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Winter Weekends: On the Trail at Mohonk



Librado Romero/The New York Times

The Mohonk Mountain House, a castle-like, privately owned resort, is in a setting that makes it a sight in itself.

By KATHRYN MATTHEWS
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At the Mohonk Preserve west of the Hudson near New Paltz, N.Y., you can [hike](#) year round — or [ski](#), conditions permitting — on more than 65 miles of carriage roads and trails. Ninety miles north of [New York City](#), this 6,700-acre tract of cliffs, forests and streams is managed by a nonprofit group and protects part of the northern Shawangunk Ridge, a long outcrop where rock climbers are frequently seen scaling dramatic white cliffs.

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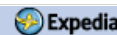
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At the visitors center (3197 Route 44-55, near Route 299, Gardiner; 845-255-0919; www.mohonkpreserve.org), pick up a trail map

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and day pass (\$9) for the preserve. Trails vary in length and difficulty, from the short and easy LaVerne Thompson Nature Trail to the strenuous uphill 7.5-mile High Peters Kill Trail. A scenic trek (for hikers and skiers) is on the wide, level and easy-to-navigate Undercliff and Overcliff Carriage Roads, a 4.7-mile loop skirting the base of rock-climbing cliffs, with spectacular views of the Walkill Valley, the Catskills and the ridge of the Shawangunk Mountains.

From some of the trails, there are views down to Lake Mohonk and the Mohonk Mountain House, a castlelike private resort that is a sight in itself.

Post-exertion, head into New Paltz and warm up at the cozy Village TeaRoom (10 Plattekill Avenue; 845-255-3434; closed Jan. 6 to 12), serving homey comfort fare like a miniature Irish-style Dingle pie (spiced minced lamb ensconced in flaky pastry crust) and afternoon tea with scones and sandwiches. Or relax with a glass of wine at the Harvest Cafe Restaurant and Wine Bar (10 Main Street; 845-255-4205), featuring light lunches (soup, salad, wraps) and stick-to-the-rib dinners, like potato Cheddar pierogies and steak au poivre.

For a splurge, book a [spa](#) treatment at Mohonk Mountain House, which is celebrating its 140th year in 2009 with anniversary deals (845-255-1000; www.mohonkanniversary.com). An 80-minute indigo herbal poultice massage is \$186.90 and a 50-minute nature-inspired Mohonk eco-sampler is \$140. Regular room rates, including all meals, start at \$480 a night for two people on weekends, with a two-night minimum stay (ask for anniversary specials). For budget-friendly options, chain hotels are nearby in New Paltz, Poughkeepsie and Kingston.

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