

G O D O M E T E R

New Hampshire

words: Sue Haley

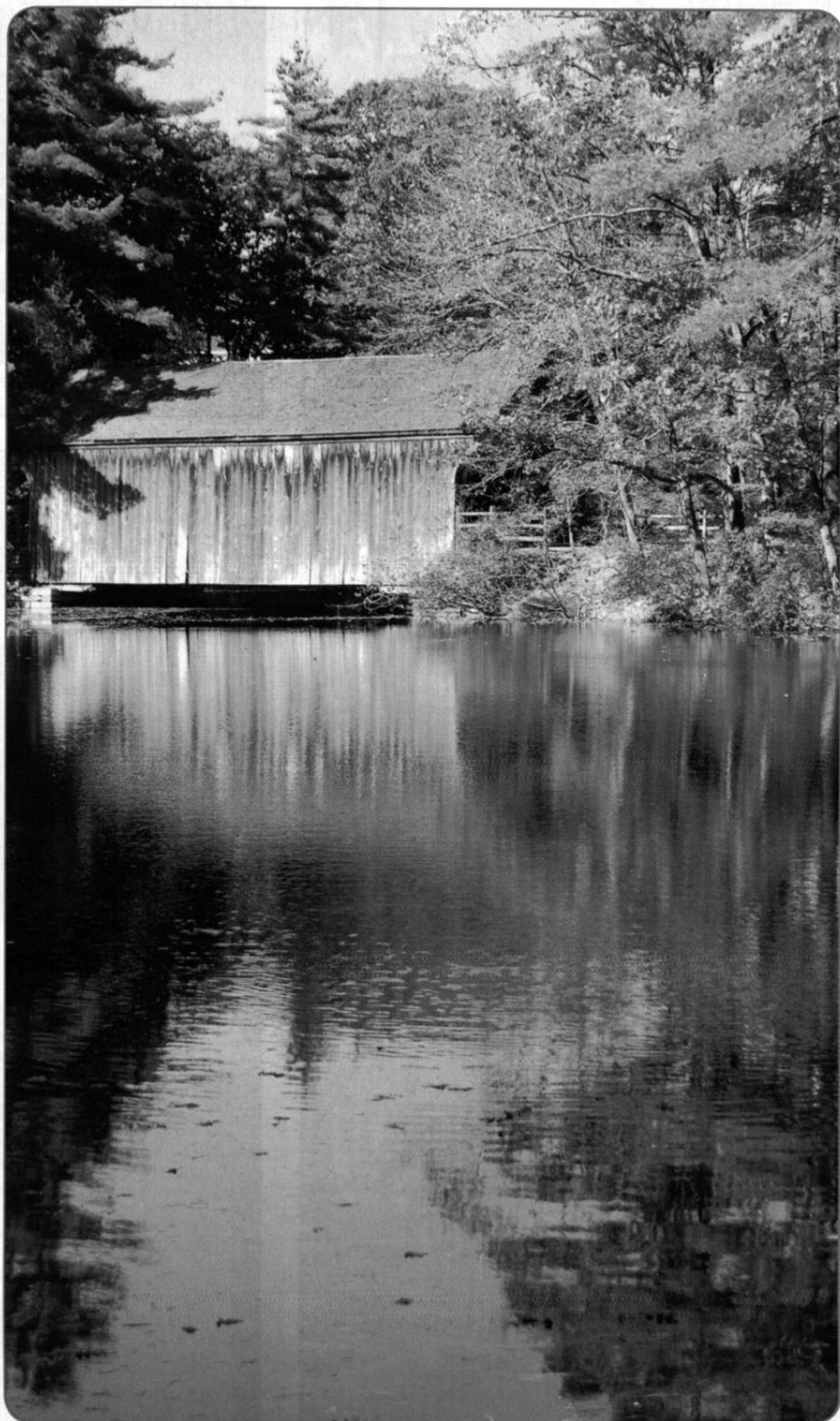
photos: Julia Freeman-Woolpert

It looked like something out of the movies. I stood up on the back pegs of the bike and snapped repeatedly trying to capture the vivid colors I saw through the lens. Bright reds, oranges, and yellows zoomed by as Johnny and I rode down the Kancamagus Hwy. It was a last minute motorcycle trip to end the year, and we couldn't have picked a better time. It was October, peak season for the changing of the colors, and there was no better place to view it than in one of the most beautiful New England states

- New Hampshire.

Our flight landed in Manchester where a representative from Eagle Riders greeted us. Talk about great service! Even on such short notice they were able to put us on a 2006 Ultra Classic. Because we were limited on time, we had given Marcy and Jug from Eagle Riders an idea of where we wanted to go and what we wanted to see and they handed us marked maps and phone numbers.

We headed out in the rain taking Hwy 149, a backroad to Hillsborough. From there we dropped down to Keene and picked up Hwy 12 North which runs parallel to the Connecticut River and divides New Hampshire and Vermont. It continued to rain, but even the dark clouds couldn't stop the first amazing impressions of the changing season. We passed one of the longest covered bridges in the United States and it reminded



me of movie, "The Bridges Of Madison County." We followed the river heading north to Woodville, then turned southeast directing us to our destination, The White Mountain National Forest. I can sum it up in one word, awesome.

Our first day ended in North Woodstock at the Woodstock Inn. Believe me, there's a reason people kept pointing us in the same direction. The locals of New Hampshire are used to visitors at this time of year and the information they offer is pretty consistent and dead on. The Inn was a bed and breakfast and Johnny and I stayed in the attic. The bathroom was to die for with a footed bathtub, and fluffy bathrobes that hung on ceramic and brass hooks on the back of the door. One inch white equiangular ceramic tiles bordered in black wrapped the walls and floors, and a porcelain water picture sat in a washbowl in the corner of the room. I felt I was visiting another period of time and I loved it.

On day two we headed north to Lincoln and the Kancamagus Hwy that takes you right straight dab in the middle of the White Mountain National Forest where colors exploded. This was it. This is what we came to see. Tree framed waterfalls broke free from the mountainsides and rippled across rocks and into lakebeds. Vivid colors formed a high vaulted cathedral ceiling over the highway. The branches intertwined in the breeze and mixed colors like that of an artist's pallet. "This must be heaven," I thought.



In Lincoln we turned east on Hwy 112 to Conway then north on Hwy 16 to our destination, New England's highest peak, Mount Washington Auto Road. Unfortunately, even though it was a sunny day the road was closed to motorcycles. The park ranger informed us that the weather can change on the mountain from sunny to stormy winds in a matter of minutes. We were disappointed, but we had already seen and experienced more than we had expected. We rode until there was no more light and returned to the Inn for a romantic dinner for two.

We woke up early the next morning and started our journey home. The backroads never leave their passengers disappointed and we were graced by New Hampshire's beauty as we made our way to Manchester. Beyond the road, around a curve, and through the trees Lake Winnepesaukee, where "On Golden Pond"

was filmed, with her banks slapping against wooden docks and drifting boats was a magnificent end to our adventure. It was right out of the movies.

Johnny and I made a promise to each other when we married that we would help each other do and see the things we wanted to do and see before we turned up our toes. Seeing the leaves change colors in a New England state was on my list. We couldn't have picked a better place to experience it than in New Hampshire.

