

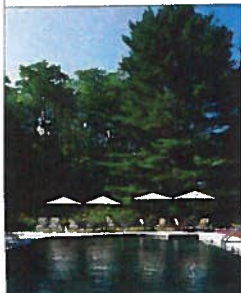


TRAVEL FOR DESIGN

The Luxe Outdoors

by Annette M. Rose-Shapiro

BLANTYRE OFFERS ACTIVITIES INDOORS AND OUT FOR ADVENTUROUS GUESTS



Take A Dip | Blantyre's heated pool (ABOVE LEFT) is conveniently located next to The Potting Shed Spa. **Croquet, Anyone?** | Two bent-grass croquet courts (ABOVE RIGHT) hearken back to another era. See Resources.

Take a short trip to Lenox, MA, and you'll find yourself in a magical setting with myriad choices for outdoor and indoor activities. A weekend at Blantyre can satisfy the most avid hiker and the most dedicated antiques lover, with neither having to leave the grounds of this enchanting 19th-century country inn.

Built in 1902 by Robert Paterson, Blantyre was designed as an Elizabethan manor on 117 rolling acres. Paterson named Blantyre after the hometown of a Scottish neighbor, and its meaning in Gaelic—the warm retreat—is quite fitting. In the style of the “Gilded Age,” the home’s furnishings had been imported from England, and Paterson built a gallery to display his extensive art collection. His friend Andrew Carnegie was a frequent guest at lavish dinner parties held in the summer and fall.

Eventually, the economy changed, fortunes were lost and the Patersons sold Blantyre at a loss. It fell into disrepair and went through several changes, but luckily the home was purchased by Jack and Jane Fitzpatrick in 1980 and restored as an inn by their daughter, Ann Fitzpatrick Brown. She opened Blantyre in 1981; the property became a Relais & Chateaux member in 1983, and finally a year-round facility in 2005.

Fitzpatrick Brown's attention to detail and insistence on the highest level of service from her



Suite Dreams | Decorated with luxurious fabrics and period antiques, the Crimson Suite (TOP) includes a fireplace, private balcony and dressing room. **A Tasty Morsel** | A fine example (ABOVE LEFT) of Chef Christopher Brooks award-winning cuisine. **To the Manor Born** | The enchanting main house at Blantyre. See Resources.

staff sets Blantyre apart and makes staying there an unforgettable experience. She is a knowledgeable antiques collector and has decorated the inn with an eclectic mix of periods and styles. For the visitor with an interest in antiques, several days could be spent exploring Blantyre's many public rooms. Two 300-pound gold-gilded bronze Art Nouveau chandeliers illuminate the con-

servatory, while an iconic Dresden chandelier hangs in the breakfast room. The music room features a hand-painted 18th-century Italian secretary, among many other exquisite antiques. Fitzpatrick Brown is always happy to give tours to guests who would like to know more about her collection, and there's always a chance to see some of the guest rooms in the main house, each



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with a unique décor. The inn also has a large collection of books on art and antiques, and plenty of cozy spots inside and out to curl up and read.

Blantyre offers the sports enthusiast a number of interesting options, right on the grounds. Don your croquet whites and take in a game on the championship bent-grass courts. Have a tennis lesson on one of the four Har-Tru tennis courts, or ask the front desk to arrange a bocce or shuffleboard match. Blantyre does not have its own golf course, but the 18-hole Cranwell Golf Course, designed in 1926 by John van Kleeck, surrounds the property. There are hiking trails situated on the perimeter of the grounds and October Mountain State Forest is nearby if more challenging trails are desired. The heated outdoor pool is conveniently situated next to the Potting Shed Spa, should you want to avail yourself of the fitness center, steam room, sauna, indoor hot tub or spa services.

There are many activities in and around Lenox, including the famed Tanglewood Music Center, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, Shakespeare & Company and tours of Edith Wharton's home. After a long day of antiques hunting, hiking, culture or sports, you can return to Blantyre for a meal by Relais & Chateaux Grand Chef Christopher Brooks. Dinner includes canapés in the main hall, the meal in the dining room and, finally, a cheese course and dessert buffet in the music room. Blantyre's wine cellar holds over 20,000 bottles, and is overseen by a knowledgeable wine steward and sommelier (see pg. 78).

Blantyre provides a combination of luxury accommodations and outdoor activities year round. Cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and ice skating are available on the premises in winter, with a Snow Concierge on hand to work out all the details. You can follow up with a selection from the inn's exclusive hot chocolate menu. For an easy and relaxing weekend trip, there is plenty to keep you busy at Blantyre, indoors and out. ●

DAY TRIPS IN AND AROUND CT

For more ideas on short trips to the great outdoors from Connecticut and Westchester, *City Weekends*, by Alison Lowenstein (Universe), outlines itineraries for sports lovers, sightseers, antiques hunters, museum-goers and more. You don't need to travel very far and Lowenstein provides directions for driving, as well as public transportation. Some suggestions:

Mystic, CT, offers aquatic adventures at the Mystic Aquarium and Institute for Exploration; boat rides along the seaport; activities for kids at the Children's Museum; and the U.S. Navy Submarine Force Museum.

Stony Creek, CT, is the place to set sail for a 45-minute boat tour of the Thimble Islands. Hop aboard the Volsunga IV (www.thimbleislands.com) or the Sea Mist (www.thimbleislandcruise.com).



Stonington Borough, CT, has a historic twist and it's just right for a day of antiques hunting.

Great Barrington, MA, combines literary history with a three-mile hike at Monument Mountain, with plaques along the trail that

tell the story of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville's picnic there.

Millerton, NY, on the Connecticut/Massachusetts border, was named by *Budget Traveler* as one of the "Top Ten Coolest Small Towns in America" and offers many galleries and antiquing opportunities.

Hudson, NY, is best seen on foot, making it an ideal short-trip location easily reached via Amtrak. Its main street houses galleries, antique shops and restaurants. If you want to rest your feet, you can take a sightseeing tour of the Hudson aboard Hudson Cruises (www.hudsoncruises.com).