



KELLY MOONEY

FROM WILDLIFE TO NIGHT LIFE, SOUTH JERSEY OFFERS PLENTY OF WAYS TO PLAY

GARDEN STATE OF MIND

★ BY BETH D'ADDONO ★

The lower half of New Jersey, the area embraced by the Delaware River to the northwest, and the Atlantic Ocean to the east, is a beguiling destination that manages to combine small-town appeal along the Delaware with the glitter of an ever-expanding Atlantic City, and an approachable family scene along the Atlantic beaches.

While unspoiled, natural environments and rolling farmlands have earned New Jersey its "Garden State" nickname, the region also has a metropolitan flair, enhanced by its many universities and

by its vibrant arts and cultural scene.

MANY ATTRACTIONS OF HISTORIC PROPORTION

First discovered by European colonists traversing the Delaware River in 1624, New Jersey was a hotbed of strategic action during the Revolutionary War—George Washington spent a quarter of his time here as commander-in-chief—which accounts for many of the historic sites along the river: from the evolving Camden Waterfront, where the USS *New Jersey* attracts military history buffs by the thousands, to the more than 200 historic

sites in Salem City, South Jersey's "west coast" has much to recommend.

Take a trip back through time with a visit to Burlington, where the past comes alive in a quaint downtown district. If you take the RiverLine to Burlington, you'll step off the train at the same station used by President Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant during the Civil War. Burlington was home to Grant's family during the war, and he and the president often conferred there. Burlington is also the birthplace of James Fenimore Cooper, author of *The Last of the Mobicans*, and the early home of Captain James Lawrence, hero of the War

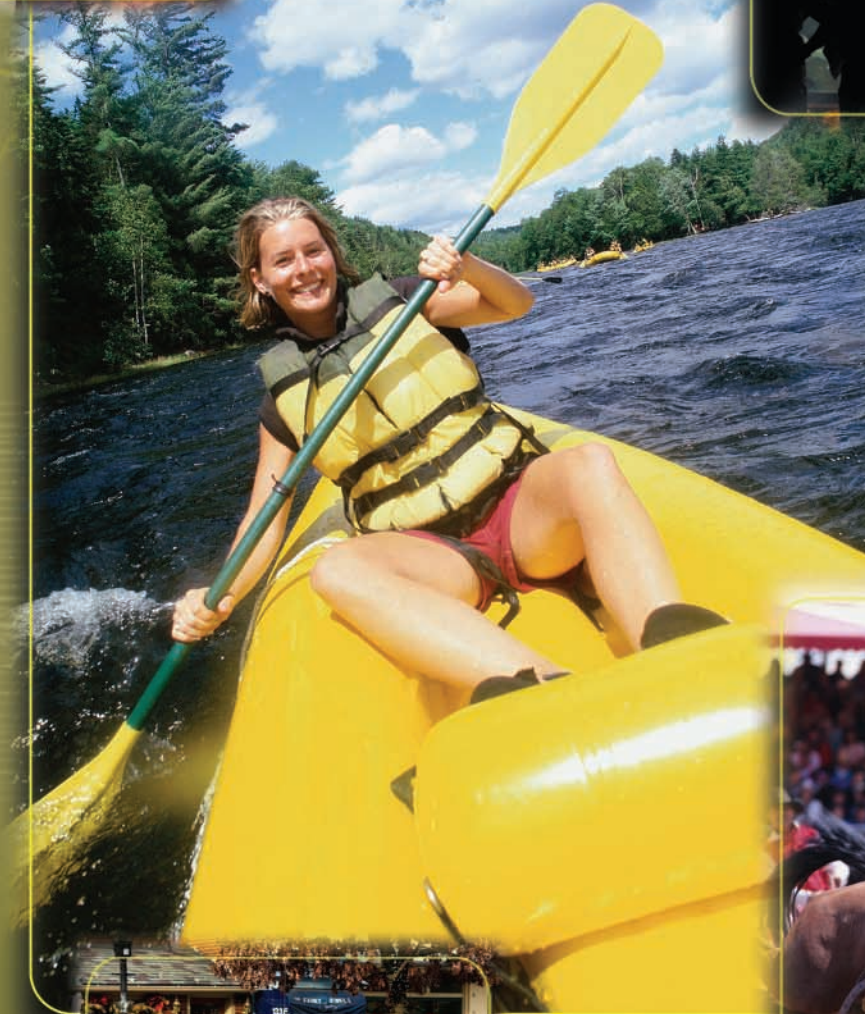


Wharton State Park



Camden Waterfront

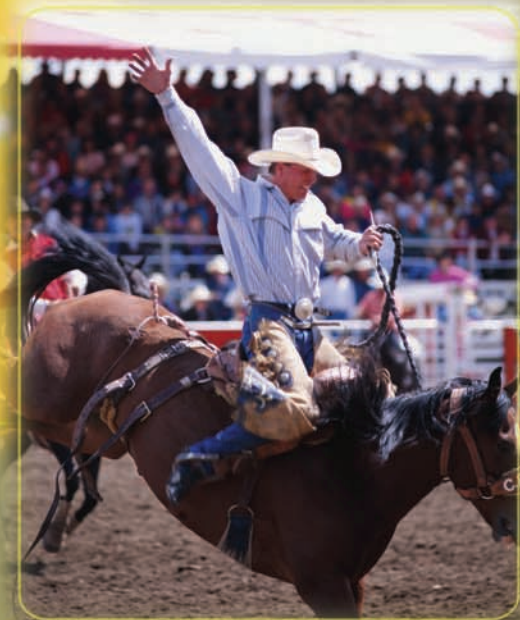
Surprisingly South Jersey.



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TOURISM

of 1812, whose dying words were "Don't Give Up the Ship." Once a busy industrial town in the 17th and 18th centuries, a prominent position along the Underground Railroad. Here, too, you can find the original copy of The Concession and Agree-

BURLINGTON, A QUINTESSENTIAL SMALL TOWN USA, EXEMPLIFIES THE RICHNESS OF THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE ALONG NEW JERSEY'S DELAWARE RIVER COASTLINE

Burlington is now a quintessential Small Town, USA, with federal architecture dating back to 1696 and a litany of tie-ins to American history, including a mention by Ben Franklin in his memoirs, an address shared by Benedict Arnold's sweetheart, and



Burlington's historic roots run deep



Sidewalk strolling is a popular pastime in laid-back Burlington

ments, a frame of the government of West Jersey signed by William Penn that incorporated principles of civil and religious liberty and freedom of speech, and inspired another important document, the U.S. Constitution.

Burlington is just one example of the richness of the historic landscape along the state's Delaware River coastline. Take

ATLANTIC CITY ON THE MOVE

The grand experiment that transformed the once-genteel honeymoon resort of Atlantic City into a gambling destination 26 years ago is an economic engine that drives state tourism to the tune of 33 million visitors a year, visitors who generated more than \$2.8 billion in gaming revenues the first seven months of 2004 alone. While no other gaming destination has Miss America, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Boardwalk, Atlantic City can't rest on its laurels, not with Native American casinos sprouting across the Northeast landscape and slot machines on the horizon for Philadelphia and other key cities within driving distance. For Atlantic City, maintaining and growing its market share has meant investing big bucks into infrastructure and non-gaming attractions, to provide new and compelling reasons for people to visit.

The addition of a new transportation center and direct Amtrak service from Philadelphia, along with a 500,000-square-foot convention center, larger than the one in Philadelphia, and until recent expansions, bigger than centers in Boston and D.C., has been a boon to the Atlantic City economy. The state invested \$90 million to convert the old Convention Hall, home to the Miss American pageant since 1940, into a state-of-the-art special events arena, the permanent home to both a minor hockey and football team, and host to shows featuring the likes of Bette Midler, Simon & Garfunkel, Norah Jones, and Rod Stewart.

A new luxe room tower at Resorts, an infusion of \$400 million in equity into the Trump properties, and planned additions at Harrah's and Showboat are just a few of the ways Atlantic City is stepping up the plate. The city's new slogan, "Atlantic City: Always Turned On", is geared to its target audience, which more and more is bypassing the bus entrance and arriving in sports cars and luxury imports. Bus traffic, while still bringing the seniors in for day trips to the slot gardens, is down 12 percent. If you haven't been to Atlantic City in the past few years, make no mistake about it, things have changed.



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Summer crowds in Wildwood

TOURISM

a leisurely drive for further exploration along the New Jersey Coastal Heritage

preserved wetlands which dot the Jersey Shore provide shelter for wildlife and

THE CULTURAL SCENE IN SOUTH JERSEY IS WIDELY VARIED, WITH MANY MUSEUMS, PERFORMING ARTS COMPANIES, AND GALLERIES CREATING A VIBRANT CREATIVE COMMUNITY

Trail, a 300-mile scenic roadway that winds along the river and bay, passing historic towns, old lighthouses, and nature preserves.

THE CALL OF THE WILD

New Jersey has earned a reputation for industrial, gritty landscapes in the north, but wilderness is still within reach to the south. One of the state's greatest assets is the 1.1 million acre Pine Barrens, an internationally important ecological center that is not only the first National Reserve in the U.S., but also part of the U.S. Biosphere Program.

Get lost in the Pinelands, where more than 40 miles of hiking and biking trails and four rivers ideal for kayaking and fishing bring Mother Nature into focus. The Delaware River region is the largest wilderness area east of the Mississippi River. Wildlife refuges include the Madhorse Creek Wildlife Management Area, 5,826 acres of tidal marsh and upland habitat in Lower Alloways Creek Township, Mannington Meadows Wildlife Refuge between Woodstown and Salem, and the 2,000 plus protected acres of Supawana Meadows National Wildlife Refuge in Pennsville.

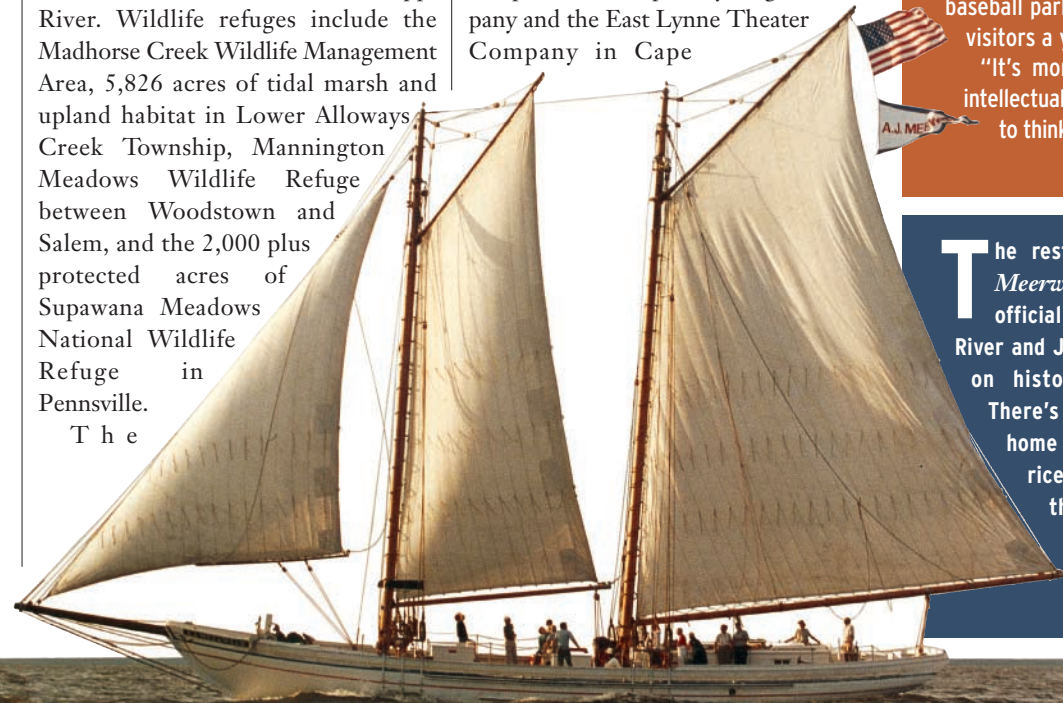
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birds, as do the Marine Mammal Stranding Center in Brigantine and bird sanctuaries in Avalon and Cape May. Sea kayaking, whale watching, surfing, boating, and fishing are just a few of the back-to-nature activities that can tempt sun-worshippers out of their beach chairs.

ARTS ALIVE

South Jersey's art scene is alive and thriving, thanks to the grassroots support of artists, corporate citizens, and non-profit groups like the South Jersey Cultural Alliance, an umbrella organization representing some 130 groups across a range of artistic disciplines. Have you ever wondered where New York actors vacation in the summer? Many go to the Jersey Shore, where each year there are excellent equity productions by companies like Cape May Stage Company and the East Lynne Theater Company in Cape

PAGE 96: KELLY/MOONEY; THIS PAGE, COURTESY OF BAYSHORE DISCOVERY PROJECT



SURPRISE, SURPRISE

Getting the word out about Southern New Jersey's riches

Surprisingly South Jersey

South Jersey

Personable, articulate, and utterly enthusiastic, Judi London is the president of the South Jersey Tourism Corporation (SJTC). She not only knows her territory, but also the difficulties inherent in promoting a place not always first in folks' minds as a getaway.

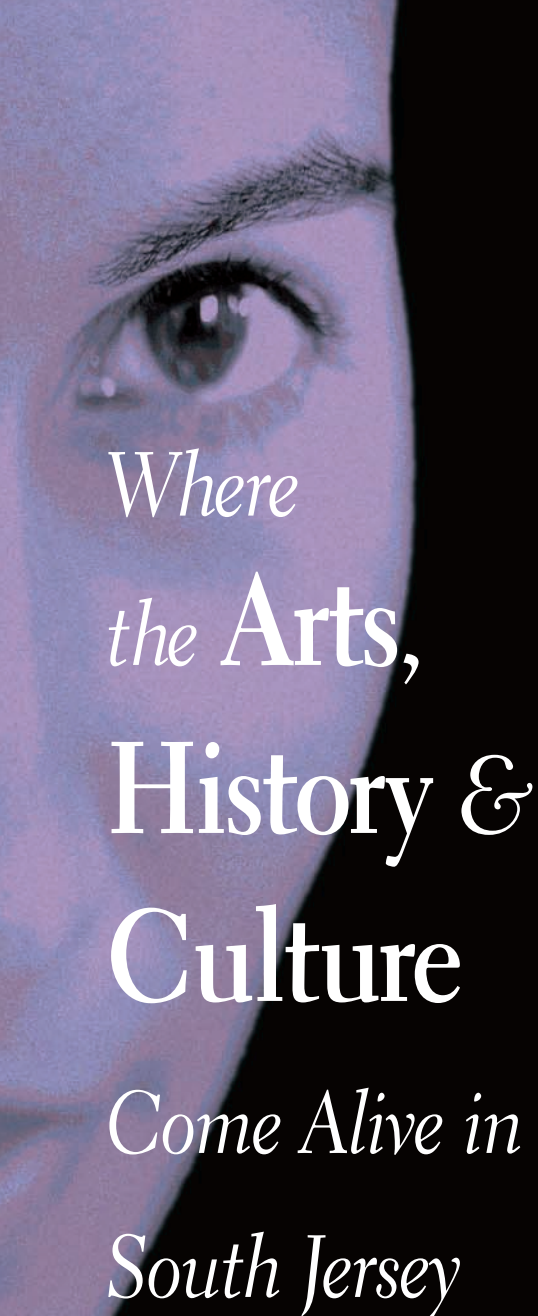
Southern New Jersey, often misperceived as a featureless stretch of sprawl, is actually home to distinctive towns with charming main streets, lovely vistas, and a topography far more varied and interesting than cursory glimpses might suggest. Hence the region's slogan, "Surprisingly South Jersey."

Given that surveys indicate close to half the visitors to South Jersey are there to see family, the goal of attracting tourists may not seem far-fetched. The Camden Waterfront—offering everything from a battleship museum to an independent-league baseball park—draws more than 2 million visitors a year.

"It's more of an emotional than an intellectual sell," says London. "We have to think of our assets in a new light."

— Kevin Riordan

The restored 1928 schooner *A.J. Meerwald*, designated New Jersey's official Tall Ship, sails the Delaware River and Jersey coast offering hands-on history and ecology lessons. There's a museum at the ship's home port of Bivalve on the Maurice River. The *Meerwald* is the star attraction every June at the annual Delaware Bay Days, the region's largest free festival.



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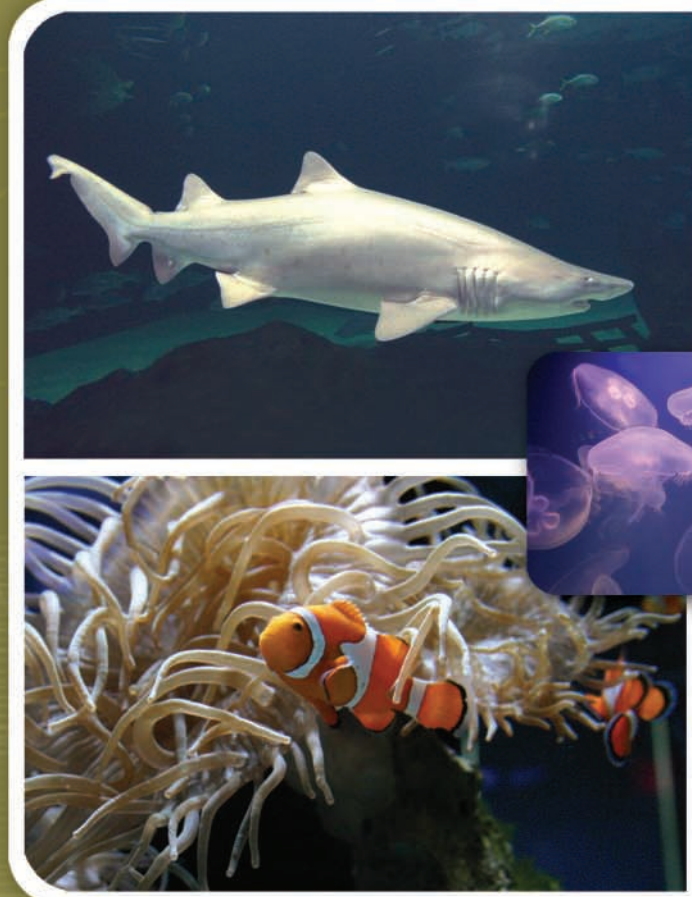
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DID YOU KNOW? ★ Cowtown Rodeo is the only ongoing weekly rodeo outside of Texas ★ **The U.S. *New Jersey* is the most decorated battleship in American naval history** ★ Hundreds of New Jersey heritage tourism sites chronicle early colonial life, the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, and the Industrial Revolution ★ **South Jersey's 1.1 million acres of pineland wilderness make up 20 percent of the state's overall land mass** ★ The region's lively grassroots cultural scene includes art glass, first-class ➤

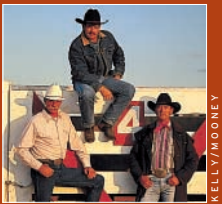
May, and SurfFlight in Beach Haven. In Atlantic City's Ducktown neighborhood, once home to the city's primarily Italian population, Dante Hall opened last year in a restored church hall, showcasing children's theater and productions from Stockton College. On the east side of the state, the Ritz Theatre Company in Oaklyn transformed an old movie theater into a live venue, presenting crowd pleasing seasons of shows like *Jekyll and Hyde*, *I Do! I Do!* and *Of Mice and Men*.



Vacationers return annually to the Southern Shore's barrier-islands beaches.

The town of Millville, once the hub of the state's glassmaking business, is a perfect example of what can happen when a community realizes the economic benefits of sustaining a rich cultural environment. Dozens of open artist's studios, a working Clay College for ceramists, galleries, restaurants, and shops transformed a declining industrial town into a vibrant, meaningful tourist destination. Nearby, Wheaton Village mines the area's glassmaking past, with

equity theater companies, and an outdoor sculpture museum showcasing the works of Seward Johnson ★ **The coastal town of Wildwood is home to the largest collection of '50s and '60s architecture and neon kitsch in America** ★ Southern New Jersey has an array of restaurants, many of them featuring locally grown Jersey fresh fruits and vegetables ★ **The region boasts 3,600 acres of cranberry bogs** ★



glassblowers on hand to demonstrate their craft at a working 1880 glass factory. The renowned Museum of American Glass houses one of the most extensive collections of pressed- and handmade-American glass in the country. In Cape May, the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts enhances the year-round cache of this Victorian seaside town. Historic Cold Spring Village, which was cited by *Smithsonian* magazine as one of the nation's best historic sites, is a working 18th century village



Alfresco fine dining is a lure for both residents and visitors.

just outside of Cape May. Open year-round, with craft, cooking, and weaving demonstrations open to the public, this living museum includes 22 restored historic buildings, an onsite restaurant, and special events almost every weekend. The cultural scene in South Jersey is widely varied, approachable, and personal, with many museums, performing-arts companies, and art galleries run by people who are passionate about their art and who live, and work, in New Jersey. ★

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PG 102 AND 103: KELLY/MOONEY



SETTING THE SOUTH JERSEY TABLE

Getting the best of the Garden State

South Jersey has long been the state's agricultural center, providing fresh Jersey tomatoes, peaches, corn, cranberries, and other produce to farm stands and stores throughout the region. With the Slow Food movement taking hold in restaurants everywhere and sustainable agriculture changing the way chefs plan their menus, South Jersey farms are more vital than ever to the local dining scene. Chef Luke Palladino, who operates two restaurants, Specchio and Ombra at the Borgata in Atlantic City, is an example of how fresh Jersey tastes are making it onto the plate. Palladino contracted with a local farmer just outside of Atlantic City to grow organic produce, micro-greens, mushrooms, and whatever other seasonal fare he can produce. Palladino knows that more and more diners are discriminating enough to want to know if their beef is grass-fed, their tomatoes locally grown, and their cheese made by regional artisans. The diverse South Jersey dining scene, which runs the gamut from Melange, a small, owner-operated Cherry Hill restaurant with chef Joe Brown at the helm, to the upmarket restaurants of Cape May and Atlantic City, benefits directly from access to some of the finest produce, fruit and seasonal ingredients available in America.

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