

## **Small Town Charm**

### **Western Pennsylvania Amish Countryside** **Villages of Volant, New Wilmington and New Bedford**

Located ten minutes west of Interstate 79 along Route 208 in Lawrence County are three picturesque villages, **Volant, New Wilmington and New Bedford**. It is while traveling that route that modern modes of transportation intermingle with Amish buggies.

A self-driving tour of Western Pennsylvania's Amish Countryside provides a glimpse of life into the **Old Order Amish**, third largest in the United States. Drive the back roads past Amish farms, schoolhouses and craft shops. Stop at **Teena's Quilt Shop** or browse the many handcrafted furniture items at an authentic Amish furniture shop, located of course on the ground floor of a barn.

Spend time shopping in the quaint villages of **Volant and New Wilmington** where the Amish mingle with the "English." Other stops throughout the Amish Countryside include **Apple Castle** for farm fresh produce and an observation beehive, **Country House Christmas Shop** for hundreds of old world ornaments and **The Cheese House**, offering over 60 varieties of domestic and imported cheeses.

For a spiritual lift, stop at **Villa Maria Community Center** outside **New Bedford**. Unwind in the Villa's magnificent chapel or register for one of the many holistic programs at the retreat center. Weather permitting, walk the hiking trail or navigate the **Labyrinth**, modeled after the one at Chartres Cathedral in France. An ecological model, the Villa's farm has wildlife habitats, an Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary and an organic garden.

## **American Heritage**

### **New Castle**

A visit to **New Castle**, located on Route 422 in Lawrence County, is not complete without a drive through the **North Hill** section of the city, fifth largest historic district in Pennsylvania, where turn-of-the-century **Victorian mansions** abound. Dedicated to the preservation of the past, three extraordinary sites are unforgettable: the **Greer Mansion**, home to the **Lawrence County Historical Society**, **Scottish Rite Cathedral**, satellite home to the **Pittsburgh Symphony and the Hoyt Mansions**, where notable art shows are conducted annually by the **Hoyt Institute of Fine Arts**. Tours of the three sites are available.

New Castle is also home to one of two **Little Sisters of Lady Liberty** placed in Lawrence County. The copper replica of the **Statue of Liberty**, dedicated in 1951 by the Boy Scouts of America, is a tribute to the diverse mixture of immigrants that flocked to the area in the earlier part of the twentieth century. A second statue is located in **Ellwood City**.

The arts come alive in New Castle's theater district, home of the **New Castle Playhouse**. The premier location for top-notch amateur performances in musical, children's and dramatic productions, the playhouse annually attracts 24,000 patrons.

Lastly, the roots of the film business for the **Warner Brothers** began in **New Castle** where in 1907 the brothers opened their first movie theater. Today, the building where the theater was located is the focus of a multimillion-dollar entertainment center

featuring the refurbished **Warner Theater**, historic museum, up-scale restaurant and retail shops.

Other attractions within a ten-minute drive include the **Harlansburg Transportation Museum**, containing an extensive display on the history of aviation and the railroad, as well as the **Slovenian Heritage Center**, including a comprehensive collection of historical artifacts from Slovenia.

Those traveling Route 422 east will also want to stop at **McConnell's Mill State Park** for a tour of the historic gristmill plus a visit to **Living Treasures Animal Park** with over 500 friendly animals.

## Lawrence County

### MORNING

A back roads' drive through the Amish Countryside provides a glimpse of life of the **Old Order Amish**, third largest in the United States. Drive past the Amish schoolhouses, see the barefooted Amish children enjoy playtime and learn why "courtin'- corners" are so popular with the Amish teenagers. Shop the quaint villages of **Volant** and **New Wilmington** or stop at one of the many specialty shops or farmers markets along the way. Stroll through the labyrinth, modeled after the one at France's Chartres Cathedral, at **Villa Maria Community Center**. A receptive tour operator is available to provide a colorful narration.

### LUNCH

Enjoy lunch in the Amish Countryside at **The Tavern on the Square**, **Short Stop Inn** or **Tuscany Square Ristorante**.

### AFTERNOON

View the architectural splendor of the Victorian age on your drive through **New Castle's North Hill**, fifth largest historic district in Pennsylvania. Tour the **Greer** and **Hoyt Mansions**. Stand on one of the largest stages between New York and Chicago at the **Scottish Rite Cathedral**. Take a walk on the wilder side at **Living Treasures Animal Park**. Other area attractions include: **Harlansburg Transportation Museum**, **Ellwood City Historical Museum** and **Slovenian Heritage Center**.

### DINNER/EVENING

Choose from one-of-a-kind restaurants specializing in Italian, Middle Eastern, Mexican, Chinese or American buffets. Enjoy one of the delightful performances at the **New Castle Playhouse**, renown entertainment at **Westminster College's Celebrity Concerts** or the **Pittsburgh Symphony** at the Scottish Rite Cathedral.

### OVERNIGHT

Stay overnight at one of our very affordable hotels, **Comfort Inn**, **Super 8** or a **one-of-a-kind Bed & Breakfasts**.

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