

TRAVEL



Terry Divyak, Shutter Tours' guide and founder, gives the historical background of buildings during tours. JOSEPH ROMAIN/COURTESY PHOTO

Picture-perfect trips

Photo tours guarantee great vacation shots

By Andrea Farnum
Examiner Correspondent

There's nothing as disappointing as returning from a whirlwind vacation to discover that your prized travel photos are out of focus, flat and fail to capture the fun and excitement of your trip. Short of getting a degree in photography, what's a wannabe shutterbug to do?

Enter Terry Divyak of Seattle. Divyak, along with other savvy businesspeople across the nation, are

answering the call of weary travelers looking to have picture-perfect mementos of their vacations. Divyak's company, Shutter Tours, offers photography tours staffed by skilled photographers who help visitors create finer images of their vacations to Seattle.

"We carry a book with us that have sample photo ideas for each location so we can teach different techniques and ideas," Divyak said. "Throughout the tour, we show our customers where to stand and how to frame their subjects to help build their confidence."

Photographers of all levels of expertise are welcome to participate. "We have had lifelong photographers

On the Web

Shuttertours.com
Phototrektravels.com

as well as complete novices," Divyak said. "We even had one lady show up with a disposable camera after forgetting her camera at home and still had a great time."

Looking to be less hands-on with your photographs, but still want to preserve your travel memories? Then PhotoTrek Tours in New York City is a great option. PhotoTrek offers private walking tours where a professional photographer will take pictures of your group and deliver a CD with images to your hotel within 24 hours.

"We are providing a completely unique tour of New York City that isn't just about photographs," said founder and tour guide Marc Samuels. "When guests are done with our tour, they know the secrets that only a native New Yorker knows."

Travelers who want to take their own photos, though, are advised to become more familiar with their cameras before going on any tour or trip. "Be prepared to become addicted to photography again," Divyak said. "We hear time after time how our tour participants became avid photographers again with the new knowledge and guidance we provided."

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GAS TANK AWAY

New Hope, Pa., speaks to art lovers of all kinds

By Marie Gullard
Examiner Correspondent

Increasingly, people find themselves drawn to the laid-back lifestyle found in picture postcard towns. Everyone knows what these places should look like — old buildings fronting a body of water, shaded town squares, a Main Street lined with small shops, perhaps a white steeple or two protruding from the treetops.

Imagining is one thing — knowing where to find these towns is often not so easy.

Pennsylvania is always a safe bet. And Cara O'Donnell of Pennsylvania Tourism has a trip up her sleeve absolutely tailor-made for the weekend getaway.

"New Hope is that perfect lazy-afternoon-stroll kind of town — with some very cool historical attractions," she said.

New Hope, once an industrial town, employed residents in the defusion of mills built along the Delaware River. Their goods were then transported along the river and the town's canal to other, larger towns and cities. When the railroads took the place of canal transport, the town slowly but surely reinvented itself as an artist colony. Over the years, summer stock theaters were drawn to the shores of New Hope in an old gristmill that was transformed into the Bucks County Playhouse.

From industry, via its mills, to a haven for artists, New Hope is filled with antique and art shops, museums and cafes, and of course, theater — all of which, in addition to providing healthy doses of small-town charm, bring in the visitors.

"There is definitely a real nostalgic feel, but at the same time [New Hope] is trendy, with more than 200 art galleries, antique shops

IF YOU GO

New Hope, Pa.

» **Distance:** About 190 miles from D.C.

» **Where:** New Hope Visitors Center, 1 W. Mechanic St., New Hope PA 18938

» **Info:** 215-862-5030; newhopevisitorscenter.org

and boutiques to explore, as well as top-notch dining, water activities, theater and more," O'Donnell continued.

The New Hope Winery conducts complimentary tastings daily in its restored 17th-century barn. You can even get there with a horse-drawn carriage ride through town.

At the Delaware Canal Locktender's House, a restored 19th-century museum on the canal, exhibits depict canal workers and their families at work and play. Those interested in decorative arts will enjoy a trip to the Parry Mansion Museum, built in 1974 as the home of Benjamin Parry, one of New Hope's founders. Tours of the mansion focus on eight rooms reflecting 125 years of decorative changes.

The distinctive galleries that line New Hope's streets include the J&W Gallery, dealing in fine oils and photography, and Image Makers Art, featuring the art of Jerry Garcia and other musicians.

Larry Weikel, Director of the New Hope Visitors Center, suggests more leisurely pursuits.

"Take a sundown cruise on the ferry on the Delaware River," he said, "and top off the evening with a ghost tour."

Whatever your fancy, New Hope is filled with fine eateries and quaint B&Bs with what may very well turn into an overnight stay.

SPLURGE

What: Adventure Package at the Mayhurst Inn in Orange, Va.

How much: \$904.15 weekdays; \$946.95 weekends

Why: For those who travel in search of an adrenaline rush, the Mayhurst Inn has you covered. The historic bed and breakfast's Adventure Package offers guests the thrill of a hot air balloon ride or biplane tour of the Blue Ridge Mountains and Shenandoah Valley. Book the biplane or balloon; either way you'll receive two nights lodging in the inn, full breakfast each morning, champagne and strawberries in your room, and a horseback ride through the Piedmont foothills at Oakland Heights Farm. If you need more excitement, travel three miles down the road from Mayhurst to Skydive Orange, where tandem skydiving costs \$255 per diver. The Adventure Package is available only to guests who call or e-mail the Mayhurst to reserve the package at least 10 days in advance of their stay.

BARGAIN

What: The Westin Crown Center in Kansas City, Mo.

How much: \$150 to \$232 per night

Why: Beyond its smoking barbecue and jazz, downtown Kansas City's Westin Crown Center offers guests tennis courts, a sauna, track, outdoor heated pool and steam room. When you're through exploring the Westin's recent \$10 million renovations, learn how greeting cards are made at Hallmark's international headquarters or watch a Harley roar to life at the Harley-Davidson Vehicle and Powertrain Operations. Kids will love K.C.'s Science City, Worlds of Fun — featuring more than 50 rides, shows and other attractions — and Oceans of Fun, the Midwest's largest tropical-themed water park with more than 60 acres of sand and surf. Don't forget to visit the Kansas City Zoo and the Kansas City Speedway. Visit starwoodhotels.com/westin/index.html for more information. — Jessica Novak

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