

YANKEE MAGAZINE

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THE TOP 25 FOLIAGE TOWNS IN NEW ENGLAND

Celebrating the publication's 75th anniversary, *Yankee Magazine's* September/October issue, on newsstands August 24, 2010, names the top 25 towns in New England for fall foliage travel -- the first time the magazine has ever ranked towns by this standard. Kent, Connecticut, wins top honors and first place on the list. (The list includes many ties, so the ranking goes from first place to 13th place.)

"The heart of the New England leaf-peeping experience lies in the details: the farmstands and covered bridges, the waterfalls and antiques stores that provide the eye candy, framed by the colors of our most glorious season" writes Michael Blanding, author of the article. "All of these things Kent has in abundance, in a perfect blend of uncommon natural beauty and culture that might shame cities 10 times its size (just shy of 3,000 people in the 2000 census)."

To determine the listing for the article -- "The Top 25 Foliage Towns in New England," by Blanding and the editors of *Yankee Magazine* -- a variety of tourism professionals, as well as *Yankee's* own writers and editors, first nominated communities for an initial review. The top contenders were then scored on a scale from 0 to 5 in 14 essential attributes of a perfect fall foliage outing: color intensity, scenery, vistas, nearby water, scenic drives, hikes, culture, farmers' markets and farmstands, orchards, covered bridges, state or local parks, the quality and variety of shops to browse, tourism amenities such as hotels and restaurants, and a category called "uncrowded" -- giving a boost to less touristy locations.

"I've been to every town on our list, and each one offers special, unique qualities," editor Mel Allen says. "Locals and travelers alike will have their own opinions of what makes a top foliage town; in one sense, a New England autumn gives all of our towns a ranking of among the best in the world. But if you take all the experiences that we feel make up a perfect fall day ? well, some towns just had more of them ? an orchard, or a waterfall, or a covered bridge, or a terrific inn. It's meant to be fun--but also a real guide for readers who look to *Yankee* to take the guesswork out of a New England trip. I say let the discussion begin!"

The article includes a write-up and a chart showing each town's category results, serving as convenient travel guide for leaf-peepers.

Here are the rankings:

- (1.) Kent, Connecticut
- (2.) Bethel, Maine
- (3.) Manchester, Vermont
- (4.) Williamstown, Massachusetts
- (5.) Middlebury, Vermont
- (6.) Camden, Maine (tie)

- (6.) Waitsfield, Vermont (tie)
- (7.) Conway/North Conway, New Hampshire
- (8.) Sandwich, New Hampshire
- (9.) Rangeley, Maine
- (10.) Blue Hill, Maine (tie)
- (10.) Woodstock, Vermont (tie)
- (10.) Waterville Valley, New Hampshire (tie)
- (10.) Amherst, Massachusetts (tie)
- (11.) Grafton, Vermont (tie)
- (11.) East Haddam, Connecticut (tie)
- (11.) Walpole, New Hampshire (tie)
- (12.) The Cornwalls, Connecticut (tie)
- (12.) Litchfield, Connecticut (tie)
- (12.) Jackson, New Hampshire (tie)
- (13.) Jeffersonville, Vermont (tie)
- (13.) Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts (tie)
- (13.) Montgomery, Vermont (tie)
- (13.) Stowe, Vermont (tie)
- (13.) Hanover, New Hampshire (tie)