

New England Travel



GARY N. MILLER/SISTERS COUNTRY PHOTOGRAPHY

The Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains in Oregon was part of the Sensational Sisters tour.

Hands-on experiences

Country Heritage Tours of New Hampshire has — for 32 years — filled a niche for quilting-centered trips

By Necee Regis
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

The travel business is populated with all manner of specialty tours, from disco-themed cruises to language-immersion backpacking treks. In New Hampshire, Country Heritage Tours has filled a niche for quilting-centered tours for 32 years. The company runs about 18 trips a year — nationally and internationally — that combine exploring the local culture of a destination with visits to quilt shows, craft museums, and fabric shops with opportunities for hands-on experiences particular to each destination, from an old-fashioned quilting bee in Pennsylvania Amish country to a natural dyeing workshop in Vietnam. We caught up with owner Scott Brodsky to talk about the initial inspiration for the company, and its decades of success in the industry.

How did you get involved in the business of running quilting tours? I grew up watching my mother



Scott Brodsky, owner of Country Heritage Tours.

start and run the business, eventually witnessing my father leave his career as an engineer with Motorola to grow the business. I was at a turning point in my career as a set designer in New York City and, with a no-opportunity-wasted attitude, decided to come home to New Hampshire to work with my parents.

Were you involved in crafts before getting into this business? I've been involved in the arts since an early age. Mom made a point of immersing me in performing arts — with piano lessons, acting, singing, volunteering as an usher — which eventually led me to pursuing a conservatory education in scenic design for theater. This gave me a profound appreciation for design and craftsmanship that I apply daily to my current position.

Quilting tours serve a very specific demographic. Generally speaking, who signs up for your tours?
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When it's time to enjoy the moment

Pack your mat and try these scenic getaways to celebrate National Yoga Month

By Lauren Daley
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

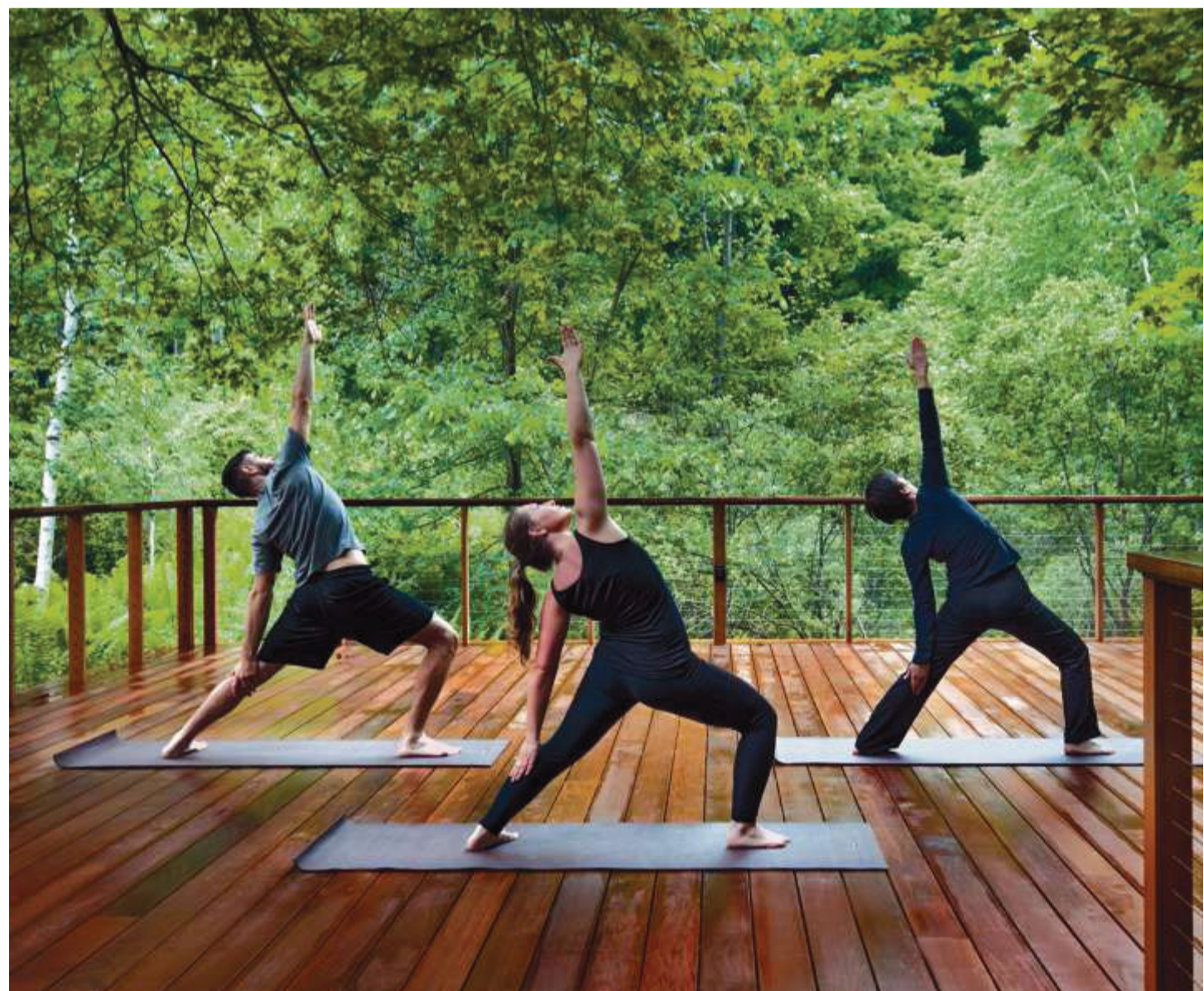
September is National Yoga Month, and whether you're a seasoned yogi or a total newbie, we've found stunning spots in New England — from yoga retreats to seaside resorts that offer yoga classes — where folks of all levels can get their downward dog on.

BEAT THE RETREAT

Spread over a stunning 150-acre swath in the Berkshires, **Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health** is a hub of holistic health and a go-to resort for all yogis. If you're looking for guidance, specific education and a structured schedule, sign up for one of their themed programs — there are hundreds throughout the year. For example, you might enroll in "Quiet Your Inner Critic and Calm Your Anxious Mind" Sept. 21-23, "Five Days to Get Om Schooled: A Fall Yoga Immersion," Sept. 17-21, or "Painting and Yoga in the Berkshires" Sept. 30-Oct. 5.

Or, if you're just looking to unwind and do your own thing, there's the make-it-want-you-want "Kripalu R&R" option. Here you might take a gentle yoga class — or not.

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TWIN FARMS

Twin Farms, an all-inclusive luxury inn in Barnard, Vt., features a yoga deck.

THE VIP LOUNGE | JONATHAN VAUGHTERS

Champion cyclist gears up for local fund-raiser

Jonathan Vaughters is a world champion cyclist who has competed in the world's most prestigious races, including the Tour de France. Next weekend, he will be in Boston with Team EF Education First-Dracac powered by Cannondale to participate in Hub on Wheels, an annual citywide bike ride along Storrow Drive that raises money for pediatric cancer research at Boston Children's Hospital. Vaughters, 45, a lifelong Denver resident, is the team's founder and manager. EF Education First, based in Cambridge, is one of the sponsors of the event, which usually has about 5,000 participants. "We're usually so busy doing world tour races, international events . . . where people can't just sign up for them. This is an opportunity to engage with a broader cycling public," said Vaughters of the Sept. 16 event. "Cycling is a great avenue for fund-raising, so we see this as our social responsibility, being able to bring elite racers to this kind of a thing where it's for the greater good

as opposed to winning prize money. And to be able to have a course that goes through a place with so much history . . . it's a special thing." We caught up with Vaughters, the father of an 18-year-old son, Charlie, to talk about all things travel.

Favorite vacation destination? I haven't really been on a true vacation in years. But I love Highbourne Cay in the Exumas [Bahamas], and then for snow vacations, Val Fex in Switzerland.

Favorite food or drink while vacationing? The three Bs for drink: Burgundy, Bordeaux, and Barolo. Food? I'll eat anything that's well prepared, but I love fresh oysters in cold water parts of the world.

Where would you like to travel to but haven't? Patagonia. I'd like to catch a huge river run salmon, eat it, and wash it down with Fernet and Coke.



One item you can't leave home without when traveling? My passport? Maybe Benadryl? It serves as a sleeping pill, also anti-allergic reac-

tion. And if you're deep-sea fishing, it keeps you from getting seasick.

Aisle or window? Window. I like to sleep, I like to look outside, and I have a large bladder.

Favorite childhood travel memory? Flying in on a float plane to a remote lake in Canada to fish. I love little old airplanes up north that are held together with bubble gum and duct tape. Makes me feel like an aviation pioneer.

Guilty pleasure when traveling? Rosé with lunch. I guess I do that at home, too.

Best travel tip? Go back to the same place a few times and don't overdo the tourist stuff. Just hang out and get to know the place for what it really is a little bit.

JULIET PENNINGTON

Stretch and relax at these N.E. yoga getaways

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Just sit back and enjoy the view. Or practice solo by the lakefront beach, curl up with a book, sketch, take a guided group hike, or walk alone. Stay as long as you want.

With either option, an array of whole food meals are included, as is access to the fitness center, hiking trails, and sauna. Rates vary. 57 Interlaken Road, Stockbridge. 800-741-7353. kripalu.org

Treat yourself to a stay at **Canyon Ranch Wellness Resort**. A restored 1897 mansion on manicured grounds with a stunner of a spa and indoor and outdoor pools, the Berkshires resort offers a myriad of activities aside from yoga — Pilates, qi gong, stand-up paddleboarding, kayak, hiking, biking, rock climbing, meditation, tennis, skulling, archery and cooking classes among them. Check online for weekly classes. Meals — largely locally sourced, and organic — are included. The spa menu includes shiatsu massage, lemon verbena pedicure, and detoxifying seaweed mud wrap. Rates vary. 165 Kemble St., Lenox. 413-637-4400. www.canyonranch.com/lenox

Escape to the Canadian border at **Sewall House Yoga Retreat**, a quaint historic house/B&B in Island Falls, Maine. No prior experience necessary; classes are small. Screen-addicts, break



GURNEY'S NEWPORT RESORT & MARINA

Above: At Gurney's Newport Resort & Marina on Goat Island in Newport, R.I., guests enjoy complimentary weekend yoga overlooking Newport harbor. Right: At Sewall House Yoga Retreat in Island Falls, Maine, classes are small and other outdoor activities are available.

free and unplug: phones aren't allowed in the common areas, although you can use them in your room. Vegetarian meals are included. Wake for pre-breakfast meditation or yoga before tucking into vegetarian pancakes or handmade granola and breads, nut butters, jams and cheese. Aside from yoga, activities include hiking, biking, horseback riding, kayaking, canoeing, stand-up paddleboarding, plus free time for a massage, or reading. You might dine on sweet potato lasagna,



SEWALL HOUSE YOGA RETREAT

homemade bread, farm fresh salad, and avocado ice cream before an evening Jacuzzi soak. Open through Co-

lumbus Day. Rates vary. 1027 Crystal Road, Island Falls, Maine, 888-235-2395. sewallhouse.com

RETREATING FROM THE RETREAT

If you're really just looking to get your child's pose on before relaxing with wine on vacay, we've got you.

Topnotch Resort in Stowe, Vt., isn't just for skiers. Take a private or group class at the on-site yoga studio, or try aqua yoga, meditation, Pilates or tai chi, guided walks, among other offerings. Hike or bike nearby woodland trails. Take a post-yoga trip to the dreamy spa complete with solarium, indoor hot tub with cascading waterfall, couple's massage suite with fireplace, and more. Grab a craft beer and dine on-site at The Roost, offering meat-lovers and vegetarian options. Eat breakfast at Flannel for a mountain view with your veggie omelet. Rates vary. 4000 Mountain Road, Stowe, Vt. 800-451-8686. www.topnotchresort.com

Greet the morning on the yoga deck at **Twin Farms**, an all-inclusive luxury inn in Barnard, Vt. Surrounded by Vermont-in-a-postcard woods, trails, and pond. Take a meditation class, practice yoga in the fitness center, soak in a traditional Japanese furo tub — a hot soaking pool with woodland view, or head to the spa for a heated blue stone massage. Hike or bike on-site trails, or just curl up by the fireplace with a book and glass of wine. Farm-to-table meals are included in the room rate, as is wine, beer, and spirits. Rates vary. 452 Royalton Turnpike, Barnard, Vt. 802-234-9999. www.twinfarms.com/spa

You've heard of goat yoga? Try Goat Island Yoga. At **Gurney's Newport Resort & Marina** on Goat Island in Newport, R.I., guests of the luxury resort enjoy complimentary weekend yoga overlooking Newport harbor. Swim in the indoor pool or practice poses in the fitness center before relaxing in the dry eucalyptus sauna, then zen out with a massage at the Seawater Spa with waterfront view. 1 Goat Island, Newport. 401-849-2600. www.gurneysresorts.com

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Piecing together cultural exploration, quilting shows

► **HERITAGE**
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Our guests are predominantly female age 55 and up. We do have the occasional husband that joins and we see lots of mother and daughter, grandmother and granddaughter duos that make it a family trip. At the end of the day, our guests

are travelers who want to explore their hobby and share their passion for quilting with other like-minded travelers.

Do you have to be a quilter to take a trip? Not at all. Although all of our trips are centered around quilting and fiber arts, we always have guests

joining us just for the destinations we visit. And whether you're a beginner or advanced quilter, or just a quilt voyeur, it's the camaraderie of our travel companions that make our journeys so special.

What makes Country Heritage Tours different than other craft-related tours? Our attention to detail and our customer service have always been the hallmarks of our business. Our guests can confirm that when you call our office, a person answers the phone. If you e-mail, you receive an e-mail back. In addition, we personally site inspect all of our tours before being released to the public. So we sleep in the beds, eat in the restaurants, and visit the quilt shops to make sure that they meet our standards.

You are based in New Hampshire. Do you have any trips specific to New England? Our signature tour that started the company is our New England Fall Treasures tour showcasing the best of New England for leaf peepers. We also have two summertime tours, Magnificent Maine & Vermont featuring the Vermont Quilt Festival, and another summertime departure, Cape Cod & Nantucket featuring the Cape Cod National Sea Shore.



The Texas Quilt Museum is part of the Texas Stars Tour.

Do you have a favorite trip? One of my favorites is our Sensational Sisters tour featuring the Sisters Outdoor Quilt Show in the foothills of the Cascades Mountain Range in Oregon. The quilt show is as Ameri-

can as apple pie. The entire town takes part in hanging the quilts, the Boy Scouts serve dinner, and every street corner has a pop-up lemonade stand. It truly is a slice of Americana.

Any new destinations on the horizon?

We are always developing new destinations to pique quilters' interest. I've been working on a seven-day trip to Alabama featuring the Gee's Bend Quil-

ter's Collective. They were featured at the Whitney Museum in [New York City] in the early 2000s and their snip-and-rip approach to quilting is remarkable. Also, a tour featuring Missouri Star Quilts, and another featuring Quilts of Hawaii is in development.

800-346-9820, countryheritagetours.com

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WHERE TO STAY

MAINE

SOUTHERN COAST

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