

Aline and I wanted to celebrate our first Thanksgiving together on our own and make a mini-vacation of it. Go somewhere we could hike and enjoy the fall foliage colors in a mountainous region. Somewhere like Stowe, a village of just over 4000 citizen's situated at the base of Vermont's highest peak, Mt. Mansfield. Known mainly for its ski hills and classic New England church steeple, Stowe met our criteria perfectly.



Crossing the border at Cornwall and then meandering through the islands of Lake Champlain, we lazed about the backroads of Vermont before finally reaching our hotel at midafternoon.

There was nothing particularly special about The Mountaineer Inn but it did offer a two-night Canadian at par package with a \$50 gift certificate for dinner, continental breakfast and a hot tub and that seemed pretty good to us.

After settling in, we spent the rest of the afternoon walking through the Stowe Foliage Art & Craft Festival before driving over to nearby Lamoille County to see a performance of *Wind in the Willows* at the Hyde Park Opera House.

The next morning, after picking up some bread, cheese and tomatoes at a farmer's market, we visited the village itself, along with the hordes of other Canadian tourists celebrating Thanksgiving and Americans enjoying Columbus Day. Took the requisite touristy photos of the white church spire and moseyed about the shops. Then we visited nearby Waterbury's Cold Hollow Cider Mill, New England's largest producer of fresh apple cider and Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Factory, where we took a pass on spending hours in a tourist trap lineup but did get a chuckle out of the Ice Cream Graveyard where retired flavors have gone to rest.

Heading back to the inn, we spent 20 minutes enjoying the hot tub before going out to take advantage of our mostly free meal at Grill 108.

Thanksgiving Monday we visited the Trappe Family Lodge, yes, the same Trappes of *The Sound of Music* fame, who started a family resort in the Green Mountains of Vermont after fleeing Austria; and then made an ascent of Mt. Mansfield after driving up the 3.7 mile zigzagging toll road up the mountain. It's unfortunate the weather didn't cooperate with us. On a good day, apparently one can see all the way to Montreal to the north and Washington to the south. On Monday, all we saw was 20 meters in front of us as a cold, clammy fog blanketed us and snowy sleet covered the trail. Nevertheless, we hiked from the nose (4063 ft.) to the peak at the chin (4395 ft.) along the Long Trail before heading home.