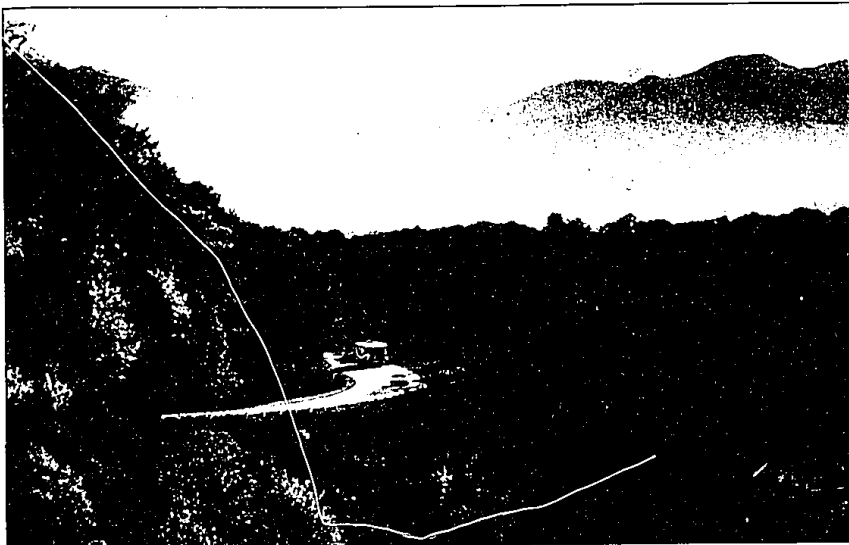


TRAVEL



COURTESY OF BLUNDSOME COUNTY, N.C., TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Taking leaves: Beautiful fall colors accent the meandering Blue Ridge Parkway near Asheville, N.C.

BY RICK MASIBURN  
NEW YORK TIMES SYNDICATE

For many people a getaway in North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains means a remote campsite or cottage, a place where the piliated woodpecker is the biggest noisemaker around.

Travelers who take smaller doses of wilderness may prefer Asheville. Hiking trails, whitewater rivers and the meandering Blue Ridge Parkway are all within easy reach, yet so are out-of-town newspapers, imported beer and the occasional foreign movie.

Not by accident is Asheville's professional baseball team called the Tourists. The city has catered to visitors since the mid-19th century, when it began to be known both for lavish hotels and sanitariums.

A number of its present-day attractions were built by people who visited first, then decided to stay: George Washington Vanderbilt was so enchanted with the sight of Mount Pisgah that he bought 125,000 acres surrounding it, then situated his 285-room estate Biltmore to give him an unblemished view.

In turn, some of Biltmore's most talented designers and craftsmen also settled in the city and continued to contribute to a body of architecture that is strong in the Art Deco and Gothic Revival styles.

Created by and for outsiders, Asheville, with a population of 60,000, has an unusual sophistication for a city in the southern Appalachians.

Events

On many chilly mornings in early fall heavy moisture settles in low-lying areas of the city and surrounding valleys. Viewed from above, the fog is a thick white sea through which the mountain peaks rise like blue-green islands. The sight is well worth an early climb on foot or by car.

More predictable are the first blushes of color in the trees at

# HEAD FOR THE HILLS

Asheville's built more to meet visitors' needs

higher elevations. The show descends and intensifies until its peak in mid-October.

To help counter the lull between summer vacationers and the throngs of leaf-watchers, numerous man-made events have been scheduled for the next few weeks. The complete calendar is available from the Asheville Convention and Visitors Bureau, P.O. Box 1010, Asheville, N.C. 28801; 800-257-1300.

Thomas Wolfe stayed away from home for eight years after he outraged the town with his thinly disguised autobiography "Look Homeward, Angel." Now he is the city's most revered native.

Walking tours include "Thomas Wolfe's Asheville," "An Evening at Dixieland" will offer music and period costumes at the Thomas Wolfe Memorial, the boarding house Wolfe's mother owned; now a museum, 704-253-8304; the house is worth a visit at any time.

Fifteen miles east of the city, at a summer camp near the town of Black Mountain, dancers and Black Mountain Fall Festival from Oct. 9 to 11 and 16 to 18. Twenty musical groups perform each weekend, headlined by the David Grisman Quintet.

The mix includes cajon music,

blues and a percussion ensemble that plays instruments made from trash. Workshops on swing and contra dancing, drumming and musical instruments are held during the day.

While some people are listening to the stage performances, other enthusiasts are in the old dining hall where they dance until dawn. Tickets for each weekend cost \$55 in advance, \$65 at the gate; order from P.O. Box 216, Black Mountain, N.C. 28711; 704-669-4546.

Sights

For a visual introduction to the city drive west through the clutter and chaos of Tunnel Road. You'll pass through Beaucatcher Tunnel, then emerge to a stately view of the downtown skyline.

Thanks to a recent rejuvenation, downtown is spirited and hospitable. There are narrow, angled streets and spacious open squares filled with cafes, galleries and boutiques.

At Pack Square, the heart of downtown, the recently opened Pack Place Education, Arts and Science Center, 704-252-3866, has provided a new home for several of the city's small museums.

Architecture enthusiasts will want to seek out the pink-roofed Art Deco City Building at 70 Court Plaza, and the Gothic Revi-

val Jackson Building, a pencil-thin skyscraper at 22 South Pack Square. For a more comprehensive look a two-hour guided walking tour begins at the Downtown Welcome Center, 14 Battery Park Ave., 704-255-1093, and costs \$7.50.

Biltmore Estate should certainly be visited, even considering the \$21.95 admission charge. Built in the 1890s and designed by Richard Morris Hunt after 16th-century French chateaus in the Loire Valley, the splendid stone mansion is filled with original furnishings and art objects collected by George Vanderbilt in Europe.

The 8,000-acre grounds, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, include lavish formal gardens and a conservatory. Lunch at one of the two restaurants on the estate and a winery tour can extend the visit to nearly a full day. The house, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. (tickets must be purchased by 5); grounds close at 8 p.m., 800-543-2961.

The rough boulders of the Grove Park Inn in Asheville stand in sharp contrast to Biltmore's gorged facade. The rustic hotel was built in 1912 of stone carved from the mountain on which it sits, and the original structure remains largely intact despite the addition of two new wings.

The terrace has dozens of rockers and a sweeping view of distant mountains; it is especially pleasant at sunset. On chilly days, comfort can be found by two huge stone fireplaces in the lobby.

Visitors who are not staying at the hotel can sit on the porch and in the lobby. Many of Grove Park's original fixtures and furnishings were made by the Roycrofters, a well-known name in the American Arts and Crafts Movement; in addition, an impressive collection of art and crafts furnishings now decorates the public areas of the new wings. At 290 Macon Ave.; 800-438-5800.

At the Folk Art Center on the Blue Ridge Parkway, 15 minutes from town, one can finger a hand-carved bowl or chat with a broom maker as he works.

## This book shop's for those who are Big on the Apple

BY EVERETT POTTER  
SPECIAL WRITER

Perhaps no American city has inspired more prose, more passion and more guidebooks than New York City.



And there is no better place to find books about the city than a small, well-lighted space called the New York Bound Bookshop. Situated in the heart of Manhattan, on the ground floor of the Associated Press building at Rockefeller Plaza, the shop carries more than 3,000 books about the Big Apple.

"This is a place for those who love New York obsessively, like we do," says Judith Stonehill, speaking for herself and co-owner Barbara Cohen.

The shop was founded by Cohen 15 years ago in the South Street Seaport area and moved to its present location three years ago. This is where shoppers can choose from some 72 guidebooks, find old copies of the Social Register, locate novels

and mysteries set in the city, pick children's books and browse through volumes on Harlem, the subway, architecture and city planning.

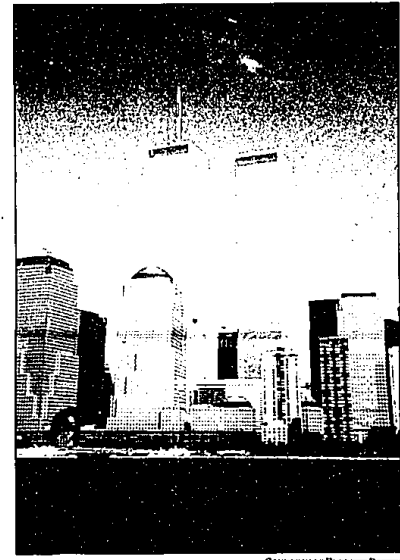
The shop also carries vintage prints, sheet music, hotel letterheads, old copies of Playbill, posters and postcards.

"One of the most extraordinary things we have right now are hand-colored photographs of New York scenes that were done by the Detroit Publishing Co. in the 1880s," says Stonehill.

Printed from the original negatives, they were done with as many as 14 color separations at a time when four or five were usually used. An unframed photo is \$175.

The current best sellers at the shop?

They include books as varied as "Letters from New York" by Helene Hanff (Moyer Bell, 1992, \$16.95); "New York Eats" by Ed Levine (St. Martin's, 1992, \$16.95), a food lover's guide to the food shops of New York; and "Chintown: A Portrait of a Closed Society" by Owen Kinkaid (HarperCollins, 1992, \$23).



COURTESY OF EVERETT POTTER

Booked up: Everything a traveler wants to know about New York City can be found in a book at the New York Bound Bookshop in Rockefeller Plaza.

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