

CLOSE-UP ON MANCHESTER, N.H.

A FRESH TURN

SPORTS TEAMS AND A VIBRANT DOWNTOWN BRING NEW LIFE TO OLD MILL CITY

By SACHA PFEIFFER | GLOBE STAFF

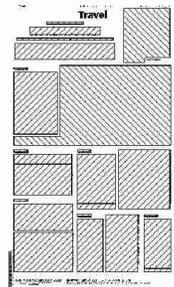
Like many manufacturing cities, Manchester suffered a reversal of fortune when the textile industry that fueled its economy collapsed in the 1930s. Along the Merrimack River, mills that once churned out a half-million yards of cloth each week fell into disrepair. But Manchester, the largest city in New Hampshire, has reinvented itself. In brick factory buildings that once housed thousands of spindles and looms, new tenants have arrived: high-tech companies, start-ups, restaurants, arts groups, small museums, even a science center. The city, just an hour from Boston, also has vibrant sports, cultural, and dining scenes. And it has retained its ethnic diversity, a reflection of the days when immigrants from around the world flocked here to work in its mills. Skillfully combining old and new, Manchester has preserved the best of its past while blossoming into a thoroughly modern city.

DO

Even if museums usually aren't your style, there are several quirky ones in Manchester worth visiting. **America's Credit Union Museum** (418-420 Notre Dame Ave., 603-629-1553, acumuseum.org) tells the story of how New Hampshire mill workers formed the nation's first credit union in 1908, and the **Scouting Museum and Library** (40 Bodwell Road, 603-669-8919, scoutingmuseum.org) has an extensive display of Boy Scout, Cub Scout, and Explorer Scout memorabilia, including medallions, flags, uniforms, stamps, pins, and badges, as well as a library of more than 3,000 books and periodicals. To learn about the city's thriving French-Canadian community, visit the **Franco-American Centre** (52 Concord St., 603-669-4045, francoamericancentrenh.com), a nonprofit cultural organization. The **Millyard Museum** (200 Bedford St., 603-622-7531, manchesterhistoric.org) chronicles Manchester's changing populations, from Native Americans to mill workers to 21st-century entrepreneurs. For a more traditional museum experience, the **Currier Museum of Art** (201 Myrtle Way, 603-669-6144, currier.org) boasts an internationally renowned collection of American and European paintings, furniture, silver, photography, and sculpture (although the museum is currently closed during an expansion). The Currier also operates Frank Lloyd Wright's **Zimmerman House**, the only Wright-designed home in New England that is open to the public (by guided tour only). At **Amoskeag Fishways Learning and Visitors Center** (Amoskeag Dam, 6 Fletcher St., 603-626-3474, amoskeagfishways.org), visitors can watch migrating shad, herring, and sea lamprey through underwater viewing windows. And across the river on Manchester's West Side, drive by **Sainte Marie Church** (133 Wayne St., 603-622-4615, stemarieparish.org), a handsome cathedral in the city's French-Canadian neighborhood.

FUEL

Burgers, club sandwiches, baked ham dinners, peanut butter pancakes, and triple-layer cakes are just a few of the menu items at the **Red Arrow** (61 Lowell St., 603-626-1118, redarrowdiner.com, \$4.50-\$10), a 24-hour diner that opened in 1922. Italian, Spanish, French, and Portuguese dishes are the specialties at **A Taste of Europe** (827 Elm St., 603-296-0292, atasteofeuropenh.com, \$10-\$23), a small,



upscale restaurant. Classic Italian, including a Caesar salad prepared tableside, is the focus at **Piccola Italia** 815 Elm St., 603-606-5100, piccolaitalianh.com, \$14-\$33). At white-tablecloth **Richard's Bistro** (36 Lowell St., 603-644-1180, richardsbistro.com, \$22-\$38), one of the city's fanciest eateries, you can treat yourself to orange-glazed duck and peppercorn-coriander broiled rib eye. Hip **Cotton** (75 Arms St., 603-622-5488, cottonfood.com, \$13-\$30), located in Manchester's historic mill yard district, serves "eclectic American comfort food," like almond-crust turkey schnitzel. For a cheap lunch, **Jerome's Delicatessen** (393 Bridge St., 603-623-5388, www.jeromesdeli.com, \$2-\$6) has salads, sandwiches, and prepared foods; for a cheap breakfast, cute little **Chiggy's Place** (372 Kelley St., 603-627-5755, \$2-\$6) makes good crepes and Belgian waffles. Whatever else your appetite, Manchester can probably sate it, from soul food (fried chicken, collard greens, sweet potato pie) at **Premier Palette** (946 Elm St., 603-622-8494, eatwithyourpal.com, \$8-\$16) to Hungarian (goulash, schnitzel, stuffed cabbage) at **Lala's** (836 Elm St., 603-647-7100, \$4-\$16) to French-Canadian fare (oven-baked omelets, baked apple pancakes) at **Chez Vachon** (136 Kelley St., 603-625-9660, \$2-\$7.60).

PLAY

For ball-crazy kids, there are sports galore in Manchester. Home to the **Manchester Monarchs**, an American Hockey League team (603-626-7825, monarchshockey.com), **Verizon Wireless Arena** (555 Elm St., 603-644-5000, verizonwirelessarena.com) opened six years ago and seats more than 10,000. Other Manchester teams include the **New Hampshire Fisher Cats** (603-641-2005, nhfishercats.com), an Eastern League double-A baseball team, the **Manchester Wolves** (603-627-9653, manchesterwolves.com), an East Division football team, and the **Manchester Freedom**, a women's tackle football team (603-391-4371, manchesterfreedom.com). Other good spots for family outings: **SEE Science Center** (200 Bedford St., 603-669-0400, see-sciencecenter.org), which has two floors of hands-on science exhibits and also offers birthday parties, workshops, and overnight visits; **Stadium Ten Pin** (216 Maple St., 603-625-9656), a destination for "galactic bowling" and birthday parties; and **McIntyre Ski Area** (50 Chalet Court, off Kennard Rd., 603-624-6571, mcintyreskiarea.com), which offers wintertime skiing and snow tubing on its 53 acres.

SPEND

Looking for unique artworks to spruce up your house? Visit the **Manchester Artists Association Art Gallery** (1528 Elm St., 603-785-6437, manchester-artists.org), which has juried exhibits featuring work from local artists; **East Colony Fine Art** (55 S. Commercial St., 603-621-7400, eastcolony.com), with a 2,400-square-foot gallery showcasing the works of artists from New England and beyond; or **KlawGlass** (406 Kelley St., 603-647-5529, klawglass.com), where you can design and buy beautiful decorative stained glass. Oenophiles will enjoy **D'Vine Wine and Gift Boutique** (1480 Elm St., 603-623-0900, dvinewineshop.com) and **Unwined** (865 Second St., 603-625-9463, unwined.net), a wine bar and restaurant with more than 200 types of wines. **Fran Cook & Co.** (889 Elm St., 603-641-2135, francook.com) sells custom jewelry and handcrafted glass and pottery. **New England Sampler** (42 Hanover St., 603-626-4477, thenewenglandsampler.com) stocks New England-made products, specialty foods, and wine. Unique home and garden accessories, including candles, furniture, and light fixtures, can be found at **With Heart and Hand** (823 Elm St., 603-625-8100, withheartandhand.com). Not only chocolate, but also fudge, candies, gourmet nuts, and popcorn are sold at **Van Otis Chocolates** (341 Elm St., 603-627-1611,

vanotis.com). And, of course, there's the **Mall of New Hampshire** (1500 S. Willow St., 603-669-0433), home to 125 stores and a 550-seat food court.

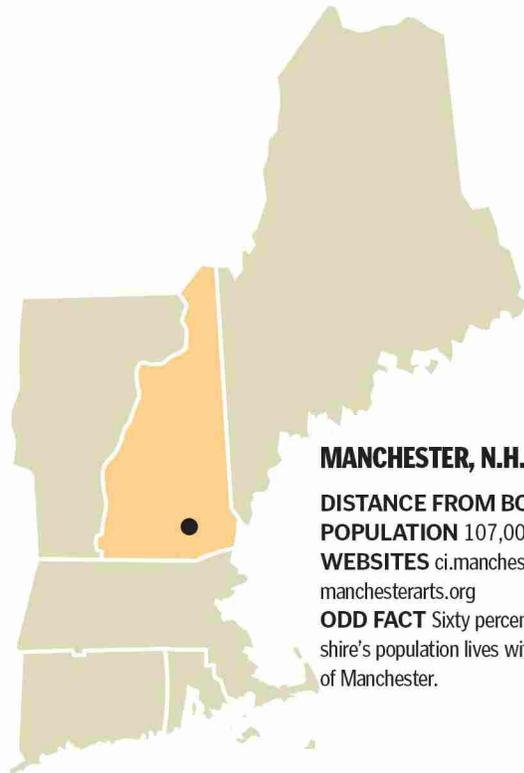
and-breakfast in a meticulously restored 1885 Victorian home.

PARTY

There's lively nightlife at the **Black Brimmer** (1087 Elm St., 603-669-5523, blackbrimmer.com), a bar and grill with live music most Tuesday through Saturday nights, as well as dancing and karaoke "in the heart of fabulous Manchvegas"; the **Wild Rover Pub & Restaurant** (21 Kosciuszko St., 603-669-7722, wildroverpub.com), which has Irish sing-alongs on Wednesday and Thursday nights, and the **Shaskeen** (909 Elm St., 603-625-0246, theshaskeen.com), an Irish pub with entertainment seven days a week. For a more sedate evening out, consider a concert by the **New Hampshire Philharmonic** (83 Hanover St., 603-647-6476, nhphilharmonic.org), the oldest orchestra in the state. Or check out the event schedules at the **Majestic Theatre** (281 Cartier St., 603-669-7469, majestictheatre.net) and **Palace Theatre** (80 Hanover St., 603-668-5588, palacetheatre.org), which host theatrical and musical performances of all kinds.

REST

Manchester has no shortage of chain hotels and motels, including a **Hilton Garden Inn** (101 S. Commercial St., 603-669-2222, hiltongardeninn.com, \$139-\$189), a **Hampton Inn & Suites** (8 Hawthorne Drive, 603-623-2040, manchesterbedfordsuites.hamptoninn.com, \$119-\$159), a **Holiday Inn Express** (1298 S. Porter St., 603-669-6800, hiexpress.com/esmanchester, \$139-\$309), and a **Comfort Inn** (298 Queen City Ave., 603-668-2600, \$119-\$169). For less generic lodging, there's the **Highlander** (2 Highlander Way, 603-625-6426, highlanderinn.com, \$119-\$159), which has an in-house restaurant called Basil's, 65 guest rooms in its main facility, and 22 more in Coldwell House, a former B&B where the rooms are decorated country-style. More intimate lodging can be found at the **Ash Street Inn** (118 Ash St., 603-668-9908, ashstreetinn.com, \$139-\$189), a classy, five-bedroom boutique bed-



MANCHESTER, N.H.

DISTANCE FROM BOSTON 53 miles

POPULATION 107,006

WEBSITES ci.manchester.nh.us,
manchesterarts.org

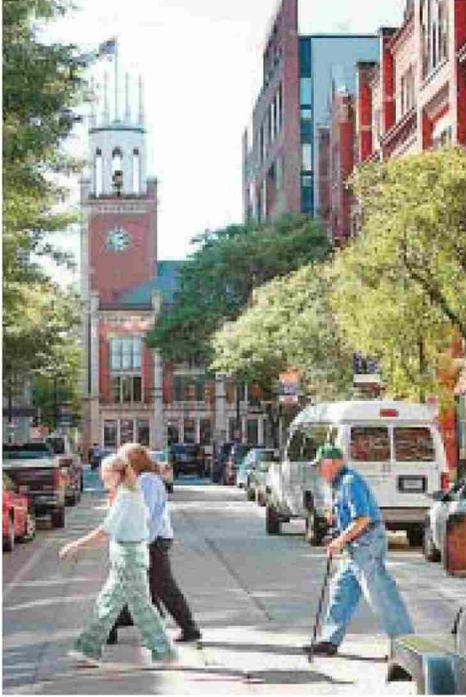
ODD FACT Sixty percent of New Hampshire's population lives within 30 miles of Manchester.



The Verizon Wireless Arena, with more than 10,000 seats, hosts the Manchester Monarchs, an American Hockey League team.



An 18-pound semi-solid milk chocolate turkey is carefully packaged at Van Otis Chocolates.



City Hall looms in the background as people cross Hanover Street, where more than one bar has a lively nightlife.



At the Amoskeag Dam on the Merrimack River, a visitors center provides opportunities to view fish.

PHOTOS BY TOM HERDE/GLOBE STAFF