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 NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

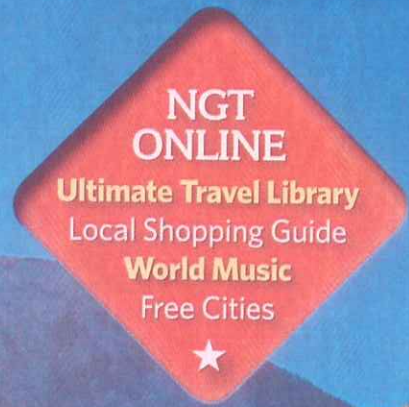
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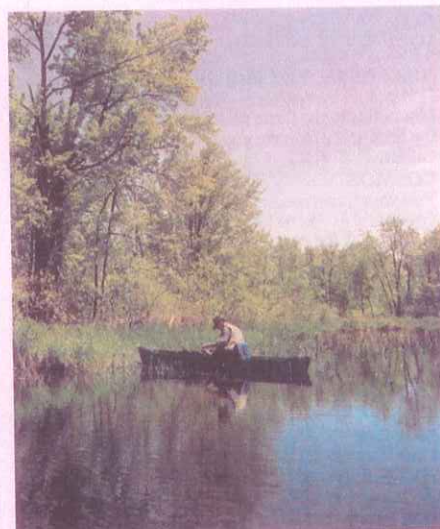
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THE LONG WEEKEND



Connecticut Country

Nature, farms, and first-class culture team up in them thar hills. By DOUG COLLIGAN

Geography has always been destiny for the tidy little hamlet of Litchfield in northwestern Connecticut. During the 18th century, beleaguered patriots from Manhattan made the trek to the hilltop town not only because it was beyond the reach of British troops but also to replenish their cache of weapons and ammo. But in the 21st century, travelers from New York City come here to get away from urban stress and sample the area's menu of sophisticated distractions. "We get a lot of history buffs," says Colleen Murphy, who runs the Abel

Darling B&B. Indeed, there are more than 40 historic buildings, including the nation's very first law school, one of whose graduates was vice president and deadly shot Aaron Burr. Take a stroll along sweeping North Street, cut through

Litchfield Hills montage: Pergola purveys nature-themed housewares in New Preston, a local goes fishing from his canoe, and Lovely the cow gets sprayed off prior to milking.

JULIE BOWWELL (FAR LEFT); WENDY CARLSON (RIGHT, BOTH)

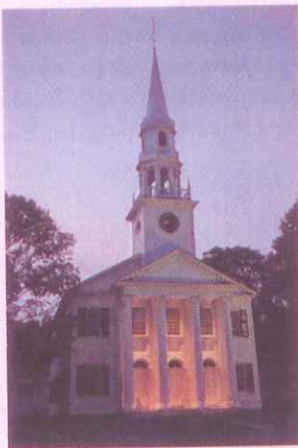
The Long Weekend



Safekeeping: In December 2008, Connecticut's governor, M. Jodi Rell, announced that the state is buying development rights on 50 acres of Tanner Farm to ensure permanent agricultural use. The First Congressional Church of Litchfield (below) was built in 1829 and restored 100 years later.

the postcard-perfect village green, continue to South Street, and you pass ranks of beautifully maintained 18th-century homes, including one George Washington visited. And antiques dealers abound—this is New England, after all.

Outdoors enthusiasts come to explore the White Memorial Foundation, Connecticut's largest wildlife sanctuary, with more than 35 miles of trails on the edge of town. Others head to the western reaches of Litchfield County, where Stacey Marcin and her husband, Mark Hampson—who run the Cornwall Inn and Lodge—cater to hikers. "A big draw is the Pine Knob Loop," Marcin says, referring to a woody portion of the Appalachian Trail.



Evenings are for music. Down in the valley, the city of Torrington's dazzling Warner Theater, a former movie palace, seats 1,700. Built in the 1930s, the crumbling venue was restored in 2002 to its art deco glory, down to crushed velvet wall covering and brocade draperies. Classical music aficionados head north to the tiny crossroads village of Norfolk, home of the Yale Summer School of Music, where world-class talent such as the Tokyo String Quartet perform in the

Music Shed, a 900-seat acoustical jewel of a recital hall, built of cedar. Jazz fans come in early August for the three-day Litchfield Jazz Festival of fresh-air concerts.

The advantage of staying right in Litchfield is being able to stroll across the green to the Village Pub and hang out with the locals. "It's our Cheers," says

Colleen Murphy. Those who are in a splurging mood can walk a few doors over to the West Grill for bistro ambience and braised short ribs. At the end of the evening, meander back to the B&B, built in 1792 by the eponymous Abel Darling, and up to one of its airy bedrooms with wide-plank floors and exposed-beam ceilings, where you will drift off to sleep to the

sound of breezes rustling through the leaves of the two massive maple trees just outside your window.

LOGISTICS: Litchfield, www.litchfieldct.com, is less than a two-hour drive north from New York City. Abel Darling B&B, from \$125; www.abeldarling.com. Cornwall Inn and Lodge, from \$139; www.cornwallinn.com; White Memorial Foundation, www.whitememorialcc.org. Yale Summer School of Music, www.yale.edu/norfolk. Litchfield Jazz Festival, www.litchfieldjazzfest.com. West Street Grill, www.weststreetgrill.com. Village Pub, 860-567-8307.

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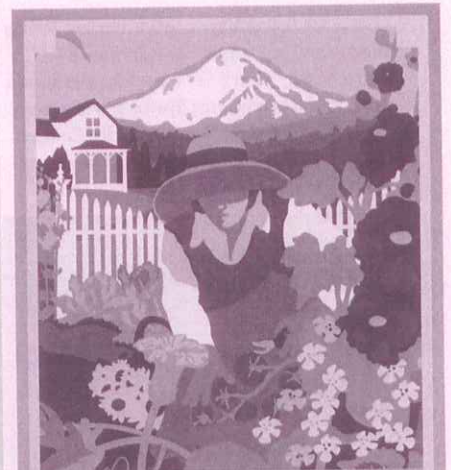
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