

Celebrating Mother's Day

—By Kirsten Gehlbach

The idea of Mother's Day is not new nor was it created by Hallmark. And yet, when we think of Mother's Day, we think of bouquets, chocolates or a pampering day at the Spa with nothing for Mom to worry about aside from which color nail polish she'll choose.

But Mother's day is an ancient holiday. It has been celebrated throughout the world and dates back to ancient Greece when the Mother of Gods, Rhea, was honored in spring celebrations. The ancient Romans made offerings to Cybele, their Great Mother of Gods.

In the 17th century "Mothering Sunday," a day honoring the mothers of England, was celebrated on the fourth Sunday of Lent. On "Mothering Sunday," servants who lived with their employers would be given the day off and encouraged to return home to spend the day with their own mothers. A special cake, called the mothering cake, was served.

When Christianity spread throughout Europe, the celebration adapted to honor the "Mother Church"—recognized as the spiritual power that gave life and protected parishioners from harm.

By the late 19th and early 20th century, America was pushing for its own Mother's Day celebration. Anna Jarvis often heard her mother saying, "I hope that someone sometime will found a memorial mother's day commemorating her for the matchless service she renders to humanity in every field of life. She is entitled to it."

In 1906, Jarvis organized a Mother's Day Memorial Committee and pushed for the



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establishment of a national Mother's Day. By 1911, Mother's Day was celebrated in almost every state, and in 1914, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed Mother's Day a national holiday that was to be held each year on the second Sunday of May.

Today, while many countries of the world celebrate their own Mother's Day at different times throughout the year, countries such as Denmark, Finland, Italy, Turkey, Australia and Belgium also celebrate Mother's Day on the second Sunday of May.

Modern Mother's Day Celebrations

Although Mother's Day is rich in history and has been celebrated over the centuries, Americans have acquired their own rituals around the holiday. From days off, to days out, spouses and children alike have come up with traditional, unusual and some highly delicious offerings. Below is a sampling of ideas to honor moms, grandmothers and great-grandmothers on Mother's Day this year.

Queen for a Day

The Strong House Spa is located just off Route 4 at 694 Main Street in Quechee, Vt. Offering a wide variety of services, from relaxation to injury rehabilitation, the spa specializes in quality therapeutic treatments. Indulge Mom with a total skin care experience including Jurlique facial, sauna, and hand paraffin or a total massage with a one-hour massage, aromatherapy and sauna. Or share a couple's massage side by side in the clinic, where two can experience aromatherapy, sports massage or Strong House's signature massage. To make a reservation for Mother's Day or surprise Mom with a gift certificate, call (802) 295-1718.

Weekend Get-Away

Want more than a day of relaxation? Turn a spa day into a relaxing weekend at one of two resorts of distinction: Topnotch Resort & Spa in Stowe, Vt. or The Inns & Spa at Mill Falls in Meredith, N.H.

Located on a 120-acre wooded estate in the heart of the Green Mountains, Topnotch Resort & Spa offers recreation in a luxurious resort atmosphere. Mom can relax in first-class accommodations in a spacious gue-

stroom or suite and dine at Norma's, a bustling bistro with open kitchen and terrace tables facing Mount Mansfield, Vermont's highest peak. The whole family can take part in a full range of resort activities including horseback riding, a leisurely carriage ride, a round of tennis or golf or a swim in the indoor or outdoor heated pools.

For total relaxation, the day spa, consistently rated one of the top ten in the U.S., offers unique treatments and pampering. Visit the historic village of Stowe with shops and restaurants and walk or bike on the award-winning Stowe Recreational Path. For information and reservations, call (888)460-5567 or visit www.topnotchresort.com.

The Inns & Spa at Mill Falls on the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee in Meredith, N.H., offers four charming Inns, seven restaurants and a unique spa. Indulge Mom with a stay at Church Landing at Mill Falls directly on the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee or relax on the private lakefront balcony. At Cascade Spa, total massage, body treatments and facials are available.

If shopping is her passion, stay in the heart of Meredith Village at The Inn at Mill Falls. This restored nineteenth century linen mill with a forty-foot waterfall adjoins the Mill Falls Marketplace, where fifteen unique shops, galleries and restaurants await the eager shopper. For information and reservations, call (800) 622-6455 or visit www.mill-falls.com

Vermont Wine Tasting

While a trip to Sonoma or Napa Valley would rank right up there with having one's own private jet, wine tasting can be found closer to home. Conveniently located just off I-89, on Route 4 by the Quechee Gorge, the Ottauquechee Winery offers seven wines for tasting. The shop boasts an eclectic assortment of wine related foods and gifts and is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. year-round. The tasting room is located in the historic Quechee Gorge Village complex where antique shops reside beside the Farmer's Diner, which is housed in a 1947 Worcester Diner Car #787 and a post and beam barn dining room. The diner is open seven days a week from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and serves hearty meals with fresh ingredients from

area farmers and small-scale producers. From poached eggs to burgers, the menu is sure to please young and old. For information, call (802) 295-9463.

Just an hour away, in southern Vermont, the North River Winery in Jacksonville produces wines for both the North River Winery and Ottauquechee Winery labels. All fermentation, bottling and distribution are done on the premises. You can tour the winery, located in a 1850s farmhouse and barn and learn how the wines are made. Taste from eleven different wines made from apples, raspberries, pears, blueberries, cranberries and rhubarb.

While Mom might think all fruit wines are sweet, a taste of the crisp Chardonnay-like Northern Spy, a dry, oak-aged apple dinner wine, might change her mind. Award winners include Vermont Pear, a bone dry, smooth wine made from 100 percent Vermont-grown Bartlett Pears and Vermont Harvest, similar to a sweet sherry, made with apples, cinnamon and 10 percent Vermont Maple Syrup. The Winery is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. for tasting. For information and directions, call (802)368-7557 or visit www.northriverwinery.com. In addition, North River Winery has year-round tasting rooms located in Bennington at Camelot Village and in Manchester Center at Vermont Magic.

Paint a Plate

The following suggestions are a little off the beaten path. They are for families who believe that spending time together is an important part of honoring mom. Whether indulging in pottery or sitting lazily by the side of a river or taking a vigorous hike, families can celebrate mothers in many unique ways.

Tip Top Pottery & Beads is located on the first floor of the Tip Top Building in White River Junction, Vt. The paint-your-own pottery and beading studio, owned and operated by Amy Robb, offers a fun atmosphere to create gifts. "I have created a communal space where families can have fun together. I'm a mom and cater to moms, children and families," says Robb.

No need to be an artist. Choose a piece of unfinished pottery, fill your plate with glazes



Topnotch Resort and Spa in Stowe, Vt. is a perfect getaway for Mom.

and go to town. Studio fee includes idea books and stencils to get the ideas flowing, plus paint, glaze and kiln firing of the finished creation. Bring mom in on Mother's Day and her pottery studio fee of \$8 will be waived.

Robb recently added beading to the studio. The full beading bar includes crystal, sterling silver, pressed glass, seed beads and charms, as well as Swarovski and Czech crystal beads to make your own earrings, necklaces and bracelets.

Tip Top is open on Mother's Day from 12 to 5 p.m. For hours, fees, and special events such as birthday parties and girl's night out, call (802)280-1700 or visit www.tiptopottery.com.

For the Active at Heart

A perfect setting for a Mother's Day celebration, weather permitting, is atop one of the area's peaks. For a wonderful family hike, ascend Mount Cardigan in Canaan, N.H. The 3.3-mile loop from the parking area of Cardigan Mountain State Park to the summit at 3,121 feet, takes about 2 ½ hours to hike. At the top, enjoy the views of local foothills, lakes, forests and in the distance the peaks of the White Mountains. Don't forget to pack extra clothes for the windswept mountaintop and a hearty snack. A family favorite for spring birthdays, as well as Mother's day, concludes with carrot cake. If the winds are not favorable, the parking area has a grassy area with a few picnic tables for refueling before or after the hike.

Located only 25 miles from Hanover, this hike is a family favorite and promises to bring smiles to all who reach the summit. ☺