

## Trip 15

# Rhinebeck

The trips are getting longer now, but there are enough unusual attractions here in northern Dutchess County to lure even the most jaded of daytrippers. Mansions, scenery, and local history museums, of course; the Hudson Valley is full of them. At how many other places, however, can you experience a World War I dogfight in the sky — or take a flight in a 1920's open-cockpit biplane? Have lunch at what may be America's oldest inn, where George Washington and other notables have dined before you? Or visit a strange castle made completely from scrap materials? This trip is really worth the hundred-mile drive from the city.

### GETTING THERE:

**By Car**, take the **Saw Mill River Parkway** north to the Hawthorne Interchange and pick up the **Taconic State Parkway** north to **US-41**, north of Poughkeepsie. Go west on this to **US-9**, turn right, and head north past the Vanderbilt Mansion (see previous trip) about 4 miles to the Mills-Norrie State Park, entrance on the left. This puts you in the Norrie section of the park; Mills Mansion is about a mile north, off US-9. From here, follow directions in the text. Rhinebeck is about 95 miles north of midtown Manhattan.

**By Train:** Amtrak provides regular service from Pennsylvania Station in Manhattan to Rhinecliff-Kingston, a scenic ride of less than two hours. From there you would have to take a taxi to whichever sites interested you.

### PRACTICALITIES:

This trip requires a bit of advance planning as the opening times of the sites vary considerably. The main attraction, the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome, is open daily from mid-May through October, but air shows are only held on weekends from mid-June through mid-October. The Mills Mansion is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays, while Wilderstein closes completely from November through April, and is also closed on Mondays through Wednesdays. Montgomery Place is closed on Tuesdays, on weekdays from November through mid-December, and completely from mid-December through March. Wing's Castle is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays, and completely from late December until late May. Obviously, your best choice is on a weekend from late May through October, or at least on a Thursday or Friday in season.

For further information contact the sites directly, or the **Dutchess County Tourism Promotion Agency**, 3 Neptune Rd., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601, ☎ 845-463-4000 or 1-800-445-3131, Internet: [www.dutchesstourism.com](http://www.dutchesstourism.com).

### FOOD AND DRINK:

**Beekman Arms** 1776 Tavern (4 Mill St., center of Rhinebeck) This famous cozy Colonial tavern has been around for centuries, serving hearty regional American fare. ☎ 845-871-1766. \$\$\$

**Foster's Coach House Tavern** (22 Montgomery St. in Rhinebeck) Sandwiches, salads, burgers and the like, with lots of atmosphere. ☎ 845-876-8052. X: Mon. \$ and \$\$

**Mughal Raj** (110 Route 9 South, Rhinebeck) Excellent Indian cuisine in an unpretentious setting. ☎ 845-876-4696. \$ and \$\$

**Rolling Rock Café** (46 Route 9 in Rhinebeck) A bustling place with a wide range of America's favorite dishes. ☎ 845-876-7655. \$ and \$\$

### LOCAL ATTRACTIONS:

*Circled numbers in text correspond to numbers on the map.*

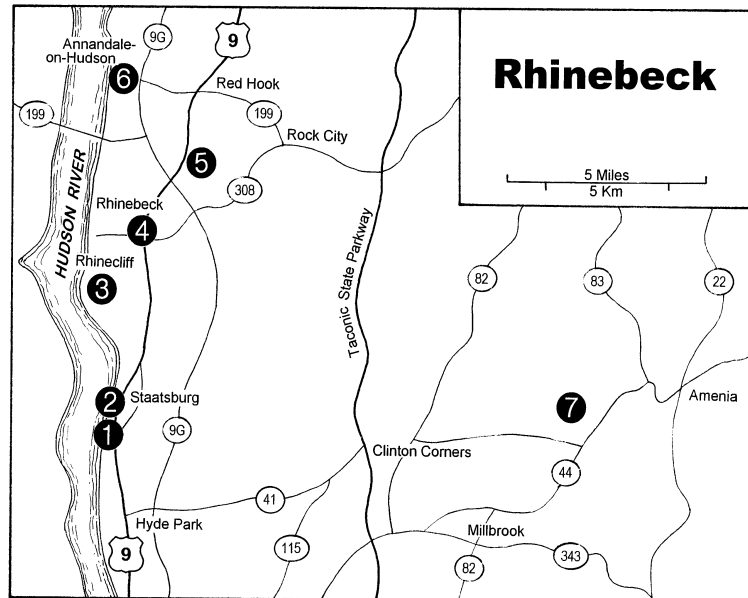
**MILLS-NORRIE STATE PARK ❶**, Staatsburg, NY 12580, ☎ 845-889-4646. *Open daily all year, daylight hours. No entry fee. Picnicking, hiking trails, fishing, bicycling, cross-country skiing. Fees for golf course, camping, and marina use. Food concession in season. Partially Ƀ.*

This attractive park on the Hudson offers fine facilities for a day's outing. There are really two parks here, one the Mills Historic Site (see below), and the other the Norrie recreation area. On the grounds of the Norrie section is an environmental educational center run by the Dutchess Community College, housed in a fieldstone structure built on the water's edge around 1935 by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The road through the park is especially scenic.

Just north of this is the:

**MILLS MANSION STATE HISTORIC SITE ❷**, Old Albany Post Rd., Staatsburg, NY 12580, ☎ 845-889-8851. *Open April–Labor Day, Wed.–Sat. 10–5, Sun. noon–5; Labor Day to late Oct., Wed.–Sun. noon–5; also around Christmas. Adults \$3, seniors \$2, children under 12 \$1. Partially Ƀ.*

The Mills Mansion was originally a Greek Revival structure built in 1832 by Morgan Lewis, Revolutionary War officer and governor of New York from 1804 to 1807. It was later the home of Ogden and Ruth Livingston Mills, who hired the noted architectural firm McKim, Mead and White to enlarge and remodel it in the Neoclassical style. Mills was a prominent financier, his wife was a member of an established New York political family, and their son served as Secretary of the Treasury under Herbert Hoover. The mansion reflects the lifestyle of America's wealthy and powerful over several generations. The gorgeous marble fireplaces, rich wood paneling, and gilded plasterwork make an appropriate setting for Flemish tapestries, fine artwork, and ornate furnishings in the Louis XV and Louis XVI styles. The grounds are beautifully landscaped and afford a sweeping panorama of the Hudson.



Continue north on US-9 towards Rhinebeck. Just south of the village is another estate worth visiting. To get there, turn left on Mill Road and follow it for 2.2 miles to Morton Road, where you turn right to visit the:

**WILDERSTEIN PRESERVATION** ③, 330 Morton Rd., Rhinebeck, NY 12572, ☎ 845-876-4818, Internet: [www.wilderstein.org](http://www.wilderstein.org). Open May–Oct., Thurs.–Sun., noon–4. Last tour at 3:30. House tour: Adults \$7, under 12 free. Grounds and trail system are free. Gift shop.

This fanciful Queen Anne mansion was built completely of wood in 1888 and served several generations of the Suckley family, descendants of the Beekmans and Livingstons. In 1983 it and the 35 acres of scenic land surrounding were donated to a non-profit historic preservation group. The grounds were designed in the Romantic style by Calvert Vaux, one of the designers of New York's Central Park, while the lavish interior is the work of J.B. Tiffany.

Return to US-9 and head north into **Rhinebeck Village** ④, settled by the Dutch in 1686 on land purchased from the Native Americans. In 1719 German refugees from Europe's religious wars named the town after their former home in the Rhine Valley, parts of which very much resemble the Hudson Valley. At the village center, the junction of US-9 and NY-308, stands the venerable **Beekman Arms Inn**, built around 1766 and said to be the oldest continuously operating hotel in the country. Its tap room is an



A 1917 Fokker Triplane in mock combat over Rhinebeck  
(Photo courtesy of Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome)

attractive and popular spot for drinks and dining (see Food and Drink, above). Rhinebeck is a picturesque old town, and you may want to spend some time here shopping, sightseeing, or attending one of the events at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds. For further information, contact the **Chamber of Commerce** booth just across the street from the inn. ☎ 845-876-4778. Open May–Nov., daily, 10–4.

Now for the main attraction. From the Beekman Arms, continue north on US-9 past the junction with NY-9G a short way to Stone Church Road, opposite a church. Turn right here and follow signs to the:

**\*OLD RHINEBECK AERODROME** ⑤, P.O. Box 229, Rhinebeck, NY 12572, ☎ 845-752-3200, Internet: [www.olderhinebeck.org](http://www.olderhinebeck.org). Open mid-May through October, daily 10–5. Airshows mid-June through mid-Oct., Sat.–Sun. at 2 p.m. Admission on non-airshow days: Adults \$6, seniors \$5, children (6–10) \$2, under 6 free. Admission on airshow days: Adults \$12, seniors \$10, children (6–10) \$5, under 6 free. Flights in classic biplane on weekends, \$40 per person; rides ticket booth opens at 10 a.m. — first come, first served. All flights are at the pilot's discretion.

This one-of-a-kind “museum in the sky” is a showcase for the late Cole Palen's collection of vintage aircraft dating from 1900 to 1937. Palen sank everything he had into acquiring and maintaining these rare specimens, which take to the air every weekend in season for a thrilling **\*airshow**. The daring young men in their flying machines, sporting aviator garb out of World War I, are aided in takeoffs and landings by a ground crew that apparently knows exactly how to handle planes without brakes or automatic starters, on runways of dirt that slope just enough to give the

necessary boost. Before and after the show, you can take a **\*barnstorming ride** in a 1929 New Standard open-cockpit biplane for a thrilling view of the Hudson Valley. The planes, some of which have starred in movie and TV productions, are on display for your inspection every day during the season.

Game for what is probably the most impressive mansion in these parts? If so, continue north on Church Road, becoming Norton Road, then turn left on NY-199 to River Road, CR-103. Here turn right, north, towards Annandale and:

**MONTGOMERY PLACE** ⑥, River Rd., Annandale-on-Hudson, NY 12504, ☎ 845-758-5461, Internet: [www.hudsonvalley.org](http://www.hudsonvalley.org). *Open April–Oct., Wed.–Mon. 10–5; Nov. weekends 10–5; early Dec., weekends noon–5. Guided tours: Adults \$6, seniors (60+) \$5, children (6–17) \$3. Self-guided grounds only, \$3. Picnicking permitted.* Ⓡ.

Built in 1805 in the Federal style, this 23-room mansion is the centerpiece of an exquisite 434-acre estate complete with famed gardens, pick-your-own orchards, walking trails, museum, garden shop, and glorious views across the Hudson River to the Catskill Mountains beyond. The prominent Livingston family called it home for nearly 200 years, leaving only in 1985 when it was deeded to Historic Hudson Valley, the organization responsible for most of the sites on the two Tarrytown trips (see pages 109-114). Nearly all of the furnishings are original.

The easiest route back to New York City is to take NY-199 east a few miles to the Taconic State Parkway and head south on it. If time permits, and you're interested, you could get off the Taconic at Clinton Corners and head east on Route 57, the Dutchess Wine Trail, perhaps stopping at the **Millbrook Winery** for a tour and tasting. ☎ 845-677-8383. Just beyond it, on Bangall Road, is a very strange site. **Wing's Castle** ⑦, after over 20 years of construction by artists Peter and Toni Wing, remains very much a work-in-progress. This fantasy home, looking like some imaginary fairytale castle with elements borrowed from worldwide cultures, is constructed entirely from salvaged materials and found junk. The interior is filled with objects even stranger than the building itself, if that is possible. *RR 1, Box 174A, Millbrook, NY 12545. ☎ 845-677-9085. Open late May to late December, Wed.–Sun. 10–4:30. Adults \$5, children \$3.*