



The Delaware River, photo courtesy of Niki Jones.

Milford: Small Town, Grand Style

ENTERING MILFORD, CALLED "THE PRETTIEST COUNTY seat in America" by no less an authority than *Atlantic* magazine, is like pulling into a fairy tale. Milford sits on the banks of the upper Delaware River, right where Pennsylvania meets the borders of both New York and New Jersey, and is the north gate to the 70,000-acre Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. Add autumn color, extraordinary architecture, waterfalls and bald eagles and, well, you might as well be in a dream.

But Milford isn't all forests and fantasy. It's classic

IF YOU GO

Grey Towers National Historic Site, open daily Memorial Day through October, www.fs.fed.us/na/gt, 570.296.9630.

Columns Museum, open from 1-4 p.m. Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday, www.pikehistory.org, 570.296.8126.

Black Bear Film Festival, October 12-15, www.blackbearfilm.com, 570.409.0909.

WaterWheel Café Bakery & Bar, www.waterwheelcafe.com, 570.296.2383.

The Dimmick Inn & Steakhouse, www.dimmickinn.com, 570.296.4021.

Hotel Fauchère, www.hotelfauchere.com, 570.409.1212.

Pike County Chamber of Commerce, www.pikechamber.com, 570.296.8700.

Pocono Mountains Vacation Bureau, Inc., www.800poconos.com, 800.762.6667.

small-town America with an extra twist: an eclectic blend of culture, heritage and art from all eras.

Start your Milford experience by touring Grey Towers, the grand Richard Morris Hunt-designed mansion built by James Pinchot in 1886 in a medieval



The Milford Theater hosts the Black Bear Festival.



Grey Towers National Historic Site, photo courtesy of U.S. Forest Service.

French style. Later home to Pinchot's son Gifford, a two-term Pennsylvania governor and first chief of the U.S. Forest Service, this castle-like structure comes complete with circular stone towers and, yes, even a moat. Its outdoor dining "table" is called the Finger Bowl and is actually a raised pool; during meals, food is floated between diners in small balsa-wood rafts. Not even Camelot had that.

Next, check out Columns Museum. Housed in an early 20th-century Neo-Greek Revival home, the museum has an extensive collection, but its most famous and moving relic is the blood-stained American flag that cushioned President Abraham Lincoln's head after he was assassinated.

All of Milford's downtown area is part of a registered National Historic District. Take the walking tour and see the Calvert Vaux building that was Milford's Post Office

in the 1860's or Forest Hall, the building Hunt & Hunt designed for Yale University's Forestry School summer program. Those buildings now house shops, where the good stuff ranges from fine jewelry, blown glass and metalwork to custom furniture, vintage clothing and photos, much of it created by local artists and artisans. Check out the gallery and antique scene at The Gallery at Forest Hall, Golden Fish Gallery, Forest Hall Antiques, Old Lumberyard Antiques, Pike Modern, Greenbaum Studio and Gallery 116.

Milford was an early location for silent films, including several directed by D.W. Griffith and others starring Mary Pickford, Lillian Gish, Pearl White and F.X. Bushman. Today, catch the stars on celluloid during October's annual Black Bear Film Festival, which hosts classic films, as well as current independent flicks. Real film buffs immerse themselves in the parties, free screenings, lectures and educational programs that are part of the festival.

Milford dining gives you a sneak peak into the town's rustic past. The Water Wheel Café's dining room window-wall reveals the building's working 19th-

century wooden gristmill. And there's Dimmick Inn & Steakhouse, in operation since 1828, and Nervous Nellie's Café at the Old Lumberyard Shops.

But by far the star of Milford's recent renaissance is the amazing and elegant Hotel Fauchère. Originally opened in 1852, the establishment was run by the family for 124 years, until closing in 1976. A recent \$8 million renovation has restored the 16-room hotel to an extraordinary standard with a collection of authentic Hudson River School paintings in its public spaces. Its Bar Louis, sleek and contemporary, features photography by Andy Warhol protégé Christopher Makos and Paul Solberg. It's all but impossible not to be spoiled here by the stylish décor, five-star cuisine and refined service in the hotel's Delmonico Room restaurant. Guest rooms are equally elegant, with Frette linens, and marble and Pennsylvania bluestone bathrooms with radiant-heat floors, heated towel warmers and Kiehl's amenities.

Like the town of Milford itself, it all adds up to a grand combination of old-fashioned grace and modern comforts.

Counter-clockwise from top right, reception lounge, exterior sign, sun porch; (photos courtesy of Hotel Fauchère). Bottom right, Bushkill Falls.

