Headline: Pa. small towns often have most to share

Deckhead: Host of quaint communities ideal destinations for getaways

Researching destinations for a short getaway often causes many to only consider popular hotspots.

Major cities quickly come to mind. Beach towns, as well. But what if there was a gem shrouded by the temptation of bright lights or sandy shores? A small town that’s within a reasonable vicinity? That could change a determined traveler’s mind.

These towns replace glamor and glitz with peace and beauty. Their mom-and-pop atmospheres are a covered-bridge jaunt to another realm – one that resides in an antique setting that provides guests a needed hiatus from their everyday grinds.

Pennsylvania is home to many of these charming towns. Some of its most enticing destinations include:

***Johnstown –*** Synonymous with a tragic flood in 1889, it’s situated among the Allegheny region. Visit the Johnstown Flood Museum to learn how the town reinvented itself after 20 million tons of water nearly destroyed it. The Southern Alleghenies Museum of Art is a soothing way to spend an afternoon, watch a performance by the Johnstown Symphony Orchestra, or visit the Johnstown Inclined Plane – the steepest vehicular inclined plane in the world.

***Lititz –*** Located in Lancaster County, Lititz is best known for its tasty American snacks. Julius Sturgis Pretzel Bakery was the first of its kind in the U.S. Guests can tour the facility and take a lesson in pretzel twisting. The Wilbur Chocolate Factory has been operating since 1894 and remains famous for its Wilbur Buds – specially blended chocolate shaped to resemble a flower bud. Tour the neighborhoods in this Dutch Country town and admire the architecture that dates more than three centuries.

***Bloomsburg –*** This Susquehanna Valley town combines art, architecture and history. It’s easily walkable to see the myriad of shops, art galleries and entertainment venues. Bloomsburg’s unique eateries feature specialty hoagies and homemade treats from mom-and-pop bakeries.

***Milford –*** Hidden within the Pocono Mountains, Milford has a host of beautiful Victorian homes to visit. Guests should begin at Grey Towers, a National Historic Site and former home to a previous state governor, Gifford Pinchot. The Columns Museum is a 22-room mansion that sheds light on local history. Visitors can see the flag that was draped from the Presidential box the night of Abraham Lincoln’s assassination. Go hiking, biking or view the scenic waterfalls at Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

***Lancaster –*** No place in the state is better associated with the Amish community. Absorb the countryside and share roads with horse-drawn buggies. Lancaster Central Market is the oldest public market in the U.S., operating since early 1700s. Visit the Amish Farm and House to tour an Old Order Amish home and farm, a peek inside the live of Pennsylvania’s strong Dutch heritage.

***Strasburg –*** Located at the crossroads of Lancaster and Philadelphia, Strasburg transports guests to a past times. A stagecoach stop and trading center in the 18th and 19th centuries, this town continues to boast artifacts from those eras that define small-town living. Explore thousands of acres of farmland onboard via the Strasburg Rail Road. Visits to the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania and the National Toy Train Museum are essential following a train ride.

These are only a handful of Pennsylvania’s quaint communities that are hiding in plain sight. Sometimes, the best options can be found where they’re least expected.

Cutline: FULL STEAM AHEAD – The Strasburg Rail Road provides guest with fantastic scenery of many of Pennsylvania’s best farmlands. Image: lspi138. Adobe Stock.