

Bound for the Bay

Clockwise from top left: The Chesapeake Bay Bridge, in coastal Maryland; chef Andrew Evans and his wife, Liz, outside their Inn at Easton; the library at the Inn at 202 Dover; the exterior of the Inn at 202 Dover, in an 1874 Colonial-style mansion, also in town.



THE APPEAL "More and more people are driving down here just

for dinner," says chef Andrew Evans, who opened the celebrated Inn at Easton with his Australian wife, Liz, in 2000 (28 S. Harrison St.; 410/822-4910; doubles from \$200; dinner for two \$100). Sure enough, Easton's increasingly rich food scene is well worth the drive from D.C. The *New York Times*'s legendary epicure, R. W. Apple Jr., raved about Evans's latest menu last summer in one of his final pieces.

DRIVING TIPS New York Avenue, the fastest route out of the capital, is an ugly commercial road, but before long it gives way to tree-lined Route 50. (A rush-hour alternative: take the Anacostia Freeway to 395 North, but avoid Route 495, the always-packed Capital Beltway.) Route 50 passes the Sandy Point State Park, an ideal spot for bird-watching, crabbing, boating, and swimming and leads to the 4.3-mile-long Chesapeake Bay Bridge, one of the world's longest; from 186 feet above the calm blue bay, it offers glorious views. A few miles farther, Kent Narrows Bridge crosses over a bustling marina. In summer, the final stretch of highway leading to Easton is dotted with farm stands selling fresh produce.

WHERE TO EAT At the Inn at Easton, Evans has created a menu with both Chesapeake (fried oysters with spicy butter sauce) and seasonal Pacific Rim ingredients (green Thai bouillabaisse »

Washington, D.C., to Easton, Maryland

A seafood bounty on the Eastern Shore



with bok choy and Moreton Bay bugs, a lobster-like Australian delicacy). Throughout, Evans concentrates on drawing out clean, bright flavors. The prix fixe menu, paired with hard-to-find artisanal wines (one top pick: a 1999 Vavasour Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc, from New Zealand), is served in an intimate 45-seat dining room on the first floor of a restored 1790 Federal mansion. Funky Aboriginal art lines the walls, and betta, Japanese fighting fish,

‘More and more people are driving down here just for dinner,’ says the Inn at EASTON’S CHEF



serve as table centerpieces in small globe fishbowls. “It’s not slick like a city restaurant,” Evans explains. “No one wants that when they come to the Eastern Shore.” But the freshest catch around comes by way of Jeff Shores, who runs daylong fishing trips on his 42-foot fiberglass motorboat (*Hard Ball Charters*; 410/310-4637; www.hardballcharters.com; \$600 for up to six people). At the end of the day, you can take home a cooler full of anything you reel in (expect rockfish April through November and bluefish May through September).

■ **DON'T MISS** At the Crab Claw (Rte. 33 W./Navy Point; 410/745-2900; closed in winter; lunch for two \$40), a 15-minute drive from Easton, in St. Michaels, teenage waiters deliver buckets of steamed blue crabs slathered in spicy Old Bay seasoning to newspaper-covered tables. The best seats are outside, right on the dock overlooking the marina.

■ **OVERNIGHT OPTION** In 2005, Ronald and Shelby Mitchell—a former D.C. ad exec and lawyer, respectively—discovered a deteriorating 1874 Colo-

nial-style mansion, which they restored to the tune of \$2 million. Open since last July, the Inn at 202 Dover (202 E. Dover St.; 410/819-8007; doubles from \$375; dinner for two \$100) has four suites, tastefully decorated with high-end antiques, flat-screen TV's, steam showers, and jet-stream tubs. Each morning, Ronald serves breakfast (orange-croissant French toast with ham, or goat-cheese scrambled eggs) on Wedgwood china in the glass-ceilinged conservatory; at bedtime, warm homemade chocolate chip cookies greet guests in their rooms. A steak-and-lobster restaurant debuted two months ago, with Cordon Bleu-trained chef Jorge Alvarez at the helm. —SHANA LIEBMAN »

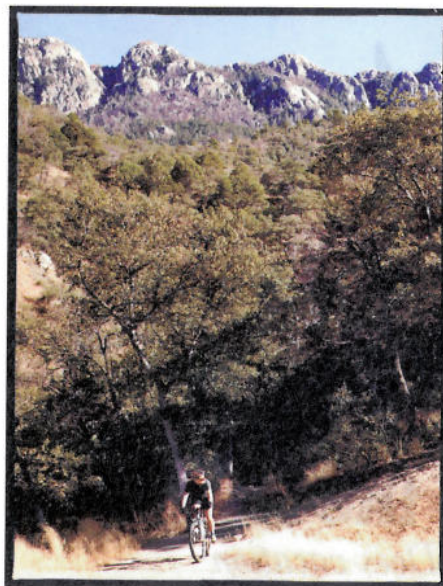
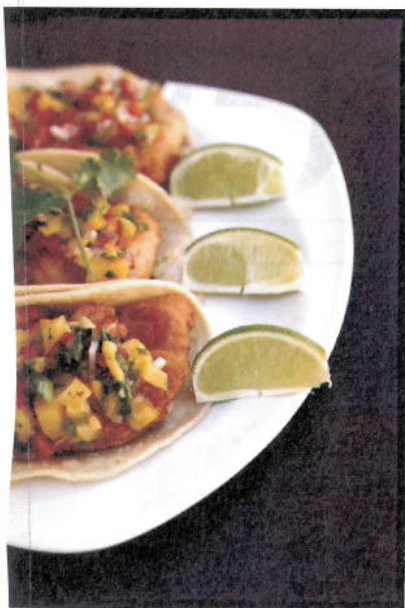


Melting Pot Clockwise from right: The marina at St. Michaels, a short drive from Easton; glazed barbecued pork belly at the Inn at Easton; the Inn's dining room, with Aboriginal artwork on display.



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■ **TAKE IT OUTSIDE** The 13-mile-long Elephant Head Trail, which begins near the top of Madera Canyon, can be a bruiser—you're bicycling past barrel cactus at peak speed—but the views are unmatched. There's paved road on both ends of the course, so bicyclists can be dropped off and picked up easily. Tucson-based Sol Journeys will meet you at the I-19 trailhead for a guided daylong ride with picnic lunch, yoga wind-down, and a half-hour post-biking massage (www.soljourneys.com; custom trips from \$175 per person). For hikers—and birders—the Bog Springs–Kent Spring Loop, a 4.3-mile trek through dense woods linking several different fern-laced springs, will not disappoint. More than 15 species of hummingbirds, as well as the Trogon—a large parrot-like bird from Mexico—take shelter here.

■ **WHERE TO EAT** The Mexican border lies just 23 miles south of Tubac, so it's no wonder that tacos, enchiladas, and margaritas are popular. Wisdom's Cafe (1931 E. Frontage Rd., Box 25;

520/398-2397; lunch for two \$35), a lovable dive, has been serving tasty beef enchiladas for more than 60 years. For the area's most sophisticated Mexican food, Dos Silos (520/398-3737; dinner for two \$55), on the grounds of the Tubac Golf Resort, prepares dishes such as chicken mole and corn casserole.

■ **OVERNIGHT OPTION** The 68-room Tubac Golf Resort (1 Otero Rd.; 520/398-2211; www.tubacgolfresort.com; doubles from \$179), set on a 500-acre historic ranch, is within walking distance of the Anza trail, a lazy path following the cottonwood-lined Santa Cruz River (www.nps.gov/juba). For a more intimate stay, check into the Tubac Secret Garden Inn (13 Placita de Anza; 520/398-9371; www.tubacsecretgarden.com; doubles from \$125), a bed-and-breakfast run by the welcoming Leila Pearsall, who serves fresh cinnamon rolls at breakfast. The classic Southwest interior—terra-cotta Saltillo tiles on the floor, white adobe walls—give you the sense that you're in an old western. —BRAD WETZLER +



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