

## PACKAGING:

# the art of the deal

One way of extending your promotional reach is to be included in a vacation package. The industry has proven that when you pull disparate elements together into a package, the visibility of a destination is increased. The emphasis can be on value, on content, or both. When you present multiple elements as a single purchasable product, you are responding to the consumer's need to focus on the best choices in a world of many possibilities. You also allow the consumer to commit to a larger expenditure in your area than might otherwise be feasible. By being able to review and purchase several elements of your area's tourist product in advance, the visitor is encouraged to experience more of your destination. In other words, packaging increases your customer's potential length of stay and financial commitment. Packaging can also:

- Provide additional advertising opportunities.
- Lock traveler's expenditures in advance by giving them more content on which to commit their dollars.
- Differentiate your attraction from others.
- Fill in shoulder seasons.
- Create a destination by bringing a wide range of diverse elements together.
- Be sold anywhere.



Optician's trade sign, 19th century, courtesy of the Shelburne Museum.



Vergennes Mural by Nick Mayer and Kyle Desjardins, 2000, courtesy of the Addison County Chamber of Commerce, photo by Mark Favreau.

## what is a package?

Generally speaking it is a tour that includes prepaid transportation, accommodation, and/or some combination of other tour elements—such as meals, transfers, sightseeing, or car rental. A package may include more than one destination as well. In Vermont, all packages promoted by the State must be priced, which means that all elements of the package shall be included for a price that is published as part of the package offering and promotion. Packages must include a component from one of the five marketing themes identified by the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing: cultural heritage, agricultural heritage, natural heritage, four-season recreation, and Vermont made products. Packages also need to incorporate lodging for at least one night, and be commissionable. The latter must reflect the entire price of the package before taxes, and not just the lodging portion.

## why have packaging standards?

Package standards are set for several reasons. Some are to:

- Protect the brand identity of Vermont as articulated in the 1998 Branding Study and refined by the subsequent studies into this important foundation of state marketing.
- Achieve specific marketing goals and objectives that are founded in the efforts to achieve competitive advantage over other states and regions who are often better funded than the State of Vermont.
- Promote quality and consumer satisfaction in the vacation experience of Vermont.
- Achieve the broadest possible economic benefit to Vermonters from tourism activity in the state.
- Assist those stakeholders in the cultural, agricultural, natural, outdoor recreation and Vermont-made product industries of the State in achieving direct benefit from tourism activity.

Besides the general packaging standards set forth by the State, there are also a set of standards that pertain to the evolution of cultural heritage tourism product. The latter were created by members of



House Chamber of the Vermont State House, photo courtesy of Todd Masinter, Northern New England Journey Magazine.

the cultural heritage community to assist in the development of cultural heritage tourism product, and to guarantee that the experience associated with said product is authentic, engaging, memorable, and significant to the visitor. The cultural heritage tourism (CHT) standards are designed to add value to the visitor's experience, support the state product development standards, ensure quality and authenticity of the cultural heritage tourism experience, ensure that accurate information is presented in an engaging and memorable way, to encourage visitation to the identified resources in a manner that has minimum impact on the integrity of the site, and to provide an income stream to all resources included in a cultural heritage package.

## cultural heritage tourism standards

- A cultural heritage resource institution must have a mission statement.
- Any CHT participant must have been in existence for two years. The information it provides must be accurate, and any display well interpreted.
- The promotion/activity must preserve and protect the resource, and not just promote it.
- The collection must be secure and in good condition.
- The artifacts must be authentic or, in the case of reproductions, be labeled as such and of good quality.
- The resource must enhance, relate, or reflect the Vermont experience.
- Any sites open to the public must show good-faith compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). (The law states that public and private institutions that present public programs or services must make reasonable accommodations to insure that people with disabilities have access to the site and the content of the program it offers.)
- The CHT standards encourage all participants to learn about access issues, to examine their facilities and programs, and to make an earnest effort to increase their accessibility to the greatest degree that is reasonable and possible.
- Signage must be appropriate to the site, and convey the information needed to understand the site itself, its activity, and/or collection. Signs must also conform to all existing state and local laws.



## cultural heritage packaging ideas

If you are thinking about creating a cultural heritage tourism package you need to address all of the elements discussed above. That said, some combinations you may want to consider could include:

### THEME-BASED TOURS/EXCURSIONS

- Historic inns with gourmet restaurants
- Historic inns with historic sites
- Historic inns or bed and breakfasts with admission to area museums/galleries
- Music festivals—2 or 3 nights accommodation around scheduled performances
- Cooking tour utilizing facilities of historic homes/house museums/sites with a famous chef
- Arts and Crafts weekend—pair accommodation with classes. Consumer makes something special, and the object becomes a souvenir of the visit.

### WEEKEND GET-AWAY

- Dinner at a restaurant that is a part of the Vermont Fresh Network, followed by performance at a local theater.
- Accommodation at a historic inn, that includes a continental breakfast, with tours of local art galleries and discounts at near-by shops offered for the following day.

### MIX ELEMENTS

- Offer museum tours and lively arts performances.
- Sports events, or shopping with a cultural activity.



Bug Art by John Hampson, collections of the Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium, St. Johnsbury, photo by H/O Photography.

The following is an excellent example of how one RMO, Eastern Vermont Gateway ([www.easternvermont.com](http://www.easternvermont.com)), chose to promote some of its cultural heritage assets.

## FINDING THE REAL VERMONT: THE HERITAGE OF A LAND AND ITS PEOPLE.

The land and the people of eastern Vermont embody the work begun by conservationist and local businessman, George Perkins Marsh. In 1869, Frederick Billings purchased Marsh's boyhood home, situated on a rise just above the Ottauquechee River. It is here he began a process of land stewardship inspired by Marsh's book *Man and Nature*; one that established the standard for the re-greening of Vermont in the 20th century.

Guests of The Quechee Inn at Marshland Farm will experience the cultural heritage of the area from their base at this lovely Georgian-style inn. Joseph Marsh IV, first Lieutenant-Governor of Vermont, and grandfather of George Perkins Marsh, built this home along the banks of the Ottauquechee River in 1793 for his family. Visiting the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park is like no other national park experience, as it is the only national park to focus on conservation history and the evolving nature of land stewardship in America. Opened in June of 1998, the park preserves and interprets the historic Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller property in Woodstock. The Rockefeller Mansion and Museum is a National Historic Landmark, one of just 114 statewide, and includes one of only two Hudson River School collections available for viewing in the Green Mountain State. The forested grounds and reservoir offer idyllic natural surroundings preserved by the people who have occupied this land.

The park is named for George Perkins Marsh, one of the nation's first global environmental thinkers, who grew up on the property, and for Frederick Billings, an early conservationist who established a progressive dairy farm and professionally managed forest on the



Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller Mansion, Woodstock, courtesy of the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park.

site. Billings' granddaughter, Mary French Rockefeller and her husband, conservationist Laurance S. Rockefeller, sustained Billings' mindful practices in forestry and farming on the property over the latter half of the 20th century. The Billings Farm & Museum was established in 1983 to continue the farm's working dairy, and to interpret rural Vermont life and agricultural history. The Billings Farm & Museum, located across the road from the park, is a private nonprofit educational institution, managed by The Woodstock Foundation, Inc.

The Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller package includes viewing *A Place in the Land*, a film by academy award-winning documentary film maker Charles Guggenheim. The film is most spectacular when seen at Billings Farm & Museum theater, included in the package; and guests who participate in this cultural heritage experience receive a videotape of the film as a keepsake of their journey into this memorable part of eastern Vermont.





The Quechee Inn, Quechee, courtesy of the Quechee Inn.

Today, Marsh-Billings Rockefeller National Historical Park and the Billings Farm & Museum are working in a close partnership to preserve the boyhood home of George Perkins Marsh and the estate, farm, and forest created by Frederick Billings. With an operating dairy farm and managed forest, the Museum and Park are uniquely positioned to demonstrate the practical application of conservation characteristic of Billings, and to interpret a vision of stewardship that can be traced back to Marsh—a vision that is respectful of nature, history, and community.

**Themes:** Cultural Heritage aspects of Agriculture, Natural Heritage and Vermont-Made Products.

**Targeted for:** Singles, couples, families with older children.

**Season and Location:** May through October.

**Duration:** 2-night stay beginning any day of the week. Package is priced for two people, double occupancy; ask about pricing for singles and other group/family sizes.

**Host Lodging:** The Quechee Inn at Marshland Farm.

**Contracts:** Quechee Inn at Marshland Farm, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, Billings Farm & Museum, Vermont Picnic Basket.

**About The Quechee Inn at Marshland Farm:** You may never have laid eyes on this incredible inn, yet you have always known that a place like this existed. The hospitality is as warm as the freshly baked muffins served at breakfast. It's an oasis of fine cuisine and comfort. Built in 1793, the inn was originally the home of Colonel Joseph Marsh, Vermont's first Lieutenant-Governor. Since that time, the historic residence has been expanded and carefully restored to maintain as much of the 19th-century character and charm as possible, while adding modern conveniences to enhance our guests' stay. When it's time to truly get away, let your imagination wander to The Quechee Inn at Marshland Farm. We'll be waiting.

### Dining Options Include:

- Two full Vermont country breakfasts at The Quechee Inn at Marshland Farm each morning.
- Dinner for two both nights of your stay at the inn.
- One Vermont picnic lunch-for-two on either the first or second day of your stay, prearranged according to your preference. The basket will be delivered to the inn before you leave for your day of cultural exploration. Just up the road from The Quechee Inn is the Quechee Gorge, one of Vermont's natural wonders. Depending on time of day you venture out, stop at the Gorge and have lunch at one of the picnic tables overlooking Ottauquechee River; or take your picnic basket along to Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park to dine along one of its many nature trails.
- Lunch on your own one day. Simon Pearce, located in the heart of Quechee Village, is recommended as it will provide the opportunity to enjoy a meal served on world-famous Simon Pearce tableware, and beverages offered in fine Simon Pearce crystal glassware. After your repast, you can view glassblowing and pottery throwing on premises, as well as browse through the retail shop featuring these, and other fine hand-made products.

### Elements of this package include:

- Two nights at The Quechee Inn at Marshland Farm for two people, double occupancy, with delicious Vermont country breakfasts each morning and fine dining each night of your stay. Be sure to arrive early on your first night to enjoy the ambiance of the sitting by the fireplace before your evening meal.
- A Vermont picnic basket for two, complete with seasonal Vermont foods and sparkling cider.

- Admission for two to Billings Farm & Museum, including viewing of the Guggenheim film and academy award-nominee *A Place in the Land* at the museum theater. One souvenir videotape of the film to keep, per couple.
- Admission and tour of the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller Mansion at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park. Use of the park's nature trails for hiking and picnicking.

**Vouchers:** Quechee Inn at Marshland Farm, Billings Farm & Museum, Vermont Picnic Basket, and Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park.

**Maps:** State of Vermont, Upper Valley, Quechee and Woodstock.

### Package Prices:

- Priced from \$\$-\$\$ for complete package for two, with two nights' lodging, double occupancy.
- Includes two dinners for two at Quechee Inn at Marshland Farm, two country breakfasts for two, one Vermont picnic basket of lunch for two.
- Also includes admission to Billings Farm & Museum, viewing in museum theater of "A Place in the Land," and souvenir video tape of film.
- Tour of Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller Mansion at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park.





Marshfield Village Store, courtesy of the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing, photo by Andre Jenny.

### resources

To find out how to submit a package, contact: The Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing, 6 Baldwin Street, Drawer 33, Montpelier, Vermont 05633-1301, 802-828-3237, [www.VermontVacation.com](http://www.VermontVacation.com).

Regional Marketing Organizations. If you have a package to promote, or an idea you want to explore, contact your RMO. You can find information on your region by going to [www.VermontVacation.com](http://www.VermontVacation.com), and clicking on 'Our Regions.'