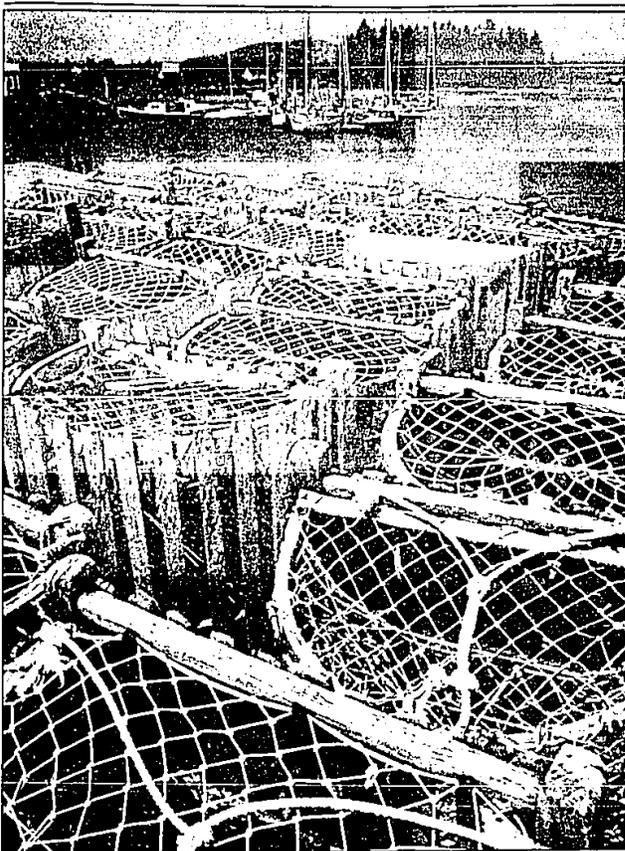


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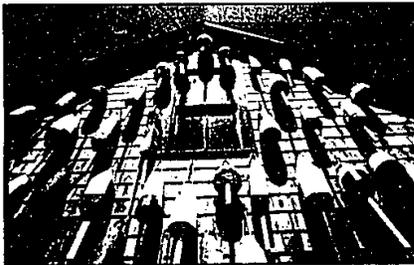
In the Maine stream

Crowds don't hurt Mount Desert's charm



Photos courtesy of Mount Desert Island Chamber of Commerce

Island in stream: A view of Mount Desert Island, above, from the Maine mainland resembles an abstract design. At right, a fishing shack on Mount Desert Island.



By WAYNE CURTIS
NEW YORK TIMES SYNDICATE

It's been three-quarters of a century since automobiles were given the run of Maine's Mount Desert Island, after being barred for years by island residents wishing to preserve the tranquility.

The traffic over the causeway from Trenton hasn't slowed since. Last year some four million visitors came to sample the island's charms.

While the crowds on Mount Desert Island — which is only about 108 square miles — can be veering in midsummer, the place still has the capacity to enchant.

In Acadia National Park, which occupies about half the island, the vistas of ocean, granite and spruce have remained largely unchanged since the land was acquired for public enjoyment by society notables, including the Rockefellers and Vanderbilts, at the turn of the century.

The island towns, while suffering mild erosion in quaintness during the 1980s land rush, are still imbued with a pleasant, drowsy disposition.

Even Bar Harbor, which has unabashedly catered to the tourist trade for more than a century, has preserved some of its classic architecture.

When a devastating 1947 fire claimed 17,000 acres of forest and residential neighborhoods, downtown Bar Harbor and some of the grand homes along the water were spared the flames.

In addition to Bar Harbor the island's principal towns include Northeast Harbor, a fashionable enclave of shingled summer homes (and the departure point for day trips to the Cranberry Islands), and Southwest Harbor, a working waterfront village where top-of-the-line Hinckley yachts are manufactured.

Bas Harbor, near the island's southernmost tip, is a rough-hewn fishing village with ferry service to rural Swan Island, a pleasant destination for bicycle excursions.

Events

The Arcady Music Festival celebrates its 12th season this year with a series of Monday night concerts until Aug. 31. All are at the Mount

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Desert Island High School, a short drive from downtown Bar Harbor.

Among the highlights this year are an all-Mozart program performed by the violinist Stephanie Chase and the forte-pianists Steven Lubin and Masanobu Ikemiyu (July 27). Tickets are \$12 at the door. For more information write to The Arcady Music Festival, P.O. Box 780, Bar Harbor, Maine 04609; or call (207) 288-3151.

On July 25 the Garden Club of Mount Desert Island will sponsor a garden tour in Northeast Harbor. Seven gardens will be open for inspection, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., including two public gardens and five on the grounds of area homes.

The tour costs \$15; tickets are limited. Order in advance by mail from Mrs. William Bancroft, Cranberry Island, Maine 04625.

First-run movies are shown nightly in Bar Harbor's Criterion Theater, which is worth a visit for its extravagant 1932 art-deco interiors. For more information call (207) 288-3441.

Outings

Most Acadia visitors make at least one circuit on the 20-mile Park Loop Road (\$5 per car; a pass good for a week), but it would be a mistake to limit one's exploration of the park to this drive.

The National Park Service maintains more than 120 miles of hiking paths, some along the coast and others through quiet woodlands or up manageable mountains. The park's visitor center off Route 3 in Hulls Cove has a list of trails,

which are graded by difficulty. Improbably enough, John D. Rockefeller Jr., Acadia's principal benefactor, has become a revered figure among mountain bikers hereabouts. Fiqued that automobiles were finally permitted on the island in 1915, Rockefeller set about constructing 57 miles of car-free gravel carriage roads.

Mountain bikes are the perfect vehicle for exploring this network. Rentals, along with maps of the carriage roads, may be obtained at two Bar Harbor shops: Bar Harbor Bicycle Shop, at 141 Cottage St., rents 21-speed specialized mountain bikes for \$9 for a half-day and \$14 for a full day. For more information call (207) 288-3886.

Mountain bikes at Acadia Bike, at 48 Cottage St., are \$11 and \$16. For more information call (207) 288-9665.

Northeast Harbor has two extraordinary gardens. Thuya Garden, a semi-formal perennial garden in the style of Gertrude Jekyll, is high on a wooded hillside above the harbor.

After wandering the well-tended garden with its reflecting pond and gazebo, stop at rustic Thuya Lodge, the former home of the noted Boston landscape architect Joseph Henry Curtis. An inviting network of paths and terraces descends from the lodge through the conifer forest and rocky outcrop pings to the harbor's edge.

The gardens are open daily July 1 to Labor Day from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The lodge is open daily from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. A \$2 donation is requested. For more information call (207) 276-5130.

Nearby, at the intersection of routes 198 and 3, is the Asticou Azalea Garden. This 2.5-acre garden has a very different character than that of Thuya Garden, even though both were designed by Charles K. Savage.

The azalea garden shows a strong Japanese influence, including an austere sand garden modeled after those found in Kyoto in the late 15th century. Azaleas typically bloom the last two weeks of June; Rhododendrons and laurels bloom a few weeks later.

The Asticou Azalea Garden is open during daylight hours between April 1 and Oct. 31. No admission is charged.

Climbing Mount Fuji to see sunrise

By GENE AND ADELE MALOTT
SPECIAL WRITERS

Louis and Gloria Calfin, who are avid mature travelers from West Bloomfield, wanted to climb Mount Fuji to see the sunrise.

"Don't worry," Gloria Calfin told her husband. "Thousands of Japanese climb Fuji every year. It must be easy. And don't forget the saying, 'He who climbs Mount Fuji is a wide man.'"

"Yes," he replied, "and don't forget the rest of it: 'He who climbs it more than once is a fool.'"

As mountain climbing goes, the five-hour ascent of Mount Fuji is relatively easy, especially for healthy seniors. It is a continuous uphill climb with no forbidding intermediate peaks or steep overhanging cliffs to scale.

Or, as Louis Calfin now puts it, working up the 12,400-foot summit "is just a matter of putting one foot before the other."

Participants move in a line. They are guided by a long chain bordering the mountain path. Each person tugs on the chain for an occasional boost.

Climbers wear sturdy shoes, a hat and gloves for grasping the chain guide.

The Calfins decided they would make the climb after first visiting Tokyo. When they were ready, they sent their baggage on to

Kyoto, then took a bus to Kawaguchiko, at the base of Mount Fuji.

"It is best to climb at night, since then you will be able to see the goraku (sunrise)," was the advice the Calfins got from their Japanese innkeeper — who lent them knapsacks, sweaters, windbreakers and flashlights.

When it came time to board another bus to Gogome, where the climb would begin, a large crowd of Japanese young men and women was already assembled.

They all wore colorful costumes and carried jangling pole bells — long, wooden climbing poles topped with bells and ribbons.

The Calfins purchased their own climbing poles, which proved invaluable for keeping steady while scaling the mountainside.

It was 8 p.m. and completely dark when the climb began. A cold wind forced the Calfins to quickly don their sweaters and jackets. The flashlights saved many a misstep on the loose lava rock.

They climbed until midnight, using the poles and chain guide along the steep path, reaching a large hut, where some of the faster climbers were already asleep on the floor.

Louis Calfin says he and his wife rented two thin mattresses from the owner of the hut, put them on the tatami-matted floor and tried to sleep.

At 4:30 a.m. the magic began. First the sky turned red, orange and violet. Shadows bathed the mountain peaks in mystic blue.

"It could have been a surrealistic scene by Dali," Calfin says.

Within 10 minutes the sun burst into view, a brilliant reddish orange. No one uttered a sound as the miracle of nature took place.

It was well worth the mountain-climbing adventure, the Calfins say. After the experience — and exchanging bows of goodbye with their companions — they began the descent.

And that, says Calfin, was a breeze. Thanks to a volcanic sand slide, called sunabashiri, people can practically slide downhill — which takes about three hours.

Climbing season is July 1 to Aug. 31.

For further information contact the Japan National Tourist Organization, 630 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10111 or call (212) 757-5640.

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