

**SUZI CORDISH AND CASTLE ON THE HUDSON PHOTOS**  
Suzi Cordish describes the century-old Castle on the Hudson hotel in Tarrytown in the Hudson River Valley, above, as "spectacular."

# VALLEY FEVER

Maryland arts advocate Suzi Cordish feels at home amid natural beauty of New York's Hudson River Valley region

**BY STEPHANIE CITRON**  
Special to The Baltimore Sun

**M**aryland Art Place chairwoman and fundraiser Suzi Cordish doesn't like to sit still for very long. Along with her husband, developer David Cordish, she travels to exotic settings around the world, wherever work and interests take the couple. They frequent world-class art fairs, international tennis tournaments and high-powered global conferences. But when it comes to divulging her favorite getaway, Cordish points to an American region that is long revered for its inspiring historical significance and well-preserved natural beauty: the Hudson

Valley and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

We talked with Cordish about her love for the valley, where she might go next and the one thing she doesn't travel without.

**Where is your favorite travel destination?**

Between our two careers, we travel so often, it's hard to choose just one place. But one of our favorites is Tarrytown, N.Y., and West Point.

**How and when did you discover it?**

We first visited last spring when David and I went to watch Johns Hopkins play Army in lacrosse at West Point. I mentioned our plans to my father, who is a retired Army general, and he told me, "Seeing West

Point is an experience of a lifetime."

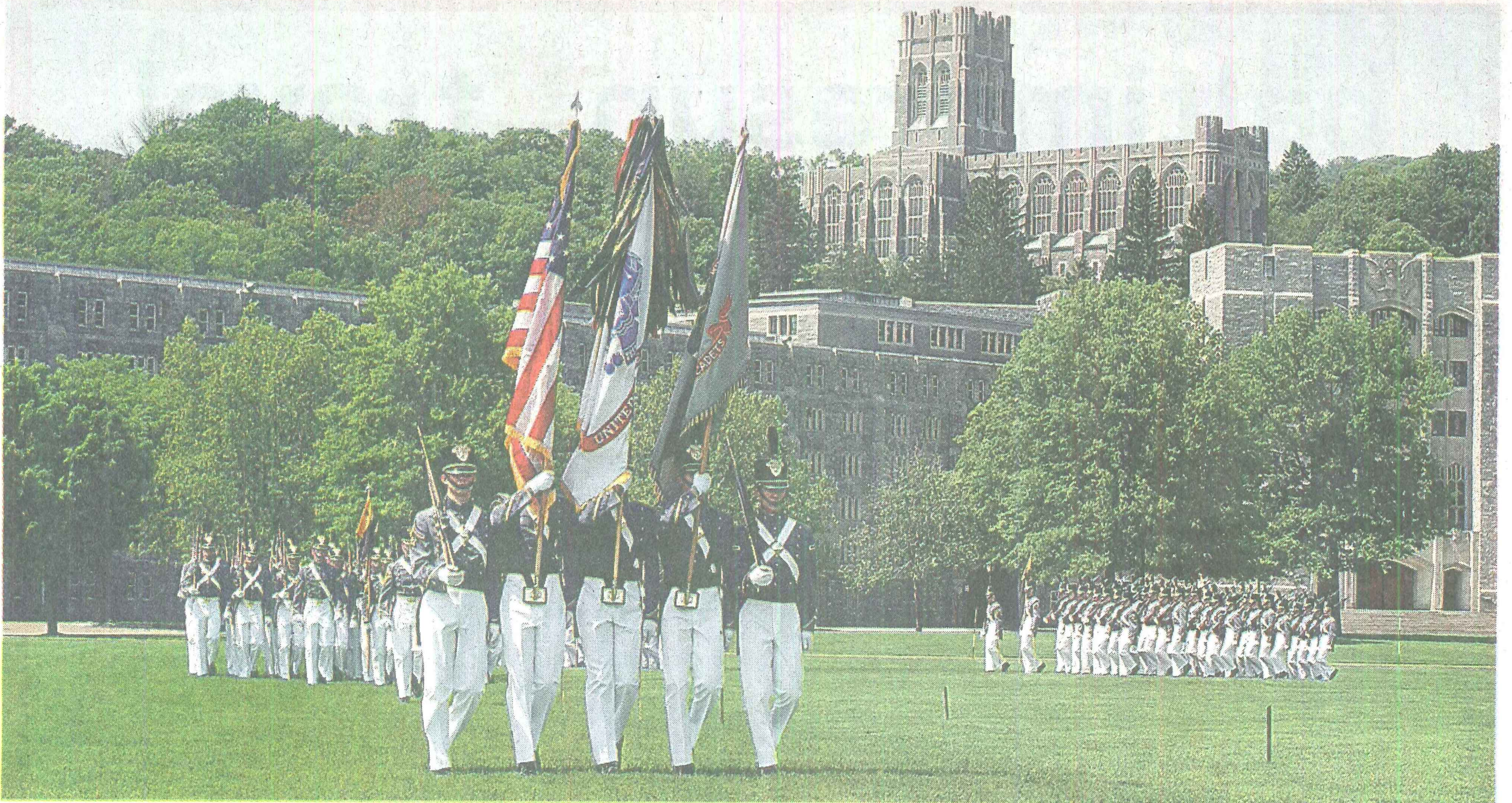
We found ourselves wondering, knowing the Naval Academy so well, how can anything compare — and West Point really does. We're actually taking friends there this weekend because we love it so much.

**What do you find so inspiring about this destination?**

From a historical point of view, it is the birthplace of our country forming a cohesive fighting force. Because of the natural beauty of the region, it's such a fabulous fall destination.

**Where do you stay?**

Last time we stayed at the hotel on campus — the Thayer. It is a gorgeous old See **TRAVELER**, page 7



HUDSON VALLEY TOURISM PHOTO  
A color guard at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Suzi Cordish's father, a retired Army general, told her, "Seeing West Point is an experience of a lifetime."

# Her heart's in the Hudson River Valley

**TRAVELER**, From page 1

hotel overlooking the Hudson and West Point. It is a bustling place, especially on a weekend when there is a sporting event. On this trip, however, we are going to stay at the Castle on the Hudson in Tarrytown, which is spectacular.

## What can visitors see at West Point?

The school is beautiful, overlooking the Hudson River. The buildings are all so old and historic, but some are brand-new, so you can see the evolution of it all. And, of course, you see the cadets walking to class in formation, which is so magnificent.

The museum on the campus is extraordinary, housing some of the oldest military artifacts in the country. There are tours every hour; they are so well-organized!

It's a [combination] bus and walking tour. The guides explain every spot of historic significance in the area. You visit the [Main Cadet] chapel and the cemetery, which has gravestones dating back to the 1700s. [The oldest grave is that of Ensign Dominick Trant, a soldier in the 9th Massachusetts Infantry, who died at West Point in 1782.] They show you the location in the Hudson where the U.S. positioned huge, handmade iron chain-link barriers to block British ships from entering the area during the Revolution.

## What else is there do in the area?

That's the fun part, because you are so close to a number of other things. From West Point, we visited Storm King [Art Center], a 500-acre park with curated exhibitions of outdoor sculpture all around the property. It is one of the world's leading sculpture parks; for art buffs it's a dream.

Then there's Kykuit, home to four generations of Rockefellers, beginning with John D. It is an extraordinary tour because you go through the house and the gardens.

Rockefeller also had an incredible sculpture collection, which includes Picassos, David Smith and so many others. In his art galleries, you can see the tapestries and all the other things he collected, like cars and horse-drawn carriages.

## Are there any activities on the Hudson River?

Yes, there is a boat tour called Pride of the Hudson, and it is so much fun. You catch the cruise just north of West Point. It is so beautiful to be out on the water and see the [Hudson] Valley from that vantage point.

## Where do you like to dine up there?

Because the Culinary Institute is based in the Hudson Valley, it's really a culinary mecca. We ate at the Castle on the Hudson at Equus, their five-star, somewhat formal dining experience. It is really special.

## What other destination ranks high on your must-see travel list?

Sicily and Corsica. We've been to Italy several times, but David and I haven't seen that part of the country.

Do you have a favorite travel bag or

suitcase?

My lucky suitcase is a Tumi. My baggage must be able to fit overhead; I never, ever check it. I'd rather avoid that tense moment of "did it make it?"

## What is the one item you will not travel without?

Family photos. I have this little travel album that is always in my suitcase.

## Do you have any favorite travel reads?

Well, I just spent six hours on a plane returning from Lisbon reading "The Hare with Amber Eyes" by Edmund de Waal. You've got to read this book!

It's the story of his family's collection of netsuke, tiny ornamental Japanese carvings. De Waal's research about the netsukes led him back to discover that his family was once one of the most important Jewish families from Russia — similar to the Rothschilds — and how this collection was the only thing of the family's vast art collections that managed to survive the Nazi takeover. Its perfect for a long trip!

## You travel so often — do you use travel guides?

I like books that talk about how travel should be. Do you remember Alice Steinbach's "Without Reservations"? I love the way she travels, allowing serendipity to come into the trip and not always be booked. That's really important to us. I don't overprogram us, so that we can do a little discovery.

## If you go

### GETTING THERE

Although trains travel to the region (Amtrak to New York, then Metro North to Peekskill), the best way to see the expansive Hudson Valley region is via car. From Baltimore, West Point is a five-hour drive of about 270 miles. Take Interstate 95, then the New Jersey Turnpike to the Garden State Parkway North. The drive becomes picturesque once you enter the Palisades Parkway, which will eventually land you in the Hudson Valley.

### LODGING

**The Thayer Hotel at West Point**, 674 Thayer Road, West Point, 845-446-4731; [thethayerhotel.com](http://thethayerhotel.com). The Thayer, on West Point property, is an ornamental, majestic hotel. In the marble and leaded glass-adorned lobby are displays of international flags and portraits of celebrated military leaders. Room rates start around \$219.

**Castle on the Hudson**, Benedict Avenue, Tarrytown, 800-616-4487; [castleonthehudson.com](http://castleonthehudson.com). This hotel is a 100-year-old castle built by the son of a Civil War general. Its posh



BRYAN HAEFFELE PHOTO

Kykuit, home to four generations of Rockefellers, features a number of tours of the house and gardens, including collections of art, cars and horse-drawn carriages.



The Oak Room in the Equus restaurant features paneling taken from a home once owned by Louis XIV of France.

CASTLE ON THE HUDSON PHOTO

guest rooms with luxurious amenities begin at \$295.

### DINING

**Equus**, 914-631-3646, [castleonthehudson.com](http://castleonthehudson.com). The regal Oak Room at the five-star, Zagat-rated restaurant in the Castle on the Hudson was once owned by Louis XIV. Try the arctic char with pine nuts. Entrees from \$28.

**Harvest on Hudson**, 1 River St., Hastings, 914-478-2800, [harvest2000.com/hoh](http://harvest2000.com/hoh). Modern Mediterranean cuisine with views of the Hudson and Palisades. Entrees from \$24.

### DON'T MISS

**United States Military Academy at West Point**. Along with its impressive sites, watching an Army football game at Michie Stadium has been described as one of the greatest experiences in sports. Tickets start at around \$79. Go

to [goarmysports.com](http://goarmysports.com) or call 877-849-2769. Tours of West Point are offered daily, 9 a.m.-4:45 p.m. Tickets begin at \$12. Go to [westpointtours.com](http://westpointtours.com)

**Storm King Art Center**, Old Pleasant Hill Road, Mountainville, N.Y., 845-534-3115; [stormking.org](http://stormking.org). This 500-acre landscape showcases more than 100 sculptures by prominent artists.

**Kykuit**, 381 N. Broadway, Sleepy Hollow, 914-631-8200. The Rockefeller estate includes extraordinary gardens, architecture, artwork and history. There are five tour options, with tickets ranging from \$23-\$35.

**Pride of the Hudson Boat Tours**, Torches Landing, Newburgh, N.Y., 800-979-3370; [prideofthehudson.com](http://prideofthehudson.com). Two-hour sightseeing cruises.

### INFORMATION

Go to [travelhudsonvalley.org](http://travelhudsonvalley.org) or call 800-232-4782.