

# Come for the Chocolate, Stay for the Snow: Jackson, NH

By Peggy Newland

If you could pick a perfect village for a Currier and Ives themed holiday getaway, then Jackson, N.H., is your postcard to write home about. Think horse-drawn carriages, lit up inns and pubs, and add in a horse-drawn sleigh ride with hand-made chocolates given to you along the way and you've got a happy weekend.

I chose an early December weekend at The Wentworth, which is central to all things classic New England. Walkable to the Jackson Waterfall, world class cross-country ski trails, bakeries, and art galleries, and surrounded by the White Mountains, this is easy peacefulness. Inside the inn, there are tartan couches next to roaring fireplaces, a classically funky Alpine bar serving Hot Toddies, a festooned spruce tree lit up in a lobby, and the vibe

of rosy cheeks and comfy slippers mixed with cool jazz holiday music.

"I'm in love with this place," I tell Brian.

"And you haven't even eaten any chocolate yet," he replies.

We grab a couple of cocktails and head to our room. Flipping the gas fireplace on, we play a game of cribbage and then pop into the hot tub, which sits in a private nook on our deck. Afterward—relaxed and toasty—we head downstairs to the 1869 Room.

"Why is it called the 1869 room?" I ask the waiter, and he tells me that in 1869, Joshua Trickey built this inn as a wedding gift for his daughter, Georgia.

"Pretty nice gift," I add.

"Check out the historical letters, artwork, and photos throughout the inn after dinner," he suggests as a candle is lit.

I decide on a shrimp cock-

tail while Brian tries a maple cider butternut bisque. We share appetizers as we clink glasses of Reisling. We have romaine salads with red quinoa croutons (yum!), parmesan and roasted hazelnuts and then "mix and match" our entrees of slow braised short rib, bacon braised Brussels sprouts with pan roasted Wester Ross salmon, turnips, peas, spinach, and mushroom hash. Of course, we have desserts: a Callebaut dark chocolate brownie with hot fudge, candied pecans, and house espresso ice cream for me, and spiced carrot/pineapple cake with whipped cream cheese and maple bourbon caramel for Brian. We fall into the feather-topped bed that evening, dreaming of chocolates and jingle bells and sleighs piled high with

blankets.

The next morning, we gear up for the upcoming chocolate tour, by chowing down on eggs, bacon, fresh fruit, and loads of coffee. With a light dusting of snow, skiing is sparse, but the trails are ready for hiking. We drive over to Tin Mountain Field Station trails and stroll on rolling paths that wind above the town's white-steeped churches and red barns, and we find an overlook toward Mount Washington. In the distance, frozen Jackson Waterfall sits like rolling ornament of ice. We spy old stone cellar holes, pits from previous tin mines, and pass a series of frozen ponds surrounded by pine glades.

After the hike, and a quick couple of burgers at the Wentworth, we head

"downtown" for chocolate themed sleigh ride. Snuggling in with other revelers, hearing the clip/clop of Draught horses' hoofs and bells of the authentic Austrian sleigh, we get quickly in the mood for loads of chocolate. I pull my wool hat down as we make the first of many stops and are offered arrays of bespoke treats and tidbits by local chocolatiers who tell us of their histories and traditions. Truffles, nutted nougats, cashew clusters, almond bark, coconut darks, butter crunch, and pecan turtles, it's a Willy Wonka wonderland of sugar in the woodlands of Jackson!

That night, after another long walk around town and along the falls, we choose a light supper followed by another Hot Toddie and sit by the outdoor firepit. The night

ends in the hot tub with the shades open to starlight.

The next morning, at breakfast, we hear about "piles of snow" coming into town that afternoon. "Better gear up," the waiter says. "Almost a foot."

Luckily, we are near North Conway and the land of shopping deals, so we head to Eastern Mountain Sports to see about ski-type sales. We find plenty and I stay with the historical theme of our getaway and buy an EMS '67 heritage jacket and beanie.

"Here comes the snow!" an excited cashier says, as the flakes run thick outside. "Get outside and be happy!"

By the time we get back to Jackson, after a quick stop at the "Kissing Bridge," we head to the open trails for a winter wonderland ski.



Courtesy photos



## if you go

**The Wentworth.** 1 Carter Notch Road, Jackson, NH. [www.thewentworth.com](http://www.thewentworth.com). 800-637-0013.

Book a spa suite at this "chocolatier" property and relax in your outdoor, personal hot tub, cozy up by the in-room fireplace, and sleep under feather quilts. Ask for the Jingle Bell Package: includes accommodations, daily breakfast, and chocolate themed sleigh ride.

**Jingle Bell Chocolate Tour.** Jackson, N.H. [www.JacksonNH.com](http://www.JacksonNH.com). 978-580-0905.

Book early as this event gets sold out most years. Stop at quaint inns and hotels in "downtown" Jackson and be offered chocolate delights to enjoy in your sleigh. Starts weekends, mid-November; ends just before Christmas. \$45 per person: includes festive bag for chocolates, one hour sleigh ride, and chocolates. Hourly: 11AM- 4PM.