



ANNETTE LEIN file photo

The Esperanza Mansion in Bluff Point, Yates County, offers a picture-perfect view of Keuka Lake.

Spring fling on KEUKA

The close-to-home lake offers plenty of options for a weekend escape

BILL REED

THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Folks from Rochester can get back and forth to Keuka Lake on a long day trip, but that's no reason to forego a relaxing weekend getaway to the Y-shaped Finger Lake. And a spring fling lets you avoid the visitors and higher prices that arrive with summer vacation and the fall foliage season.

When my wife, Valerie, and I visited Keuka Lake last fall, we were lucky — for two reasons — to get a room at the Trimmer House, 145 E. Main St. in Penn Yan.

First, most of the two dozen or so B&Bs around the lake (and the Best Western, too) were booked — largely by people who, like us,

were there for weddings.

Second, the 115-year-old Queen Anne house was picturesque, from the formal yet comfortable library, music and dining room to our spacious bedroom with its queen-size sleigh bed and claw-foot bathtub.

Our host, Gary Smith, renovated the place to look as it did when wine merchant David Orville Trimmer built it for his wife and daughters in 1891. Smith also provides modern comforts such as air conditioning, VCRs, wireless Internet access and a hot tub. Posted rates range from \$99 to \$199 double occupancy. For more,

call (800) 968-8735 or go to www.trimmerhouse.com.

For travelers who want more pampering and creature comforts, such as a full-service restaurant on site, the obvious choice is the stately Esperanza Mansion, 3456 Route 54A in Bluff Point, Yates County.

The Greek Revival house, with its bright-white facade and towering columns, offers a commanding view of Keuka Lake. Built in 1838 and a National Registered Historic Landmark, it's a picture-perfect location for a wedding — which is why my college chum's daughter and her fiance picked it. (For a more casual stay, there are

Online Extra

FINGERLAKESWINE.COM

Look for our interactive map of the wine region and multimedia features.

Events

Mother's Day Buffet and cruise: The Esperanza Mansion, 3456 Route 54A in Bluff Point, Yates County, is hosting a buffet from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. May 13. Cost is \$23.95 (\$10.95 for children ages 5-11; free for children 4 and younger). The price includes a cruise on the Esperanza Rose tour boat (weather and space permitting) at 1, 2:30 or 4 p.m. (866) 927-4400 or www.esperanzamansion.com.

Keuka Lake Wine Trail: Event hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays, noon to 5 p.m. Sundays (or 11 a.m. for east-side wineries). Designated drivers get a 25 percent discount. For details and reservations, call (800) 440-4898 or go to www.keukawine.com.

■ Keuka in Bloom, May 19 and 20. Along with food and wine samples, participants receive a potted flower or herb at each winery. Cost is \$30, or \$45 per couple. Reservations required.

■ Barbecue at the Wineries, June 9 and 10 and June 23 and 24. Cost is \$30, or \$45 per couple; \$5 less in advance.

21 motel-style rooms in the Inn at Esperanza.) Posted rates (which include a continental breakfast) start around \$180 and go up to \$260; ask about weekday and pre-season discounts.

The mansion also runs the Esperanza Rose, one of two tour boats that normally cruise the lake. (The Keuka Maid is the other, but mandated hull inspections may keep the boat out of the water for most of the upcoming season.) While the Esperanza Rose's regular season begins Memorial Day weekend, a cruise is included in the price of the mansion's Mother's Day buffet on May 13.

For more on the mansion, inn