



THE MAGICAL PULL OF GOFFSTOWN'S HIP VIBE

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Antique boots have a story
to tell at Out of the Woods
Antiques in Goffstown.
Photo by Stacy Milbouer.

Goffstown Village looks more like a mountain hamlet than a suburb of Manchester. The block-long shopping district surrounding the 19th-century, Queen-Anne-style Congregational church has coffee shops, galleries and boutiques as well as a 21st-century general store tucked in a bend of the Piscataquog River in the twin shadows of the Uncanoonuc Mountains.

But it's so much more than quaint. Day by day it's morphing into a cozy, cultural cool place to shop, graze and gather.

"We lived in Manchester," said David Christopher, who moved to the village almost a year ago with his wife, Sarabeth Bundzinski.

The couple, who met in art school, own and operate Finder's Seekers, a toy boutique filled with "Star Wars" figures, Legos and other fantasy "artifacts," like a shrine to Princess Leia.

The store also features Bundzinski's art work – shadow boxes filled with found objects, artfully arranged, as well as paintings.

"We were looking for a place where people could walk everywhere and wouldn't

necessarily have to drive their car," said Christopher. "We took a ride and came here. There was a post office, a grocery store, hardware store, boutiques and coffee shops, everything you need. And you can walk to all of them."

Coincidentally, at end of that same block is another art gallery, Michelle Dyson Art. Dyson used to be Bundzinski's teacher. Her studio/gallery features colorful and whimsical work in mixed media, fine art, acrylics and fiber art.

"I think Goffstown has some kind of magical pull, which draws creative people to it," said Dyson. "There is a feeling of belonging no matter what your artistic flair may be. In such a small downtown, there is support for music, movement, painting, handmade items, even cupcakes. Locals and surrounding townspeople believe in the creative businesses movement."

That is certainly the case of Apotheca, the unofficial epicenter of this hip village center.

Owner Alyssa Van Guilder moved the shop into the 137-year-old former Goffstown Train Depot in 2008. It has the original ticket windows, doors and exterior

What's in a Name?

The town currently known as Goffstown was originally part Massachusetts and was named Narragansett No.4 in 1734, when it was granted by Colonial Governor Jonathan Belcher to soldiers who fought in King Philips War (1675-78). The township failed to take hold and was known as Piscataquog Village and Shovestown before it was granted by Governor Benning Wentworth in 1748 to a new group that included Colonel John Goffe, for whom the town is now named.

The town now has three villages: Goffstown, Grasmere – named for the English home of poets William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge – and Pinardville, named for Manchester grocer Edmond Pinard, who subdivided the property in 1906.

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Explore the Geography of Goffstown

Goffstown is awesome – inside and out. In addition to shopping, dining and entertainment, it's got a lot to offer in terms of outdoor activities.

In nice weather, it's not uncommon to see bicycles on kickstands beside a smattering of outdoor tables as bicyclists on the Goffstown Rail Trail stop for a bite to eat. The 5.5-mile rail trail follows the former Boston & Maine railroad right of way along the Piscataquog from the Main Street Bridge through Grasmere and the county complex, to the Manchester city line in Pinardville, where a bridge connects it with the Queen City's Piscataquog Trail.

The Uncanoonuc Mountains that overlook the town are two small mountain peaks with rounded tops that are reputed to be named by the Native Americans. Uncanoonuc, the story goes, is the native name for breasts.

The north peak has an elevation of 1,324 feet above sea level, the south peak 1,321 feet; both are popular with hikers. The Appalachian Mountain Club's Southern New Hampshire Trail Guide says the north peak has "what is probably the finest forest of communications towers in New Hampshire." Hiking maps and information are available at goffstowntrails.com.

The Piscataquog is a 34-mile tributary of the Merrimack River. According to the almanac, "The Farmer's Daily Visitor (1852)," it means "great deer hunting place." During high water in the spring it is popular for canoeing and kayaking and is a training ground for beginning whitewater enthusiasts. During much of the year fishermen (and women) try their luck in the river pools, which are stocked with rainbow and brown trout. On Oct. 14 and 15, the riverfront will be the center of the Pumpkin Weigh-Off and Regatta, (see additional sidebar), one of the state's most unusual autumn traditions.

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trim still intact. In fact, the entire building, decorated with a combination of antiques, fresh flowers, plants and objects d'art, is a total sensory experience.

The sign says it's a flower shop, but it's so much more. It's a flower shop, café, art gallery, gift boutique and a classic third place, where regulars at distressed tables hover over their laptops while noshing on chicken cranberry sandwiches and turkey and Swiss.

Deep inside the multi-roomed establishment are isolated nooks where customers are steeped in conversation. A glass-walled walk-in refrigerator filled with flowers is a breath of spring no matter the time of year.

In 2013, Van Guildler became business partners with Rossina Moran, and they opened Apotheca's sister store, Acopio Goods, a world goods shop with items for "the home, the body and the soul." The store, which is situated in the old town post office on Main Street, has much the same esthetic as Apotheca – eclectic, hip with an offering of clothes, artwork, crafts and jewelry from local artisans and from cultures around the world. In addition to the items they sell, Acopio hosts wellness events. And they offer retreats and outings in Goffstown's natural surroundings.

There's no better place to gear up for adventures or your garden than the ACE Hardware Store across from Apotheca on Depot Street. It's a marvel, a general store for the 21st century. It's a community treasure that sells puppets as well as plumbing supplies, boots, shoes, clothes, walking sticks, plants, fairy houses and garden supplies, even beef from Goffstown's McDougall Farm.

The store has been a fixture in Goffstown, under various guises,

Below, left: Michelle Dyson, owner of Michelle Dyson Art gallery

Below right: Apotheca

Opposite page: Acopio

Photos by Stacy Milbouer





for 80 years. Ten years ago, it moved into its new 20,000-square-foot store and warehouse. There is free coffee and popcorn, even a park bench on which to relax.

Whether outings are for shoppers, gallery hoppers or bikers, there are plenty of opportunities to refuel in Goffstown Village. For a quick bite, and to give a little back to the community, drop by the 87-year-old green and white Lions Club popcorn stand on the corner of High Street and North Mast Road. All the proceeds of the stand, which is open Saturdays and Sundays from May through the end of September, go to the organization and its charitable causes.

At the Village Trestle, you can grab an awesome burger and a beer, but also feed your soul live music. The basic blues bar and eatery is a suitably darkened establishment with a pool table and a loyal cadre of regulars. The menu is strong on comfort food and the entertainment on local talent.

Bartenders Brenda Cadieux and Amberly Gibbs liked the place so much they bought it four years ago. There is live music on many occasions as well as a blues jam on Sunday afternoons and country music every Wednesday.

The Blue Moose Café in the shadow of the clock tower of the brick Town Hall is a bakery and sandwich shop opened for breakfast and lunch. Locals rave about the cupcakes, the cinnamon sugar doughnuts and the sun-dried tomato turkey sandwich. Its motto, emblazoned on T-shirts, is “The more you weigh the harder you are to kidnap. Stay Safe. Eat cupcakes.”

China Gourmet, a ball’s toss from the river on Main Street,

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- **Men's & More Night** Thursday, December 14th
- **Santa is here** Sunday, December 17th

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boasts a multicultural menu of Cantonese, Mandarin, Szechuan and Thai cuisine.

But there's more to Goffstown than the village. Chiggy's Place on Mast Road is a diner popular with locals. Two Friends Café on Mast Road in the Pinardville section of town was opened 10 years ago by BFFs Heather Asang and Stacey Wood. Asang bakes sweet treats. Wood specializes in savory dishes. They sell bagels and sandwiches, sticky buns and more goodies, as well as putting up frozen meat and chicken pies. Pick one up and take it home to dine on after your own Goffstown adventure.

Devriendt Farm Stand and Ice Cream Shoppe outside the village on South Mast Street (Route 114) has been Goffstown's fresh food basket and nursery for more than 25 years. Not only do they have a big selection of local fresh produce, plants and whimsical home decorations, they strive to maintain a low carbon footprint. Even the cups at the ice cream stand are paper and recyclable.

If you intend to dine out or catch a show at the Village Trestle, why not get "jooshed" up first at Wicked Salon and Spa on Mast Road.

Or if your idea of date night is an awesome homecooked meal, head to Lemay & Sons Beef on Daniel Plummer Road, where Rick and Yvonne Lemay offer fresh and frozen meats, local produce, hard cider and crafts beer at Steak Out, their retail store. Their steak tips are said to be to die for.

In the market for a genuine split-wood backpack, a bellows the size of a coffee table or delicate, vintage high-button shoes? Out of the Woods Antiques, also on Mast Road, offers three floors of prime antiquities in a big red barn for those with a Budweiser budget or willing to drop a fortune.

Deja Boutique, owned by Sara and Josh Dubois, is a consignment shop on Mast Road full of gently used clothes for men, women and children and New-Hampshire-made gifts like teas from Teapot Tavern in Dunbarton and Wick-it Cool soy candles made in Hollis.

The Only Thing Certain...

Halloween reminds us of the fragility of life and awakens thoughts of what we might leave behind, and a visit to the Goffstown Rail Trail offers food for thought. Adjacent to the trail, behind the Hillsborough County Farm in Grasmere, is a cemetery with 710 graves, where the resting places are not marked with the names of those whose bones are beneath, but rather with numbered marble tablets.

The stones mark the graves of former residents at the Hillsborough County poor farm, which closed in 1924. It was thought that it would be cheaper to mark the graves with numbers, rather than the names of the not-so-dearly departed.

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