



An Overnight in Princeton

In an (Ivy) League of Its Own

The joys of being a teacher are boundless. For me, a math teacher, they are infinite. One such joyful occasion came at the end of July when Vincent and I attended a former student's wedding at the grand, gothic Princeton University Chapel. Why, you might ask, Princeton Chapel? Both my former student Laura and her husband are Ph.D. candidates at the graduate school.

While Princeton is just an hour and fifteen minute drive from Wilmington, I had only been to the town's train station once, many years ago. After a weekend exploring the downtown and campus, I highly recommend the trip for a fall — or any season — excursion.

Begin your plans with a reservation at The Peacock Inn. This colonial-style mansion turned boutique hotel is steps from Princeton's main street, Nassau Street. With restaurants and shops densely populating one side and the Harry Potteresque campus on the other, Nassau Street is at the center of action. The inn's history is part of its charm ... from hosting members of the Continental Congress to serving cocktails in the basement's Prohibition-era speakeasy. Also of note is Albert Einstein's ten-day stay upon arrival to Princeton where he would be among the first faculty at the Institute for Advanced Study.

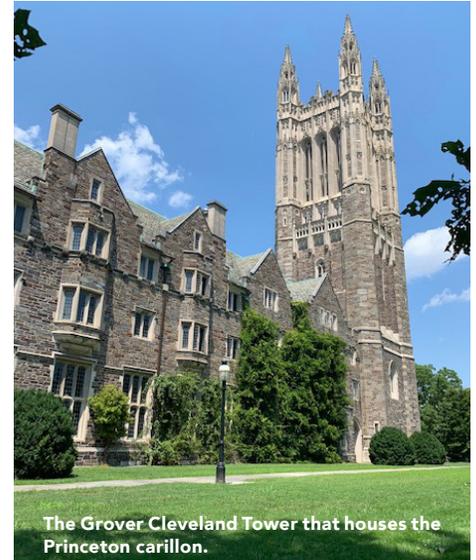
The Peacock Inn's stylish bar warrants a visit for a classic or signature cocktail. Breakfast or brunch at the inn's elegant restaurant is a must. I recommend the strong French press coffee along with one of the following:

- If you enjoy smoked fish, try the Smoked Fish Platter of smoked salmon, sable, and whitefish salad. It is served with bagel crisps for a pleasant crunch.
- In the mood for eggs? Opt for the Crab Benedict of Maryland blue crab, poached eggs, hollandaise, and toasted sourdough.

- For a more "lunchy" than "breakfasty" dish, go with the Lobster Roll of Maine lobster salad, grilled buttered bun, pickle, and crispy fries.

For dinner, head to Mistral. Just a ten-minute walk from the inn, Mistral boasts a James Beard semi-finalist chef, Scott Anderson. The open kitchen layout is abuzz with university students and local diners. Fresh, local ingredients are at the heart of the cuisine, and the sharing plates allow for tasting around the menu. Vincent and I shared four small plates and one entree, and the portions were ideal. The menu changes regularly, so my recommended items may not appear on your menu:

- For more smoked fish, try the Smoked Mackerel Dip with charred scallion, caper, cucumber, and salt & vinegar potato chips. (An inspiration for our Feast of the Seven Fishes!)
- For a twist on hummus, try the English Pea Hummus with labneh, dukkah, mint, and pea. It is served with toasted pita ... so much better than doughy pita.
- For a flavor-filled seafood entree, order the Pan Roasted Ocean Trout with spring allium curry, mussels, spelt, asparagus, and pea. Don't be fooled by the name. This is not lake trout; it is steelhead, which is native to ocean waters. A lovely deep salmon in color, this trout is much richer in taste and texture than its counterpart.
- For a wine pairing, the Domaine Barmes-Buecher Riesling from Alsace, France, came highly recommended by our server. It was the perfect recommendation with the trout — crisp and dry, not to be mistaken for a sweet dessert Riesling.



The Grover Cleveland Tower that houses the Princeton carillon.

In addition to exploring the campus, I recommend walking the streets of Palmer Square. Clothing boutiques, chocolatiers, and book stores abound.

Lastly, arrange your schedule so you do not depart before 2:00 p.m. on Sunday. Otherwise, you will miss out on one of Princeton's main attractions. A short drive from the main campus, Princeton's carillon is located in The Grover Cleveland Tower of the Graduate School. Princeton has one of the 180 carillons in the United States. Lisa Lonie, the official Princeton carillonneur, gives concerts every Sunday at 1:00 p.m. and arranges a summer concert series featuring international carillonneurs. As the concerts are "en plein air," toss a blanket in your trunk so you can sit in the shade of an oak. This next detail is of utmost importance. Make sure graduate exams are not scheduled during your visit. If exams are "on," the carillon is "off," as the carillon tower is adjacent to the graduate dormitories. 



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