



ANDERS VERCELLI

The lavender at Fort Hill Farms in Connecticut.

Currents

Laze amid the lavender

Go for a relaxing stroll among the lavender beds at Fort Hill Farms & Gardens in Thompson, Conn., where this aromatic plant blossoms through July. Bring a pair of scissors and you can gather lavender from the Quintessential Gardens’ 1,500 plants. Or buy pre-dried bouquets and cuttings at The Creamery, the farm’s new ice cream and lavender shop, which opened this month. Here, you can sample organic lavender jelly or try the new Quintessential Dessert: vanilla ice cream that’s covered with lavender topping and served with a lavender cookie on the side. The gardens are open daily from 9 to 9, weather permitting. 860-923-3439, www.forthillfarms.com

On top of the world in Singapore

Bring walking shoes for your stay at Singapore’s new \$5 billion Marina Bay Sands resort, which has 2,560 rooms and a 2.5-acre park that spans the top of three hotel towers and includes jogging paths, a public observatory, gardens, restaurants, lounges, and an infinity swimming pool. Bring some spare cash, too: The resort, designed by Boston architect Moshe Safdie, has a four-story casino with more than 600 gaming tables and 1,500 slot machines. You’ll find large-scale works along the resort’s Art Path, including 83 ceramic vessels in the hotel atrium. Room rates start at \$359 per night, including buffet breakfast for two people. 011-65-6688-8868, www.marinabaysands.com

Do it for the green sea turtles

Roll up your sleeves and spend three days helping local fishermen and researchers monitor endangered green sea turtles in Magdalena Bay on the west coast of Mexico’s Baja California peninsula. Then slip into your bathing suit and spend three days paddling with sea lions and dolphins, snorkeling with tropical fish, and exploring uninhabited desert islands in Loreto Bay National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the Sea of Cortez on the peninsula’s east coast. The naturalist-guided tour, run by Sea Kayak Adventures, is suitable for beginner to intermediate paddlers, and includes beach camping and hotel stays. It runs Oct. 24-31, and 40 percent of the trip cost goes to a local sea turtle conservation organization. Adults \$1,650, children ages 12-17 \$1,485. 800-616-1943, seakayakadventures.com

KARI BODNARCHUK

THROUGH SEPT. 26
SAN FRANCISCO

“Impressionist Paris: City of Light”: Paris was the world capital of art in the 19th century and into the 20th. More than 150 prints, drawings, photographs, paintings, and books in this exhibition at the Legion of Honor give a sense of cultural life in the city during the years of Monet and Renoir. The work of both those painters, as well as Cezanne, Manet, Degas, Pissarro, and Morisot are part of a complementary show, “Birth of Impressionism: Masterpieces from the Musee d’Orsay,” which runs at the de Young Museum through Sept. 6. The Musee d’Orsay is the Paris museum devoted to 19th-century art. *Lincoln Park at 100 34th Ave., 415-750-3600, legionofhonor.famsf.org (de Young: Golden Gate Park at 50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive, 415-750-3600, deyoung.famsf.org)*

THROUGH AUG. 29
MONTREAL

“We Want Miles: Miles Davis vs. Jazz”: More than just a trumpeter, Davis may well have been the most iconic figure in jazz history. He was a shape-shifter of styles, going from bebop to hard bop to modal to fusion, bringing the rest of jazz along with him. This Montreal Museum of Fine Arts exhibition looks at his career through photographs, videos, album art, and, of course, recordings. There are even two of Davis’s paintings on display. *1380 Sherbrooke St. West, 514-285-2000, www.mmfa.qc.ca*

THROUGH SEPT. 5
STOCKHOLM

“Ed Ruscha: Fifty Years of Painting”: Sweden is a long way from Los Angeles, and mileage is the least of it. This makes the idea of seeing a retrospective of LA’s greatest artist at the Moderna Museet all the more appealing. The fact that Ruscha’s art is so sly, rowdy, and unpredictable helps, too. *Skeppsholmen, 011-46-8-5195-5200, www.modernamuseet.se*

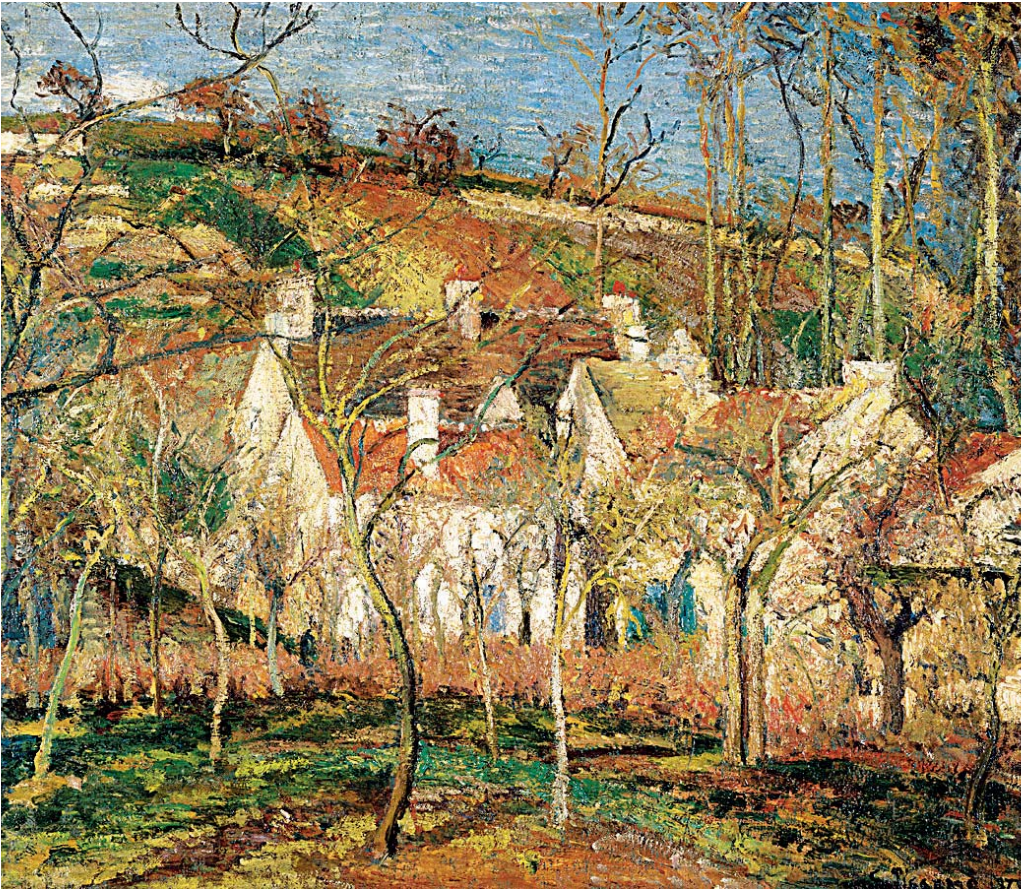
AUG. 13-SEPT. 5
EDINBURGH

Edinburgh International Festival: Founded in 1947, this event began the tradition of citywide culture festivals. This year’s features opera, theater, music, and dance. Highlights include a new production of George Gershwin’s “Porgy and Bess”; a staged adaptation of Ernest Hemingway’s “The Sun Also Rises”; concerts by the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Kronos and Tokyo quartets; and a dance salute to Brazil by Pina Bausch’s Tanztheater Wuppertal. *The Hub, Castlehill, 011-44-131-473-2099, www.eif.co.uk*

Destinations

ARTS

City of Light, Golden State



Camille Pissarro’s “Red Roofs, Village Corner, Impression of Winter” from 1877.

THROUGH SEPT. 26
LONDON

“Grace Kelly: Style Icon”: Only Audrey Hepburn exceeds her as a screen fashion style — and Hepburn was never a real-life princess. This exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum includes dresses Kelly wore in “Rear Window” and “High Society,” the gown she wore when she won the 1955 Academy Award for best actress (“The Country Girl”), and some of the fashions she owned by some of her favorite designers, including Dior, Balenciaga, Givenchy, and Yves St. Laurent. *Cromwell Road, 011-44-20-7942-2000, www.vam.ac.uk*

AUG. 28-OCT. 24
NEW ORLEANS

“UNTITLED [New Orleans and the Gulf Coast 2005]”: To observe the fifth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, the New Orleans Museum of Art will be presenting this exhibition of 69 color photographs by Richard Misrach. They show the messages people wrote on walls and

cars and trees in the wake of the storm’s devastation. Their words run the gamut from rage to sorrow to humor. *1 Collins C. Diboll Circle, 504-658-4100, www.noma.org*

PLAN AHEAD

OCT. 31-JAN. 30
WASHINGTON

“The Pre-Raphaelite Lens: British Photography and Painting, 1848-1875”: The National Gallery of Art will be showing some 110 photographs and 20 paintings and watercolors to examine the interaction of photographers and painters in mid-century Britain. *4th and Constitution Avenue NW, 202-737-4215, www.nga.gov*

MARK FEENEY

Events are sometimes canceled, rescheduled, or sold out; check online. Mark Feeney can be reached at mfeeney@globe.com.

Signature cheeses, distinctive wines, ages-old tradition

► **FRANCHE-COMTÉ**
Continued from Page M1

process is small scale and personal. And that human touch is what makes this obscure corner of France — less than three hours by train from Paris — perfect for Slow Food touring. Sandwiched between Burgundy and Switzerland, Franche-Comté not only has its signature cheese and some distinctive wines, it is also dotted with rustic inns where Michelin-starred chefs offer complete tasting menus for the price of a main dish in Paris.

The landscape skews more toward Switzerland than Burgundy with buttercup-laden pastures, rolling hills punctuated by rocky outcrops, and mountain lakes. Green valleys harbor tidy villages and prosperous market towns.

Poligny is the center of the Franche-Comté cheese industry and La Maison du Comté, a cross between a museum and a tourist office, is a good place to get some perspective on the vastly popular cheese with an intensely local accent. Monsieur Comté, an animated wheel of cheese, narrates a short film about the cheese-making process, and displays demonstrate the operations of each village’s fromagerie, the co-operative cheese dairy. In short, farmers within an eight-mile radius deliver their milk twice a day and each morning it’s made into cheese. When the cheeses begin to develop a protective skin within a few weeks, they are transferred to a regional aging cellar.

Roughly 3,000 family farms, 170 fromageries, and 20 aging facilities are spread throughout Franche-Comté, which is about the size of Connecticut and Rhode Island combined. Operations that welcome visitors are listed in a booklet (in French with some English translation) available at the Maison du Comté and are marked with a green-and-white plaque with a cowbell. Some sites require advance reservations; ask for help at the Maison or any village tourist office.

Marmier and five other farmers own the fromagerie in Bouverans, a speck of a village shared by 1,000 cows and 300 people. Town Hall, the school, and the fromagerie constitute the center of



PATRICIA HARRIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Gabriel Defrasne delivers milk to Fromagerie Bouverans, the village’s cooperative cheese dairy.

town. Cheesemaker Philippe Morrey keeps regular morning and evening hours so locals can grab some cheese and exchange some gossip.

Stop by in the morning and you will see Morrey at work in his gleaming facility, where huge copper cauldrons with rotating blades are linked to stainless steel tanks by a vacuum system. Modern equipment notwithstanding, Morrey follows what he calls a “thousand year recipe,” which begins when the milk is heated and combined with rennet to create curds and concludes when the curds are pressed into molds. Comté is usually made in 40-kilo (88-pound) wheels and the whey (which is drained from the curds) is mixed with grain to feed the village pigs. Marmier and Morrey claim that whey milk also cures the “hanging over,” a good thing to know if you sample too much Jura wine.

Cheeses from Bouverans and

37 other fromageries are aged at Fort Saint-Antoine, a late-19th-century military fortress dug into the hillside. In 1966 it was converted to an aging cellar, or affinage, where more than 65,000 wheels of Comté are aged every year. Highlights of the 90-minute tour are seeing some of the 1.9 miles of spruce shelves where cheeses are stacked more than 30 high, and watching a worker “tap” a cheese by withdrawing a small plug to determine if the wheel is ripe. “We test every wheel,” says guide Philippe Goux. “We also work a lot with the view and the nose.” Cheeses are aged four to 18 months. The tour concludes with a tasting to compare the mild younger and nuttier more mature Comtés.

Many local people claim to eat Comté three times a day, starting with a few slices on a baguette for breakfast. The smooth-melting cheese is also good for fondue, a specialty at La Finette Ta-

verne in Arbois. Local custom calls for swirling the bread impaled on your fork eight times around the pot before lifting it to your mouth.

Arbois is the center of the Franche-Comté’s Jura winemaking region and the slopes surrounding the town are covered with vines. Foodies also visit for Hirsinger Chocolatier, the 110-year-old shop presided over by fourth-generation chocolatier Édouard Hirsinger. A small museum traces the history of the business and the family’s enduring commitment to all things chocolate. Hirsinger is especially proud of a framed award given to his great-grandfather in 1902. No slouch himself, he is one of only 20 chocolatiers to be designated as Best Artisan in France. For a literal taste of history, sample a dark chocolate mixed with praline (from a 1907 recipe) followed by one of Hirsinger’s fanciful creations — maybe a strawberry and balsamic vinegar jelly paired with licorice-infused chocolate.

Hirsinger is a mere flash in the pan compared with Château d’Arlay, which has been making wine for more than 900 years. “The first castle was built at the end of the 11th century,” says Count Alain de Laguiche, the current proprietor. “The estate has never been sold or bought since then.” A “new” chateau was completed in 1783 for the Countess de Lauraguais, a big spender who also created an English-style park before she was beheaded during the Revolution. Her grisly demise, says de Laguiche, “is not an exception.”

Looting noble homes was also common, but the chateau was refurbished to the height of style in the 1820s. In summer, guests can tour the park and gardens as well as the chateau’s elaborate drawing room, gorgeous oval library, and one bedroom — none of them changed since the 1820s.

The wine tasting room, which is open year-round, is a showcase of Jura wines. Vin Jaune, or “yellow wine,” basically an unfortified sherry-like wine, is unique to the region. The count makes his white table wines in a slightly oxidized style that is popular with local drinkers, but meets with re-

If you go . . .

What to do
La Maison du Comté
Avenue de la Résistance
Poligny
011-33-03-84-37-78-40
www.maison-du-comte.com
July-August daily 10-11:30 a.m., 2-5:30 p.m.; April-June and September-October Tue-Sun 2-5 p.m. Tour and tasting adults \$5, children \$3.15.
Fruitière Bouverans
4 rue du Chalet, Bouverans
011-33-03-81-89-84-18
Mon-Sat 7 a.m.-noon and 5:30-7:30 p.m., Sun 7-11:30 a.m. and 6-7:30 p.m. Free.
Fort Saint-Antoine
69 Grande-Rue, Malbuisson
011-33-03-81-69-31-21
www.tourisme-metabief.com
Tour and tasting July-August Wed-Thu 9:30 a.m., September-June Thursday only. Adults \$7.50, children \$4.40. Reservations required. English language tours may be requested.
Hirsinger Chocolatier
Place de la Liberté, Arbois
011-33-03-84-66-06-97
Shop open Fri-Tue 8-8; \$3.75 for visit and tasting. Museum open summer only. Make reservations through tourist office, 10 rue de l’Hôtel de Ville, 011-33-03-84-66-55-50.
Château d’Arlay
Route de Saint-Germain, Arlay
011-33-03-84-85-04-22
www.arlay.com
Wine tasting year-round Mon-Fri

9 a.m.-noon and 2-6 p.m., Sat 9-noon and 2-5. In summer, also Sun 2-6. Free. Visits to castle, park, and gardens June-mid September. Adults \$8.15-\$11.90, children \$5.65-\$8.15.
Where to stay and eat
Le Bon Accueil
Rue de la Source, Lac Saint Point Malbuisson
011-33-03-81-69-30-58
www.le-bon-accueil.fr
Family-run rustic alpine inn has a dozen rooms (including four junior suites and two family rooms). Chef-owner Marc Faivre, who has held a Michelin star for a decade, grows much of his produce on the grounds. Double rooms \$90-\$106, four- to five-course menus \$41-\$74.
La Chaumière Hotel-Restaurant
346 avenue de Maréchal-Juin Dole
011-33-03-84-70-72-40
la-chaumiere.info
This old farm resurrected as a half-timbered inn on the outskirts of town features 19 simply decorated modern rooms and a gracious, Michelin one-star restaurant (closed last week of August) with terrace dining. Double rooms \$96-\$106, four- to five-course menus \$39-\$69.
La Finette Taverne
22 avenue Louis Pasteur, Arbois
011-33-03-84-66-06-78
www.finette.fr
Fondue \$12, other main dishes \$5-\$19.

sistance elsewhere in France. “I sell more wine in Stockholm than in Paris,” he says.

De Laguiche is proudest of his pinot noir. “It’s been our main production for five centuries,” he says. “It’s like having Château d’Arlay in the bottle. It has a very special taste of the terroir of the chateau.”

For a much broader taste of the terroir of Franche-Comté, check out the Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday markets in Dole, the region’s capital until the 17th

century. All the narrow streets in the historic town center eventually lead to the 16th-century church of Notre-Dame and the nearby 19th-century covered market where vendors proffer delicate red and white radishes, tender green peas, golden jars of honey, and saucisse de Morteau, the local smoked pork sausage.

And, of course, big wheels and chunks of Comté.

Patricia Harris can be reached at harris.lyon@verizon.net.