

Recreation News

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Guess Who's Coming to Town?

Carnival Cruising Returns to Baltimore with Year-Round Sailings

After a several-year hiatus, the Carnival cruise experience is coming back to Baltimore with sailings beginning in September, 2011, and running year-round. Carnival will be joining Royal Caribbean, Norwegian, and Celebrity, as one of the cruise lines offering larger ships departing Baltimore for Bermuda and eight destinations. These are also similar ships from American Cruise Lines that carry approximately 100 passengers each on ports along the Chesapeake Bay and to destinations along the inner-coastal waterway of the Mid-Atlantic region.

For more information on the new Carnival cruise line, visit www.carnival.com.



COLOR OUR WORLD:
Fall in the Mid-Atlantic

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EDITOR'S NOTE with Marvin Bond

I'm what you'd call a social wine drinker; certainly not a connoisseur. However, my wine horizons broadened considerably during my tourism marketing days when I ended up on the board of the Shenandoah Valley

Wine Growers Association.

That experience taught me the value of wineries as tourist attractions and I know their popularity just continues to grow. Here at *Recreation News*, we're seeking out interesting wine trails to share with you as a pleasant way to pass an afternoon or a getaway weekend.

October is Wine Month in Virginia, which has the largest number of wineries in the Mid-Atlantic, and we're featuring lots of information to help you get in the spirit of the event. But each state in the region has wineries you can visit and we'll continue to show you how to find and enjoy them.

Trails are good ways to group experiences, whether they feature, wine, art, history, or other activities. The new *Southern Maryland Trails Guide* provides lots of ways to experience this diverse region while the new Cross County Trail in Fairfax County, Virginia, takes users on a trek through mostly primitive landscape in an increasingly urbanized metropolitan county.

This month, we've brought back our Mid-Atlantic caverns section concentrating on those show caves with haunted cave activities during October and those caverns which remain open all year.

Fall is a time for festivals, foliage, and fun so get out and enjoy it all! You'll find a host of festivals listed in our calendar this month. We also have stories about festivals in interesting places throughout the region, from Pennsylvania's Raystown Lake area to wine festivals on Maryland's Eastern Shore and in almost every corner of Virginia.

Festivals are great family fun and can be great educational tools as well. See our St. Mary's Co., Maryland story to learn about the wonderful Farm-Life Festival, a tradition being expanded and carried on by the current generation of the Parlett family. It's a great way to show the kids (and yourself) what life on a farm has been like over the years. And seafood lovers shouldn't miss the St. Mary's County Oyster Festival. Check out the Oyster Cook-off and meet our own food columnist, Reed Hellman, who's judging the tasty dishes.

And don't forget that many festivals in the Mid-Atlantic actually raise money for worthy local charities and civic clubs so they can continue their good work in the community.

Travelers Toolbox

• Starwood Hotels provide a Hurricane Travel Insurance benefit for Caribbean customers that allow them to get out of danger's path without penalty and re-book a vacation. Ask about it when you book a reservation.

• If you're into campfires, but find the yellow and orange flames a bit boring, you can pick up Funky Flames in the camping aisle at many big box stores and enjoy blue, green, and purple colors as well.

• UncommonCruises.com specializes in unusual experiences and destinations for those who are looking for something other than a mainstream cruise or cruise ship. Although there are 100 "cruise themes," many do not have cruises available so the process can be a bit frustrating for users of the site.

• The first line of airport checkpoint-friendly laptop sleeves and cases is now available from SOLO. Check out the new Fly-thru collection at www.solocases.com.

COMING NEXT MONTH

Girlfriend Getaway in Sistersville
Virginia Beach
Holiday Light Experiences

Coming Up

The Quiet Resorts Birding Weekend (Oct. 17-19) in the Bethany-Fenwick, Delaware, area offers two dozen boat tours, paddling expeditions, and hiking trips to experience the fall migration. Visit www.bethany-fenwick.org for registration information.

Also in Delaware this fall are two of America's top 100 events, as designated by the American Bus Association. The Sea Witch Festival, Oct. 25-26 in Rehoboth Beach, and the annual Punkin Chunkin, Oct. 31-Nov. 1 in Sussex Co., are great entertainment.

We often feature activities at the Mid-Atlantic's national wildlife refuges, which are hosting a variety of events during National Wildlife Refuge Week, Oct. 12-18. The Patuxent Wildlife Refuge may be closest to Washington, but it is just one of many throughout the region. Check out www.fws.gov/refuges to find a refuge near where you live or vacation.

On Our Cover

Toasting October as Virginia Wine Month at Hillsborough Vineyard in Loudoun County. (Loudoun Co. Tourism)

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