.

coastline. "That trail can take you 500 miles along the shoreline, all the way from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario, and there are all these quaint restaurants and antique shops along the way worth exploring," says Christine Gray, director of the Oswego Department of Promotion.

Wellesley Island State Park, near the Thousand Island International Bridge, is a lovely spot for a picnic along the water, and there are a wildlife sanctuary and hiking trail. At one end of the island, you will find beautiful, old Victorian homes.

A major attraction on the waterway is the melancholy Heart Island. It is accessible by water taxi and was owned by George Boldt, the one-time owner of the Waldorf-Astoria. In 1900, he began construction of a castle — complete with a drawbridge — for his bride. But when she died four years later, he ordered the workers to drop their tools and cease construction. The state has spent millions restoring the place and turning it

into a popular tourist attraction. You can reach the island from Alexandria Bay, which is a fun little tourist town.

And yes, there really are a thousand islands in its waterways — nearly 2,000, in fact.

## THE ADIRONACKS

There's no better place to get back in touch with your inner outdoorsman (or woman) than among the 6 million acres that are the Adirondacks. Although many people associate areas like Lake Placid and its Olympic complex as primarily a winter playground, when the snow thaws the region's 6,000 miles of rivers and 2,000 lakes make it an ideal spring or summer getaway.

In the southern Adirondacks — about a four-hour drive from Manhattan — places like Lake George Village, in Lake George, offer beaches, boating, shoreline cruises and the Fort William Henry Museum, which opens for the season this month. It's a replica of the British fort destroyed by the French and Indians in 1755, depicted in "The Last of The Mohicans."

The Champlain Valley and Lake George areas are filled with historic sites like Fort Ticonderoga, which opens this month and has great views of the lake.

Lake George also offers scuba divers a rare find. In 1758, the British sunk 260 French ships and intermediate divers can still explore seven of those bateaux.

Raquette Lake, in the western Adirondacks, is where the Vanderbilt summer home Sagamore can be toured to get a taste of the "Great Camps" — elaborate summer retreats favored by New York City elite around 1900. Nearby on Route 28 in Old Forge is a popular spot to rent a canoe for an 18-mile route through lakes. There's also whitewater rafting in the area.

Heading north, Cranberry and Tupper Lake are relatively undeveloped and are



WATER YA WAITIN' FOR? Adventure beckons on the 6,000 miles of rivers in the Adirondacks.

also prime spots for canoeing, hiking and fishing.

Saranac Lake is one of the most central spots to create as a base. It's a short drive from there to Lake Placid, the home of the 1980 Winter Olympics. Even during the spring and summer, you can skate on its huge indoor rinks or take an elevator for a heartstopping look from the top of the 26-story ski-jump tower.

The gondola at Whiteface Mountain Ski Area takes visitors to the top of Little Whiteface, where they can get a look at the 700-foot waterfall. Real sports en-

thusiasts will also want to make a stop at the Mount Van Hoevenberg Sports Complex on Route 73 to rent mountain bikes or practice target shooting.

Additionally, there are hundreds of trails to hike in the Adirondacks. Two of the best are the steep climb up Black Mountain, near Lake George, and New York State's highest peak, at Mount Marcy (5,344 feet), in the north. But that's just the tip of the (finally melted) iceberg to explore in this great park. Should 6 million acres really be called a park anyway? ♦

## IF YOU GO

### ACCOMMODATIONS

#### Finger Lakes

*Glen Iris Inn* near Letchworth State Park — A Victorian-era home that overlooks the park's waterfalls. Rates from \$80 to \$175. (585) 493-2622; [www.glenirisinn.com](http://www.glenirisinn.com).

*The Vagabond Inn* in Naples Rates — A mountaintop lodge with only five guest rooms, each with its own fireplace and Jacuzzi. Rates from \$115 to \$400. (585) 554-6271; [www.thevagabondinn.com](http://www.thevagabondinn.com).

*Morgan Samuels Inn* in Canandaigua — Breakfast is served by candlelight in the 1810 stone mansion on 46 acres. Rates from \$119 to \$395. (585) 394-9232; [www.morgansamuelsinn.com](http://www.morgansamuelsinn.com).

#### Thousand Islands

*Selkirk Lighthouse* in Pulaski — Advance reservations are a must to sleep in this spot on the National Register of Historic Places. (315) 298-6688; [www.maine.com/lights](http://www.maine.com/lights).

*Thousand Islands Inn* in Clayton — Most rooms have views of the river. Open May to September. Rates from \$60 to \$99.50. (315) 686-3030; [www.1000-islands.com/inn](http://www.1000-islands.com/inn).

#### Adirondacks

*Adirondack Loj* in Lake Placid — A wilderness B&B that's just a 10-minute drive from Lake Placid. Rates from \$34 to \$110, breakfast included. (518) 523-3441; [www.adck.org/html/adirondack\\_loj.html](http://www.adck.org/html/adirondack_loj.html).

*The Wawbeek* on Upper Saranac Lake — On 40 acres, an authentic and luxurious Adirondack

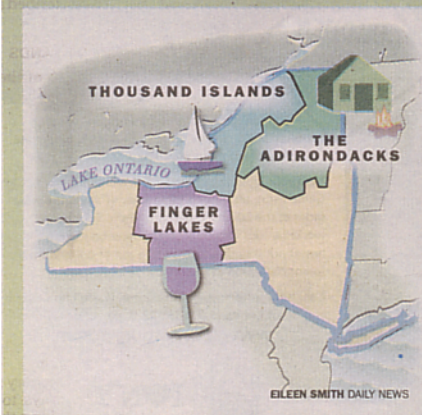
Great Camp. Boat rentals and breakfast are included. Rates from \$100 to \$495. (518) 359-2656; [www.wawbeek.com](http://www.wawbeek.com).

*The Point* in Saranac Lake — The very upscale, stunningly beautiful former Rockefeller Estate. Rates from \$1,250 to \$2,500 per night. [www.thepointresort.com](http://www.thepointresort.com).

*Mirror Lake Inn Resort and Spa* — A modern but cozy hotel and spa on the lake with plenty of fireplaces and antiques. Rates from \$200 to \$825. (518) 523-2544; [www.mirrorlakeinn.com](http://www.mirrorlakeinn.com).

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

To speak with a travel counselor, at New York State Department of Tourism, call 1-800-225-5697. For general information, go to [www.llovery.state.ny.us](http://www.llovery.state.ny.us).



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