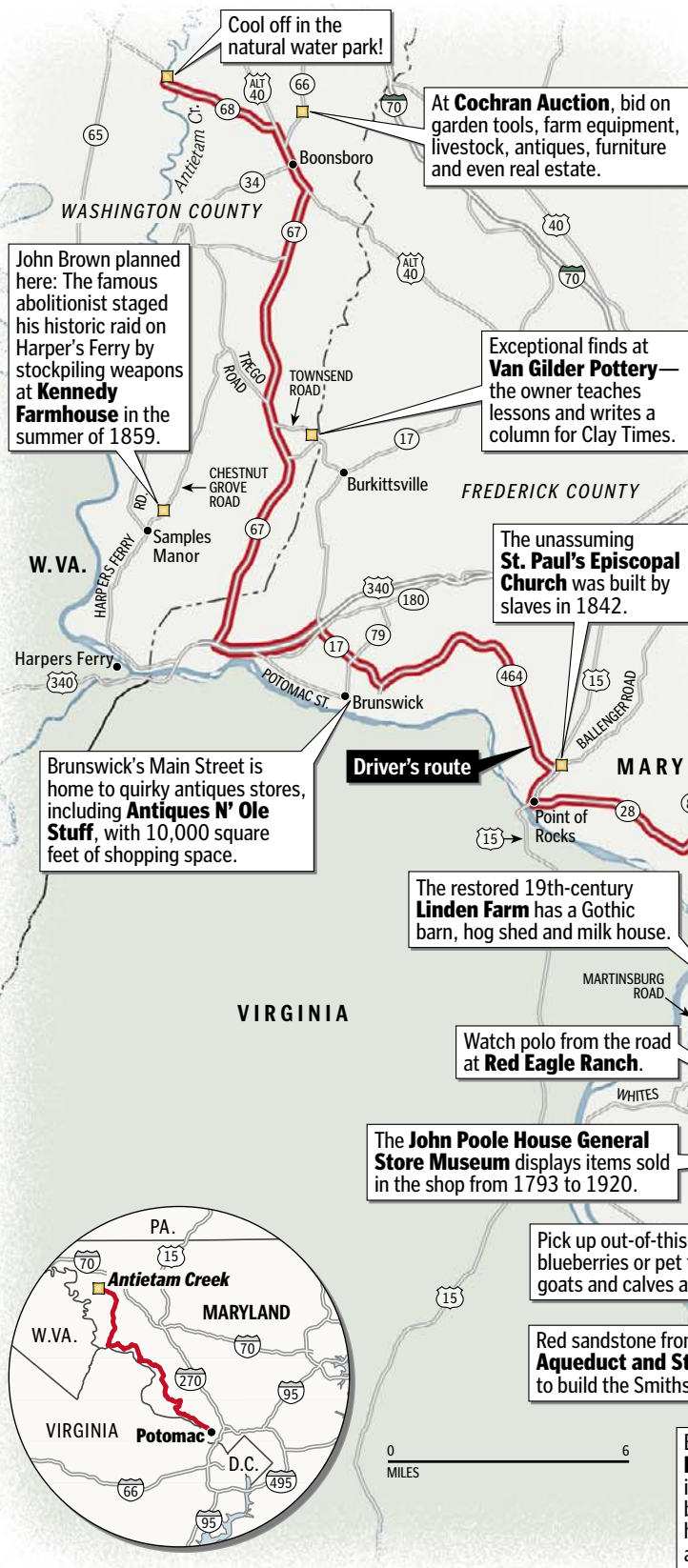


ROADTRIP | Canoe Antietam Creek



WHERE: Boonsboro, Md.

WHY: Equine leather goods, a super-stocked auction and splash-splash action on Antietam Creek.

HOW FAR: About 65 miles from Potomac, or 90 minutes.

In the city it's hot and humid, and you're sticky and miserable. Thankfully, nearby is a natural oasis for escaping the heat: Antietam Creek, a spring-fed waterway down in a hollow (or "holler," as the locals say), where the water-level temperature is often 20 degrees cooler than the surrounding countryside.

One of the best ways to enjoy the water is by canoe. Most of the creek is just one to two feet deep, with a few easy Class I and I/II rapids. Highlights of the ride include a couple of arched stone bridges, a waterfall and two deeper sections where you can swim and play on rope swings suspended from overhanging trees. If you've got access to your own boat, bring it along and put in at Devil's Backbone Park (you can drop off your car on Route 65 at the gravel parking lot a mile south of the Burnside Bridge; see the map at www.antietamcreek.com/lower-map.htm). Or, rent a vessel: At Antietam Creek Canoe (301-881-7570, www.antietamcreek.com), owner Greg Mallet-Prevost teaches a quick but thorough paddling lesson and runs guided tours. And River and Trail Outfitters offers guided tubing trips and canoe rentals (888-446-7529, www.rivertrail.com).

The drive there offers numerous other options for paddling adventures, following the C&O Canal and Potomac River and passing by Seneca Creek and the Monocacy River. Additional diversions: In Poolesville, Homestead Farm is worlds away from the antiseptic grocery-store produce department; you can pick your own fruits and veggies or try the decadent peach pie a la mode. Want to wow your passengers with a bit of trivia? In Point of Rocks, note that the town is best known for flooding whenever the Potomac runs high—77 times between 1929 and 2001. Finally, if you're on the road when Cochran Auctions is having a sale (check the Web site, cochranauctions.safeshopper.com), duck in to see if you can score a deal. You could walk away with anything from a table saw to an antique erector set, circa 1940.

— **Matthew Graham**

Road Trip maps are available online at www.washingtonpost.com/roadtrip, as are addresses and hours of operation (be sure to check before you go). Have an idea for a trip? E-mail roadtrip@washpost.com.