

DESTINATION

Enjoy the Silence

No malls, no bars, and plenty of open space make Wenham a hidden gem.

By Karen Sackowitz

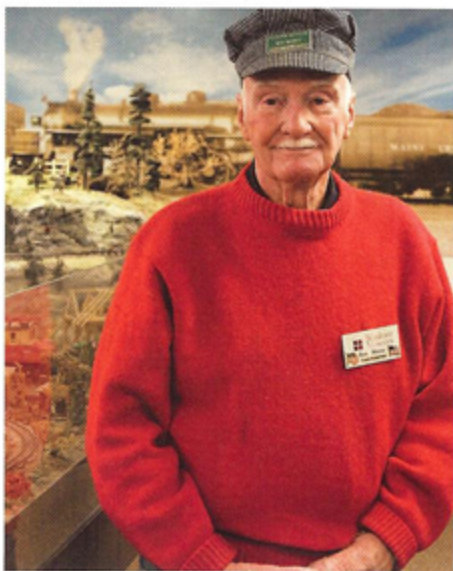
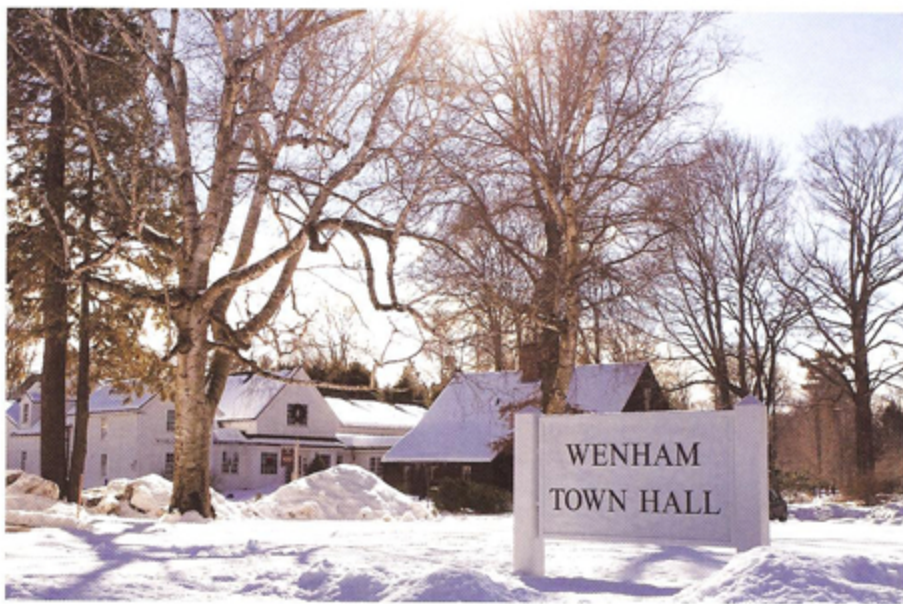
BLINK WHEN YOU DRIVE THROUGH the center of Wenham and you might just miss the whole thing. But if you take it slow, it's easy to see why the locals work hard to maintain the tranquility and charm of this small North Shore town.

"Our church, fire station, police station, town hall, and post office are all in our town center," chuckles Wenham native Catherine Tinsley. "It's like Cheers where everyone knows your name—except we don't have any bars! No malls... in fact, no business district!"

What Wenham does offer, however, is rural living that harkens back to the good old days when community meant just that—folks working together to care for their town and each other. Throw in acres of open space, a top-ranked college, a highly involved citizenry, and a 20-mile commute to Boston, and the appeal of Wenham comes into focus.

Local shop owner Harper Della-Piana had to make quite an adjustment when she moved here after living and working in New York City for 15 years. She agrees that Wenham has predominantly been known by outsiders as a town you pass by on the way to somewhere else, but she says that tide seems to be slowly turning.

"The town is attracting younger residents, the type who own their own business or who can work remotely via computer," Della-Piana says, "The web is a



big factor. Eighty percent of my customers find me online and travel here to shop."

Four years ago, Maria Leckakos bought the former Hebert's Candy building on Main Street to house her salon and day spa, M.Lekakos.

"Throughout the entire renovation process, the town was great to work with," she says, "That isn't always the case in other towns."

Picture Perfect Clockwise from bottom right, a display at the Wenham Museum; Ben Merry (museum volunteer); the town center; and Wenham Lake.



4TH - 7TH DRAGOONS
(1727-1741)

For some residents, balance is professional and personal. Elissa Della-Piana is a gallery owner whose downtown business thrives. She is also a Wenham native whose house sits on former farmland owned by her father. Hers is one of many meticulously restored properties. She credits the preservation efforts in Wenham for maintaining the traditional feel while welcoming some change.



Tea Time: Gourmet tea sandwiches and petite desserts at Wenham Tea House.

WHAT TO DO

When in Wenham...

Small town appeal, old world charm. Tea, anyone?

The Exchange at Wenham Tea House

A local gem which opened in 1912, the Wenham Tea House is the oldest continually-running tea house in America. Owner Emma Roberts raised a few eyebrows last year when she adjusted the liquor license to offer dinner on Friday evenings, but the results have been well received. Still, most visitors come for breakfast, lunch, or to enjoy

some afternoon tea and conversation. Don't leave without checking out the bakery/gourmet shop, always stocked with baked goods, cocktail foods, to-go meals, and unique hostess gifts. 4 Monument St., 978-468-1398, wenhamteahouse.com.

The Wenham Museum

What started out as an international doll exhibit donated to the Wenham

Village Improvement Society in 1922 is now the vibrant Wenham Museum. Learn about the ways New Englanders have lived, worked, dressed, and played from the 17th century to today by checking out an ever-changing schedule of exhibits, programs, and events. Kids will get a special kick out of the trains, as well as the toys and books available in the museum shop. 132 Main St., 978-468-2377, wenhammuseum.org.

Seams

Brides-to-be and women seeking one-of-a-kind formalwear will travel any distance to browse through the creations in this fabulous boutique. Owner/Designer Harper Della-Piana stocks her own pieces as well as those purchased directly from other designers. Have something specific in mind? Talk to Harper. Chances are she'll be able to create that unique piece that will have people talking wherever you go. 152R Main St., 978-473-3398, seamstheshop.com.

The Gallery Della Piana

Creativity runs in the Della-Piana family. Next door to Seams is The Gallery Della-Piana, owned by Elissa Della-Piana (Harper's mother), a local artist and long time Montserrat professor. Visitors are treated to a variety of media and topics, explored through an ever-changing selection of pieces. Keep an eye out for monthly "call-for-entry" programs. 152R Main St., 978-468-1944, gallerydellapiana.blogspot.com.

M.Lekakos Salon & Spa

This full service salon and day spa is the only one of its kind in the area. You will more than likely be greeted by owner Maria Lekakos herself, whose infectious personality will make you feel immediately welcome. After being styled and pampered, be sure to ask her about the addition of the new boutique, which offers everything from handbags to belts to jewelry. 154 Main St., 978-468-9540, mlekkakos.com.