

Charming Columbia County



The mile-long Hudson River Skywalk.

By Andrew Frey

With its bucolic allure and breathtaking river views from atop Catskill peaks, Columbia County offers natural beauty, history and a plethora of activities. Just a two-hour Amtrak ride from New York City, Columbia County is one of my favorite places for a weekend getaway, especially the city of Hudson.

The FASNY Museum of Firefighting, a short hop from the historic Hudson Station, is home to a premier collection of American firefighting engines, equipment and fine



1939 Buffalo fire truck at FASNY Museum of Firefighting.

art. Walking through the doors, I see young families enjoying the countless interactive exhibits. Children and parents, dressed in “turnout gear”, climb aboard the museum’s Discovery Trucks, fulfilling a fantasy of being a firefighter for a day. Others slide down a fire pole, put out fires with a water cannon and save a victim as part of the Junior Firefighter Challenge Course. I decide to amble through the rows of retired firetrucks, and come across a 1731 Newsham Pumper, the oldest documented fire engine in New York State.

A short trip south from the FASNY Museum is the Hudson River Skywalk. Running alongside the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, the mile-long walkway’s three “bump-outs” allow for incredible views of the Hudson River and surrounding Catskill Mountains. It also links two historic sites, the Thomas Cole National Historic Site in Catskill and Frederick Church’s Olana in Hudson. Atop the bridge, I enjoy the fresh air with bikers, joggers and others casually walking. The Skywalk is a great place to unwind in the afternoon.

From there, I head toward the Berkshires for a sneak peek at Catamount Mountain Resort’s newest zip line. Opening in spring 2019, it’s the longest zip flyer in the United States at 5,500 feet long. Zipliners will reach speeds of 55 m.p.h., while descending 1,000 vertical feet, a truly

RIGHT: JIM STEINHART TOP: PHOTO COURTESY OF GREATNORTHERNCATSKILLS.COM