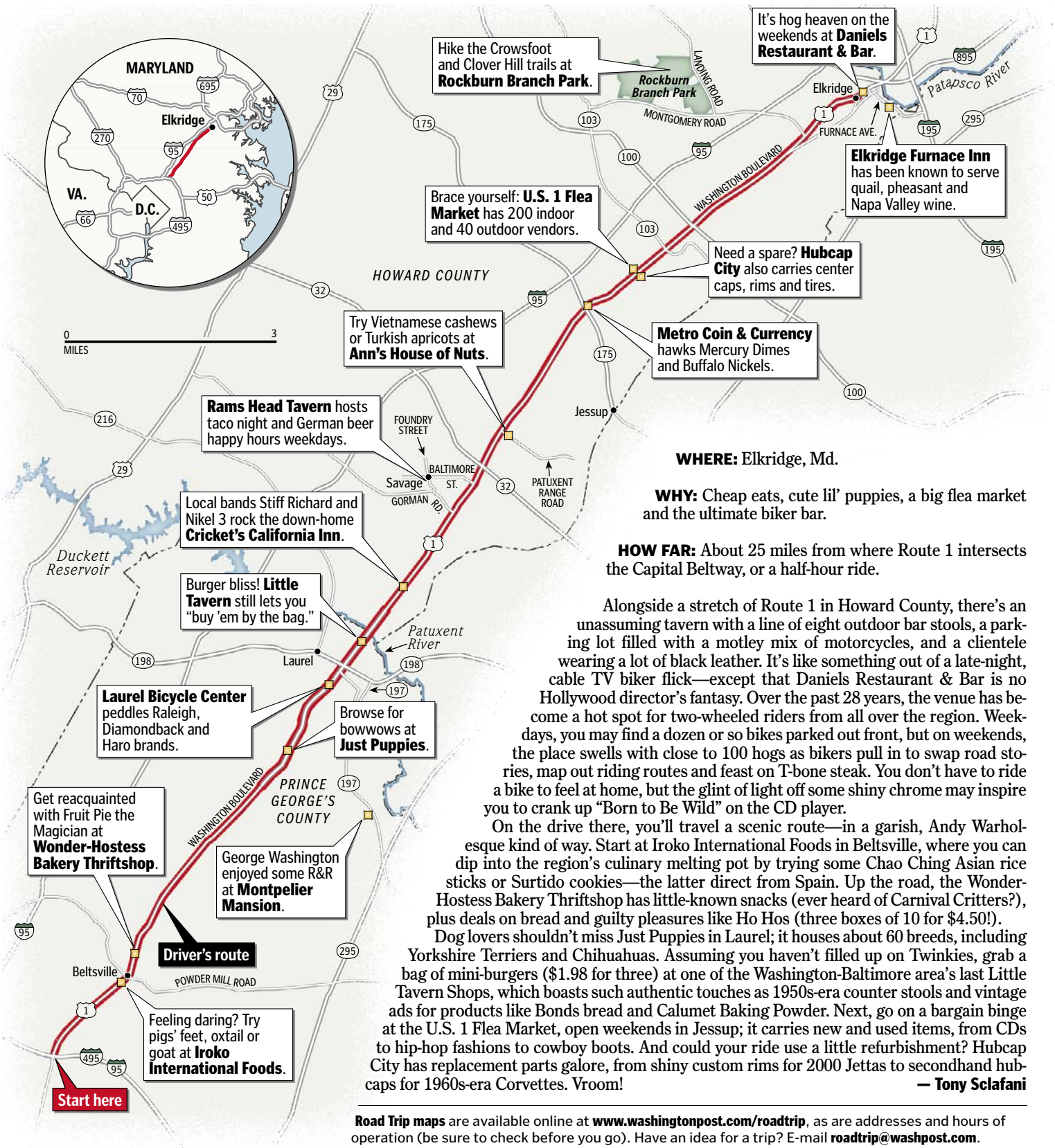
ROADTRIP | Daniels Restaurant & Bar



WHERE: Elkridge, Md.

WHY: Cheap eats, cute lil' puppies, a big flea market and the ultimate biker bar.

HOW FAR: About 25 miles from where Route 1 intersects the Capital Beltway, or a half-hour ride.

Alongside a stretch of Route 1 in Howard County, there's an unassuming tavern with a line of eight outdoor bar stools, a parking lot filled with a motley mix of motorcycles, and a clientele wearing a lot of black leather. It's like something out of a late-night, cable TV biker flick—except that Daniels Restaurant & Bar is no Hollywood director's fantasy. Over the past 28 years, the venue has become a hot spot for two-wheeled riders from all over the region. Weekdays, you may find a dozen or so bikes parked out front, but on weekends, the place swells with close to 100 hogs as bikers pull in to swap road stories, map out riding routes and feast on T-bone steak. You don't have to ride a bike to feel at home, but the glint of light off some shiny chrome may inspire you to crank up "Born to Be Wild" on the CD player.

On the drive there, you'll travel a scenic route—in a garish, Andy Warhol-esque kind of way. Start at Iroko International Foods in Beltsville, where you can dip into the region's culinary melting pot by trying some Chao Ching Asian rice sticks or Surtido cookies—the latter direct from Spain. Up the road, the Wonder-Hostess Bakery Thriftshop has little-known snacks (ever heard of Carnival Critters?), plus deals on bread and guilty pleasures like Ho Hos (three boxes of 10 for $4.50!).

Dog lovers shouldn't miss Just Puppies in Laurel; it houses about 60 breeds, including Yorkshire Terriers and Chihuahuas. Assuming you haven't filled up on Twinkies, grab a bag of mini-burgers ($1.98 for three) at one of the Washington-Baltimore area's last Little Tavern Shops, which boasts such authentic touches as 1950s-era counter stools and vintage ads for products like Bonds bread and Calumet Baking Powder. Next, go on a bargain binge at the U.S. 1 Flea Market, open weekends in Jessup; it carries new and used items, from CDs to hip-hop fashions to cowboy boots. And could your ride use a little refurbishment? Hubcap City has replacement parts galore, from shiny custom rims for 2000 Jettas to secondhand hubcaps for 1960s-era Corvettes. Vroom!

— Tony Sclafani

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BY JEROME COOKSON FOR THE WASHINGTON POST