

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY MOSHE LEVY

# Journey Through Time

*Riding along the Delaware River.*

# FAVORITERIDE



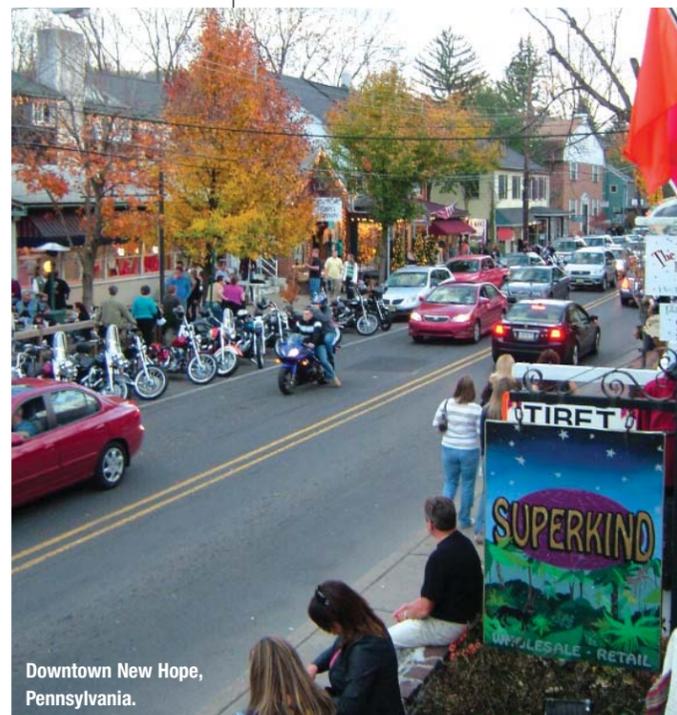
A glimpse of fall colors along Route 32, aka the River Road.

**We're about to take a contemplative journey through time, from the Colonial fight for independence to avant-garde artistry in sculpture, all within a span of approximately 100 miles.**

That may sound like a relatively short distance, but if you plan to smell the roses on this ride, allow yourself a full day.

We begin at the famed Grounds For Sculpture in Hamilton Township, New Jersey. This serene park and museum complex offers visitors a tranquil, exquisitely landscaped setting in which to view more than 230 modern sculptures. An \$8 admission ticket buys full access to explore all 35 acres of the Grounds, which also feature shops, a café and arguably New Jersey's most romantic restaurant, Rat's. Strolling the Grounds does work up one's appetite, and a neatly dressed motorcyclist ought to savor an early lunch at Rat's indoor Kafe Kabul. Garlanded with ornate multihued Afghani décor and framed by a roaring fireplace, Kabul offers reasonably priced food and a truly unique dining experience. The succulent risotto (\$14) delights my taste buds, while the stunning view of the Trygve Van Tongeren Gardens directly outside the restaurant soothes my eyes. With my mind calm and my stomach full, it's time to set out for the day's ride.

Leaving the Grounds on Fairgrounds Road, I head west on Greenwood Avenue (Route 33) which eventually



Downtown New Hope, Pennsylvania.

turns into Market Street, a main drag of the state's capital, Trenton. A few miles later the golden dome of the state capitol building appears, as does the Delaware River, and finally the entrance to Route 29. Turning north onto it, Route 29 is at this point a four-lane freeway. But in just a few short miles, it will turn into a scenic two-lane byway, almost completely shaded by a lush tree canopy. For almost 35 miles, Route 29 snakes lazily alongside the Delaware, which itself at 360 miles in length is the longest free-flowing river east of the mighty Mississippi.

Like the river adjacent it, this road has a gentle rhythm, with lenient sweepers on decent quality tarmac. I'm hoping it rolls on forever, but there is one important stop to make on 29 before we reach its end in Frenchtown. The 841-acre Washington Crossing State Park in Titusville marks the spot where a relatively young General

George Washington and his 2,400-man detachment of Continental Army troops crossed the Delaware River in the early morning hours of December 25, 1776. Washington's surprise attack on the Hessian garrison in Trenton was a watershed moment in the first year of the Revolutionary War. I dismount the sleek RT and trek quietly through those same woods, pondering how the exhausted warriors must have felt in the freezing cold, hungry and so far from home on that fateful Christmas Day.

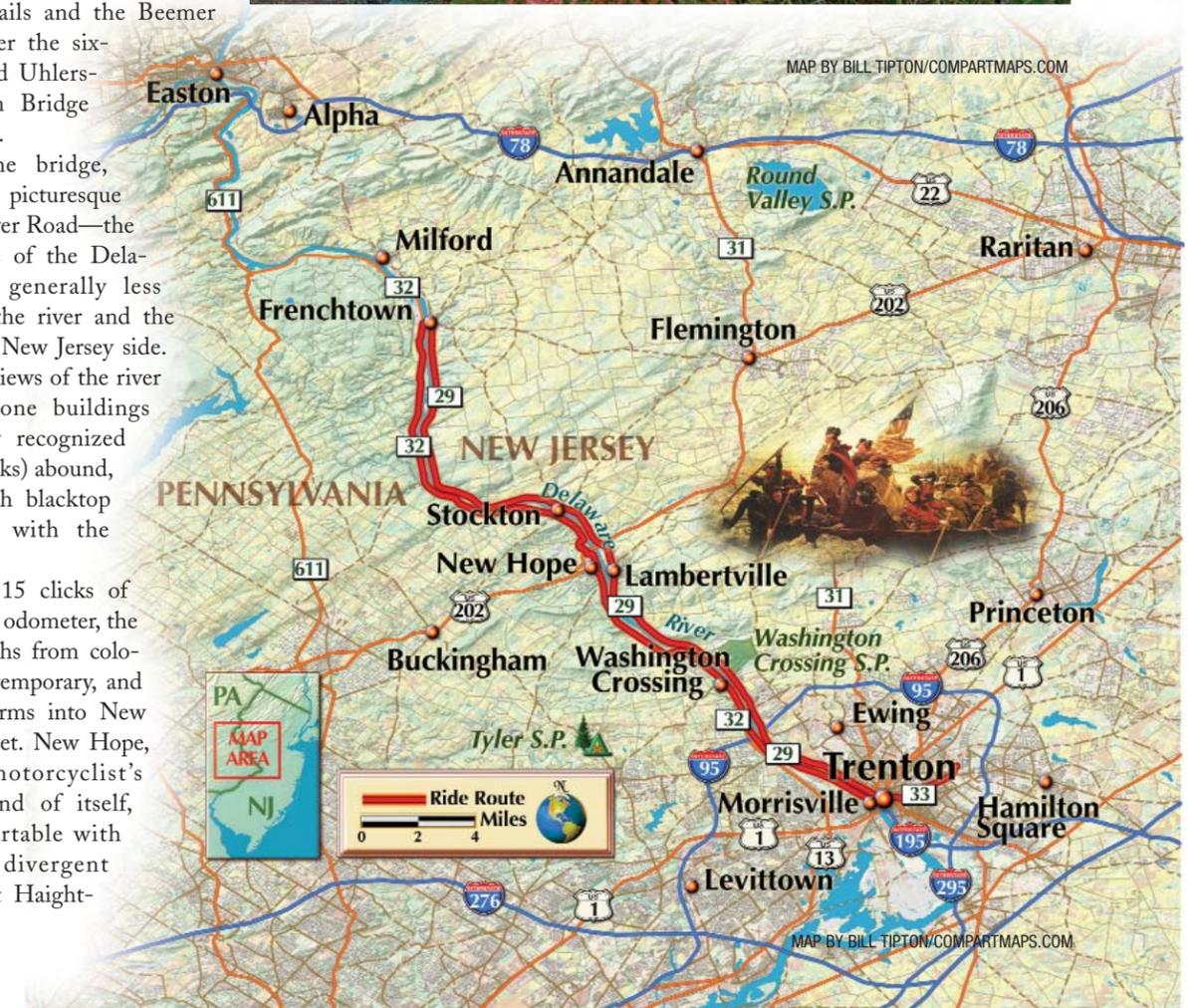
Back on the road and onward toward Frenchtown in Hunterdon County, I arrive at the conclusion of Route 29 and the beginning of this route's better half. As I turn west on Bridge Street, Frenchtown emerges as a quaint little river town with a decidedly old-school European feel. There is an extensive assortment of fine restaurants, art galleries, and upscale shops tempting me to stop and explore, but the urge to keep riding prevails and the Beemer leisurely rolls over the six-span steel-trussed Uhlers-town-Frenchtown Bridge into Pennsylvania.

Once over the bridge, heading south on picturesque Route 32 (aka River Road—the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware), there is generally less foliage between the river and the road than on the New Jersey side. Perfect postcard views of the river and Colonial stone buildings (many nationally recognized historical landmarks) abound, while 32's smooth blacktop slopes and arcs with the river's banks.

After roughly 15 clicks of casual bliss on the odometer, the architecture morphs from colonial to more contemporary, and Route 32 transforms into New Hope's Main Street. New Hope, a celebrated motorcyclist's destination in and of itself, is a town comfortable with its seemingly divergent personalities. Part Haight-



The Trygve Van Tongeren Gardens directly outside Kafe Kabul.



# state- ment of owner- ship



Ashbury hippy hangout and part domesticated shopping village, it is the perfect place to pull over for a snack and some sightseeing. Here on Main Street one can indulge in any number of activities, from buying authentic Witch's spells at Gypsy Heaven (a Wiccan shop) to heading down the Delaware Canal via mule-pulled barge at the New Hope Canal Boat Company. But first, the sheer variety of eateries has my stomach grumbling for a refill! Just walking down the strip and observing the diversity of people is fascinating, as New Hope draws all kinds.

Mounting up and heading south again, Route 32 resumes its rustic personality alongside the Delaware, the boxer settles into its fourth-gear sweet spot and I'm recalling the famous line from those Old Milwaukee beer commercials of years past. Gliding through Yardley and into Morrisville, I point the BMW's chiseled nose east over the Lower Trenton Bridge and back into Trenton, New Jersey, to complete the loop.

It's amazing when you stop to think about it. In only 100 miles, we have walked in the footsteps of General George Washington, traced the embankments of the eastern United States' longest river, observed the progression of architecture from colonial to current, and gazed upon the ultramodern Grounds For Sculpture. This ride is truly moving meditation and a scenic history lesson all rolled up into one! **34**



Above: Rat's Kafe Kabul offers a unique dining experience.

## Notable Places

**Delaware River Canal Boat Co.**  
New Street & Main Street  
New Hope, Pennsylvania 18938  
(215) 862-0758

**Grounds For Sculpture**  
18 Fairgrounds Road  
Hamilton, New Jersey 08619  
(609) 586-0616  
[www.groundsforsculpture.org](http://www.groundsforsculpture.org)

**Gypsy Heaven**  
115G South Main Street  
New Hope, Pennsylvania 18938  
(215) 862-5251  
[www.gypsyheaven.com](http://www.gypsyheaven.com)

**Rat's Restaurant (Kafe Kabul)**  
16 Fairgrounds Road  
Hamilton, New Jersey 08619  
(609) 584-7800  
[www.ratsrestaurant.org](http://www.ratsrestaurant.org)

**Washington Crossing State Park**  
(New Jersey)  
355 Washington Crossing Road  
Titusville, New Jersey 08560-1517  
(609) 737-0623  
[www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/parks/washcros.html](http://www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/parks/washcros.html) **34**