

Travel

BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE NOVEMBER 27, 2011 | BOSTON.COM/TRAVEL

What a holiday way to go

Events from seaside to countryside to mountainside to keep your spirits light until the new year

BY NECEE REGIS | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Ready or not, here they come. The holidays are nigh, and between shopping, cooking, and travel plans, amid the ribbons and bows, the latkes and candy canes, there are plenty of events to enjoy during this festive season.

Gingerbread House Workshops, Concord

Calling all architecture buffs with a sweet tooth: six Gingerbread House Workshops are being offered at Verrill Farm in December. Each participant will receive an assembled, undecorated gingerbread house, along with frosting and candy, including gumdrops, peppermints, and candy canes. Reservations are required, and an adult must accompany all children under 10. Nov-

ices need not worry: Farmstand chefs will be on hand to offer decorating tips. We guess the first tip will be, "Don't eat the decorations." *Dec. 4 (Sun) and Dec. 10 (Sat); 9:30, 11:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., Verrill Farm, 11 Wheeler Road, 978-369-4494, www.verrillfarm.com, \$35 per person*

The Nutcracker Ice Cream Tea, Boston

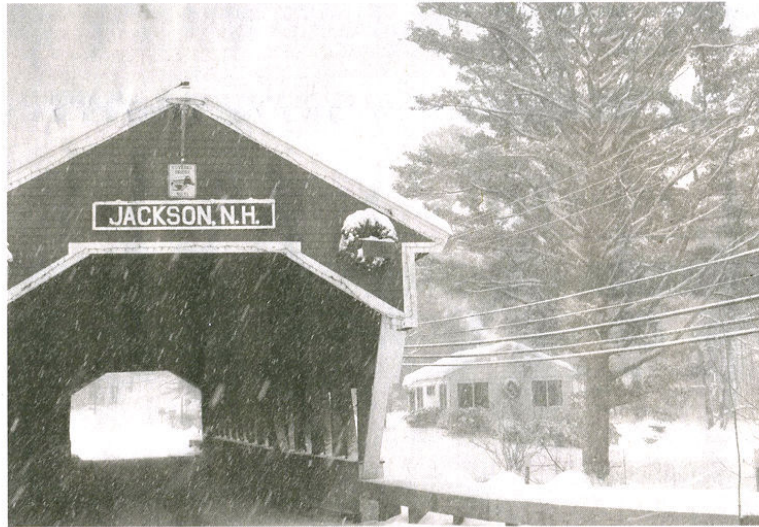
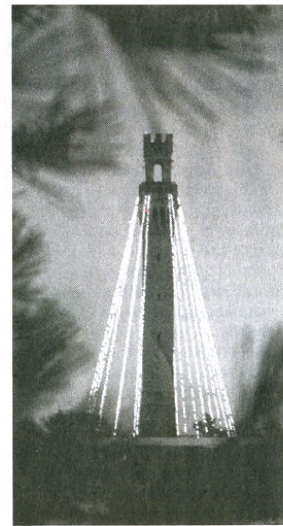
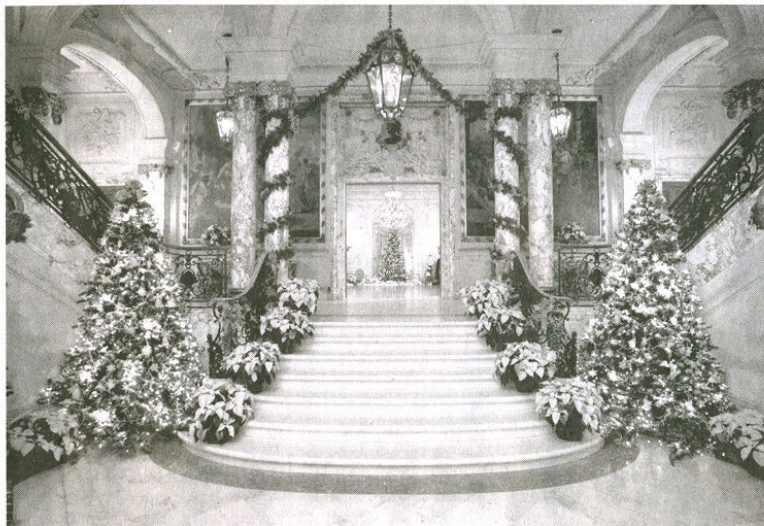
If you are heading to this year's production of "The Nutcracker" at the Boston Opera House, stop by Kingston Station Restaurant, a neighborhood bistro with this special seasonal offering. You won't see any sugar plums at this version of high tea, though you will find something better: a do-it-yourself sundae bar with homemade ice cream, assorted toppings, and holiday cookies.

The ice cream flavors reflect the season: peppermint stick, gingerbread, eggnog, and hot chocolate. No sweet tooth? No worries. Theatergoers can order an assortment of 30-minute quick-service items, including child-friendly burgers, grilled cheese, and tomato soup. *Nov. 26-Dec. 18, 25 Kingston St., 617-482-6282, www.kingstonstation.com, adults \$20, children \$10*

Jingle Bell Chocolate Tour, Jackson, N.H.

There is nothing that says winter wonderland like a horse-drawn sleigh ride through a New England village bedecked with ribbons and sparkly lights. Add chocolate to the mix, and it's holiday heaven. This tour starts at the Nestlenook Estate, where visi-

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CORBETT PHOTOGRAPHY.NET FOR THE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF NEWPORT COUNTY; LIZ SMITH/MADEINLOWELL.COM; CHUCK ANZALONE, JACKSON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE; COTTON MILL STUDIOS; VERRILL FARM

Clockwise from top left: The Elms, one of three Newport Mansions dressed up for the holidays; a pincushion ring by Liz Smith, whose Made in Lowell company will be at the SoWa Holiday Market; the Pilgrim Monument dressed for Holly Folly in Provincetown; a scene on the Jingle Bell Chocolate Tour in Jackson, N.H.; trapeze artists at Cotton Mill Open Studio and Holiday Sale in Brattleboro; and a young attendee at the Gingerbread House Workshop in Concord.

Make some fun for the holidays — or make some jokes

► HOLIDAY Continued from Page M5

tors receive a jingle bell and chocolate and snuggle under blankets on a sleigh. Holiday music serenades the tour as it crosses a historic covered bridge and proceeds into Jackson Village. At each stop along the route, local shops, restaurants, and inns dole out homemade chocolate treats. "Honestly, it's just magical," said Kathleen Driscoll, executive director of the Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce. New this year: the "Jingle Bell Chocolate Tour Recipe Book." Nov. 26, 27, Dec. 3, 4, 10 and 17. All aboard at Nestlenook Estate & Resort, 66 Dinsmore Road, reservations: 603-383-9356, www.jacksonnh.com, \$20, children on laps not taking chocolates are free

8th annual SoWa Holiday Market, Boston

Billed as a "handmade holiday spectacular," this is a juried fair featuring over 80 artists and designers from all over New England. Think of it as the best-of-the-best array of gifts made by the region's most talented practitioners. Located in the SoWa district in the South End, you are sure to find something for the most discerning hipster on your list. Choose from indie handbags, chic jewelry, fanciful (yet practical) pottery, baby clothes for Gen-Z infants, letterpress stationery, silk-screened T-shirts, repurposed wool accessories, and more. Dec. 10, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., Cathedral High School, 74 Union Park St., www.sowaholidaymarket.com, free

Santa Special at the Essex Steam Train, Essex, Conn.

Santa and Mrs. Claus make a special appearance every weekend in December on the train. Climb aboard vintage rail cars bedecked with festive holiday decorations and settle in for a one-hour ride through the scenic Connecticut River Valley. An authentic steam locomotive pulls the train, and Rudolph and Pablo the Penguin will be on board spreading holiday cheer. Children receive a small holiday gift from Santa's elves and have their own photo-op with Santa.

December weekends, 1, 2:30 p.m. plus 11:30 a.m. on Sat, One Railroad Alley, 860-767-0103, www.essexsteamtrain.com, \$20-\$40, children under 2 sitting on laps are free

Holly Folly Weekend Provincetown

Put on your glitter and gold lame and head to Provincetown. Touted as "the world's only GLBT holiday festival," this three-day event takes place all along Com-



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RANDALL PERRY



ESSEXSTEAMTRAIN.COM

From the top: In Bath, Maine, merchants downtown vie for best decorated storefront; in Provincetown, the Land's End Inn embellishes its ocean view; and in Essex, Conn., Santa and Mrs. Claus make special appearances on the Essex Steam Train.

mercial Street, where one-of-a-kind shops and galleries offer holiday gifts you won't find at the mall. Now in its 15th year, Holly Folly also features holiday light competitions, toy drives, tree trimmings, cookie parties, photo-ops with Santa and Mrs. Claus, singalongs, karaoke, parties, seasonal food and drink, and a performance by the Boston Gay Men's Choir at Town Hall. Don't miss the two-story-tall lobster trap tree in Lopes Square, made

for more than 100 traps and lighted with thousands of lights. Dec. 2-4, Holly Folly Headquarters located at Old Firehouse, 256 Commercial St., 508-487-2313, www.ptown.org/HollyFolly.asp, free parking in municipal lots, event prices vary

Christmas at the Newport Mansions, Newport, R.I.

Three of Newport's grandest historic houses, bedecked in their finest Yuletide finery, are open

for touring every day — except Christmas — from now through Jan. 2. A Winter Passport ticket gets you into all three: The Breakers, The Elms, and Marble House. Each mansion's Christmas trees are decorated with period-style ornaments, and other wintry decorations include dozens of wreaths, hundreds of yards of garland, and thousands of flowers, including poinsettias, lilies, and roses. New features this season include a custom-made Nativity scene in the Gold Room of Marble House, with figures dressed in gold, green, and ivory fabric that match the window coverings and upholstery. Nov. 19-Jan. 2, The Preservation Society of Newport County, 424 Bellevue Ave., 401-847-1000, www.newportmansions.org, Winter Passport \$28, \$9 for children ages 6-17, under 6 free

Moo Shu Jew, Boston

Oy! On Christmas eve in Boston, what's a poor member of the Jewish tribe to do? How about Jewish inspired stand-up comedy dished up alongside a five-course, pork-free Chinese banquet? If this scenario brings a smile to your lips (and a rumble in your tummy) head to Hei La Moon in Chinatown for an evening of Moo Shu Jew. The sponsor of this show, the New Center for Arts and Culture, says it best: "This messuggena show was created for Jews to enjoy at Christmas time, where Jews feel most at home, in a Chinese restaurant!" Featured comedians include Jim David from Comedy Central, Cory Kahane from Last Comic Standing, Ross Bennett from Sirius Blue Collar Radio, and Ophira Eisenberg, host of The Moth. Dec. 24, 6 p.m., Hei La Moon, 88 Beach St., reservations: 617-531-4610, www.newcenterboston.org, \$65, young adults (under 39) \$40

An Old Fashioned Christmas Bath, Maine

For a newfangled spin on tradition, head to Bath and hop on the Christmas Carol Trolley. This rolling song-a-thon is part of a month of festivities. For two hours every Friday evening in December, the trolley picks up riders at City Hall. "They go through the historic district where the houses are all lit up. It's very cute," said Jennifer Geiger, director of VisitBath.com. On Dec. 16, downtown merchants and restaurants stay open late and welcome visitors with festive holiday music and refreshments. Cast your vote for the best decorated storefront window and you might win a gift basket. Dec. 2, 9, 16, and 23, 207-442-7291, www.visitbath.com, free

Cotton Mill Open Studio and Holiday Sale, Brattleboro

Kick off the holidays at this 11th annual open studio and sale. The three-day event celebrates the arts and the spirit of the season with live music provided by the Vermont Jazz Center, trapeze artists, glass-blowing demonstrations, dance performances, and features the work of over 50 artists and small businesses. Think of it as a multi-ring circus located under one roof, a 145,000-square-foot renovated mill building dating to 1910.

Shop for holiday gifts while meeting the artists who created them. You will find paintings, pottery, toys, furniture, garden sculpture, jewelry, books, jams, granola, candles, and more at this once-a-year extravaganza. Dec. 2 (10 a.m.-7 p.m.), Dec. 3 (10-6), Dec. 4 (10-5), 74 Cotton Mill Hill, 802-257-7731, www.thecottonmill.org, free admission and parking

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Maine

Enjoy Christmas by the Sea in Ogunquit!

Holiday Festival Package includes 2 nights lodging, dinner at your choice of Jonathan's, MC Perkins Cove or Old Village Inn, breakfast each morning, wine & cheese sampler and extended check out of 1pm. Plus enjoy shopping discounts & see our Christmas Carolers — 'Tis the season for holiday cheer!

Luxury Suites - Family Suites
Heated Indoor Pool - Indoor & Outdoor Hot Tubs
Health Club & Spa - West Meadow Pub
Visit Online for Spa, New Year's & More Choices!

PO Box 2347 • Ogunquit, ME 03907 • www.meadowmere.com • 1-800-633-8718
December 2-4 & 9-11 Festival Packages start at \$195.95 ppdo. Tax & Gratuity Not Included
Rates Vary by Room Type/Number of Nights. Subject to Change.

Cape Cod

CHATHAM BARS INN
RESORT AND SPA
CHATHAM, CAPE COD

HOLIDAY EXPRESS - 12/10

Join Chatham Bars Inn for a festive and enchanting train ride on the "CBI Holiday Express." Santa's elves will provide entertainment until Santa Claus boards the train at the "North Pole" with a gift for each child! Package is based on a family of four and includes two nights accommodations and four train tickets.

GIRLFRIENDS SEASIDE ESCAPE - 1/27/12-1/29/12

A girls getaway weekend of fitness, spa, shopping, and fun. From fitness classes and mixology lessons to dinner and dancing - This will be a chance to relax with the ladies after all of the holiday stress.

297 SHORE ROAD, CHATHAM, MA 02633
1-800-527-4884 • 508-945-0096 • CHATHAMBARSINN.COM