

GAMING GETAWAYS

AT THESE DRIVE-TO DESTINATIONS, THE CASINOS ARE JUST THE BEGINNING OF THE EXCITEMENT

By Stacey Zable

Three casino resorts — all less than a three-hour drive from New York City — stand out as places to go when you feel the draw of the tables and slots. And with top dining and entertainment, world-class spas and fun area attractions, these locales make for great weekend escapes.



PHOTOS BY MOHEGAN SUN

MOHEGAN SUN

Uncasville, Conn.

THE 185-ACRE, NATIVE AMERICAN-THEMED casino resort along the banks of the Thames River boasts a 1,200-room luxury hotel tower connected to three casinos with some 350 gaming tables and 6,000 slot machines plus more than 35 retail shops. As if you need more ways to keep you busy, a 10,000-seat arena, the Cabaret Theatre and the Wolf Den bring in top headliners, comedy shows and sporting events.

You may choose never to leave the hotel tower, where you'll find the 22,000-square-foot Elemis Spa, a haven for pampering. In addition to its long list of services and treatments that take place within 20 individual rooms, you can spend "me" time in the sauna, steam room, whirlpool and relaxation area.

Next door to the spa is an indoor pool with food and beverage service and a seasonal outdoor terrace. Nearby, a large fitness center is the place to burn off the calories you're sure to rack up when you indulge in the area's dining scene. More than 40 restaurants and bars, including nightclubs and lounges, can be found here.

When it's time to explore southeastern Connecticut beyond the casinos, check out the quaint town of New London and its historic waterfront district, only 20 minutes away. Pair dinner in town with seeing a show at the beautifully restored Garde Arts Center, an attraction dating back to 1926. For dinner, consider Chaplin's. Chef/owner Jack Chaplin and his staff create delicious American bistro meals dominated by seafood. • Mohegan Sun Blvd. • mohegansun.com • 888-226-7711

INSIDER TIP

Try Ballo Italian Restaurant & Social Club for an elegant meal. Designed to resemble a Gothic abbey built in the 12th century in Tuscany, the large space sets the mood for fresh, locally grown produce and Italian favorites. Service is also superior.

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MOUNT AIRY CASINO RESORT

Mount Pocono, Pa.



PHOTOS BY MOUNT AIRY

H EAD TO THE POCONO Mountains, where this AAA Four Diamond property combines gaming fun indoors with four-season outdoor adventures. Mount Airy's casino has more than 80 gaming tables and 1,700 slot machines.

An overnight stay at the 188-room hotel includes unlimited use of the new "Get Wet" indoor/outdoor pool and entertainment complex, which opened in spring 2014. Splurge on a private luxury cabana with daybed and TV and enjoy the heated pool any time of year. A passage allows you to swim between the indoor and outdoor pool. The lounge offers light dining and after-dark entertainment.

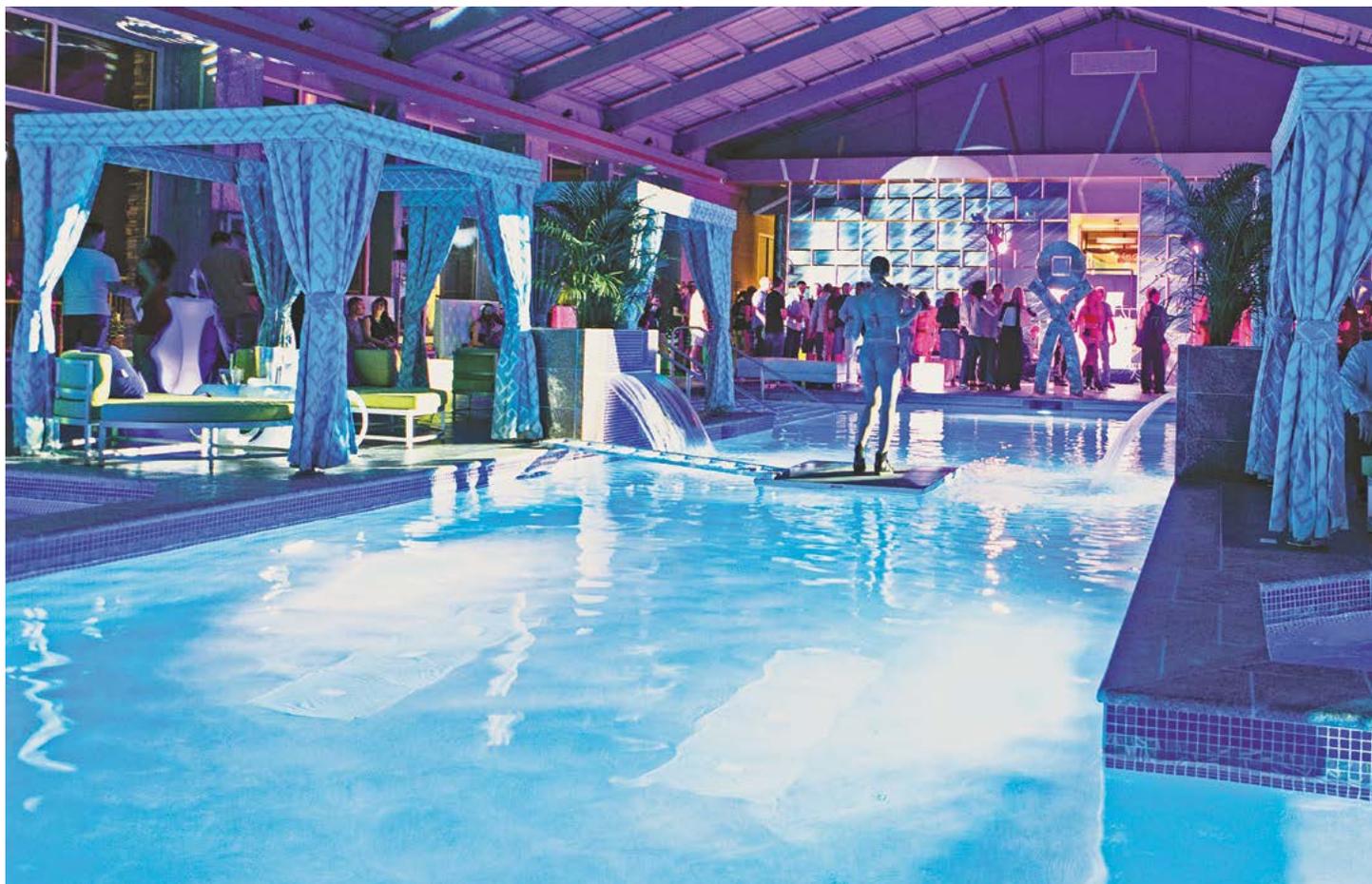
A 16,000-square-foot spa, salon and fitness center, plus a lakefront 18-hole golf course, provide more leisure options. With a Luxury Day Pass (\$30), guests can indulge in steam rooms, a sauna and rainfall showers, a nice way to end a day spent receiving massages, wraps, facials and other treatments.

Beyond the resort, take in all the Pocono Mountains have to offer. Depending on the season, you can try skiing, hiking, fishing, mountain biking, whitewater rafting, zip lining or horseback riding.

• 312 Woodland Rd. • mountairycasino.com • 877-682-4791

INSIDER TIP

The new Guy Fieri's Mt. Pocono Kitchen opened in September. The late-night comfort food menu has twists on chicken wings (with homemade buffalo sauce, blue cheese and wasabi dipping sauce), burgers (bacon mac-and-cheese) and fries (Vegas-style, topped with buffalo sauce, blue cheese crumbles and blue-sabi).



Mount Airy Casino has a 51,000-square-foot indoor/outdoor pool complex with a bar, fire pits and a nightlife scene.

BORGATA HOTEL CASINO & SPA

Atlantic City, N.J.

A TLANTIC CITY STILL BOASTS a number of grand casino resorts, and it's easy to stay at one and visit others.

The 2,000-room Borgata is the ideal spot for a home base during an AC getaway.

Borgata's casino has 250 gaming tables, 3,475 slot machines, a poker room and Racebook. When it's time for food and drink indulgence, the hotel's dozen-plus dining venues include celebrity chef favorites Wolfgang Puck American Grille and Bobby Flay Steak. Retail boutiques, nightlife experiences and The Music Box theater provide even more entertainment choices.

Go next door for pampering at the Immersion Spa at The Water Club at Borgata, which features wonderful views of the Atlantic Ocean and the Atlantic City skyline. Its 80-foot-long infinity-edge lap pool is surrounded by 42-foot ceilings and floor-to-ceiling glass panels. The Immersion experience continues

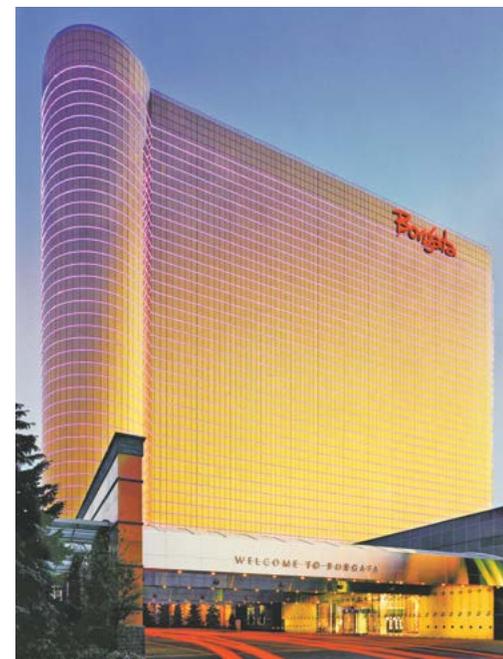
inside 16 treatment rooms, the cold-water plunge pools, Jacuzzi and steam rooms. Spa lunch can be served poolside or within a private spa suite.

When you're ready to explore the city, take a five-minute drive to the famous 3-mile-long Boardwalk, home to arcades, shops and eateries. The Steel Pier is where you'll feel like a kid again with amusements, thrill rides, games and an assortment of entertainment.

• 1 Borgata Way • theborgata.com • 609-317-1000

INSIDER TIP

A must-stop in the Borgata is the Gypsy Bar, where tequila isn't the only thing that comes in all shapes, sizes, colors and flavors — more than 80 in fact. Savor an eclectic beer selection and enjoy the live music, but by all means sample the famous homemade pineapple tequila shot. You won't regret it. ●



BORGATA HOTEL