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BY OLIVIA GUNN KOTSISHEVSKIYA

EVER DREAM OF FREE-FALLING at 120 miles per hour? Close encounters with creatures of the deep?

**YOU'RE GONNA
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"It's crazy to have a 200, 300-pound shark on your line." Twenty miles offshore, captain Ben Gardner is reeling

in 300-pounders. "Blue sharks, makos, threshers. Threshers are the biggest, but the most entertaining are the makos," he says. "They come flying out of the water when they're hooked—ten, fifteen feet—and do backflips."

With over 25 years of fishing under his belt, Gardner is the guy you want on deck when you hook one of these. His company, **Kristin K. Charters**, offers inshore fish-

ing, ground fishing, and shark fishing for groups of four. For \$995, a shark fishing trip is by far the most exciting.

Have the desire but not quite the stomach to fish these beauties? It might help to know Gardner is a catch-and-release man. "We tag them for the National Marine Fisheries Services, and we've found some of our sharks turn up all over the world: South America, Spain, the Canary Islands."

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CAGE MATCH

Dave Sinclair and his team at **Sea Ventures Charters** in St. George has just the cage for you. “We run out quite a ways, about 20 miles,” says Sinclair. “Like we’d be going fishing, we set up chum buckets to get the sharks to come up. The cage is set up with a door at the top so the divers can pull themselves up if needed. It’s about 400, 500 feet deep. We see makos, blue sharks, threshers. They range in size up to about 12 feet. It’s cool being in their environment, to see them just gliding around.”

From mid-July through August, Sinclair takes groups of six certified divers out on the boat for \$1,200. “It’s a great opportunity for photography. We’ve been doing this for 20 years. We found that sharks are attracted to electronic impulses like strobe cameras, so we’ve had situations where sharks will come up behind the diver. They mouth things to investigate, but we’ve never had any skin broken. In the end, these sharks have no interest in eating people. They’re just exploring where the scent is coming from. They’re wild animals, and we’re invading their territory.”

SKY HIGH

Not everyone’s got sea legs, but who wouldn’t try a set of wings?
At Biddeford’s **Skydive Coastal Maine**, instructor Rich Fowler and partner Nick Sergi have over 20,000 jumps between them. “About five percent of the population wants to jump out of an airplane—at least that’s what the last marketing person told me,” Fowler says. “It starts with signing the paperwork, which is usually the scariest part.”

From May to October, thrill seekers take a Cessna 182 10,000 feet up before free-falling in tandem (i.e., harnessed to an instructor) with either Rich or Nick. Imagine the Maine coast racing toward you from that vantage point!

“We free-fall down to 4,000 feet. It’s falling for about a mile. Free fall speed is 120 mph. Once your parachute opens up, you have a ride down to the ground, about five to seven minutes,” Fowler says. “The emotions on the ride [up] to altitude run the gamut from people crying to hysterically laughing.”

This weekend, check out **Skydive New England** in Lebanon. “We have an on-site

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OUTDOORS

restaurant called the Ripcord Cafe,” says Danielle Sutton, a licensed instructor with SNE, “as well as bunkhouses to rent and grounds to camp on if tandem students would like to spend the night. Often on Saturday nights, we provide live music entertainment after the plane lands for the day, theme parties, and lawn games.” Weekend jumps start at \$235.

ZIP LININ' AWAY

There may be no snow on the slopes, but that's no reason to stay off the mountains. The Twin Zips at Sunday River are 750 feet long, side by side. For \$15 each, you and a pal can go head-to-head.

At Sugarloaf, groups leave every 90 minutes to soar through the trees on six zip lines 20 to 30 feet above Gondi Brook. At 25 miles per hour, each tour takes about 75 minutes.

READY FOR TAKEOFF

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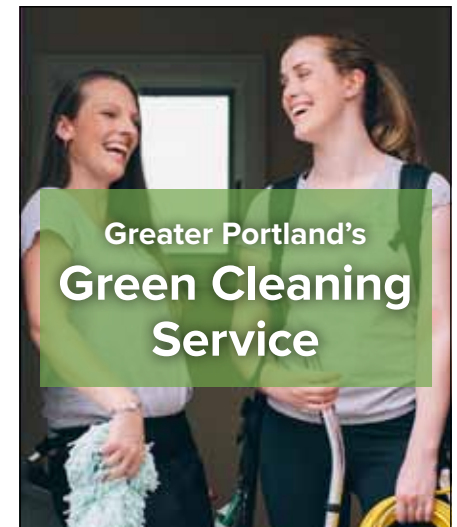
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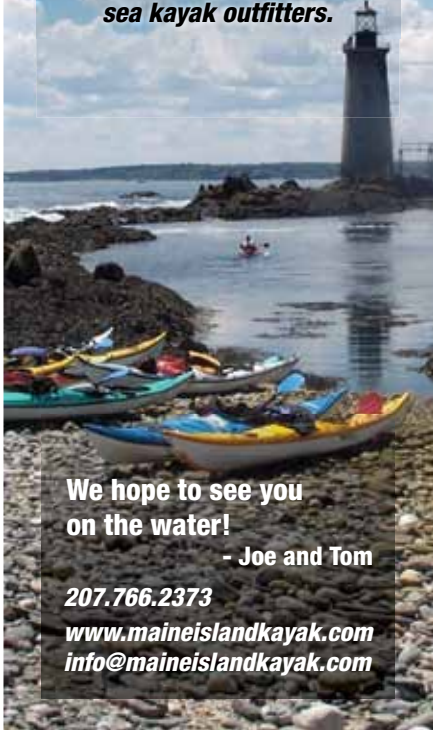
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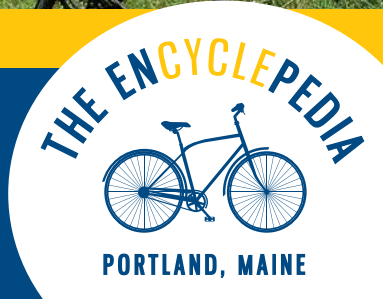
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Nulty teaches powered paragliding, similar to paragliding but with a motor. "We don't have mountains [to jump off] along the coast, so we put motors on our backs. We take off from airports or fields. I do a lot of the training out of my house in Arundel, but a lot of the flying is done at the Biddeford or Sanford airports, depending on the wind."

Powered paragliding is expensive: SP prices start at \$3,500 for a beginner with no experience or equipment. McNulty suggests a tandem flight with him first. "I had a guy up from Massachusetts, and he wanted to tandem flight. So we met at Sanford airport, and we flew for a bit, and he said that was enough. Now we're talking to him about getting gear! It's a good way to dip your feet in the air, so to speak."

What's it like up there? "It shouldn't be this easy for a human being to fly," McNulty says. "It might be the new, unique perspective that is the wow part. I couldn't think of anything else after coming back from my first flight."



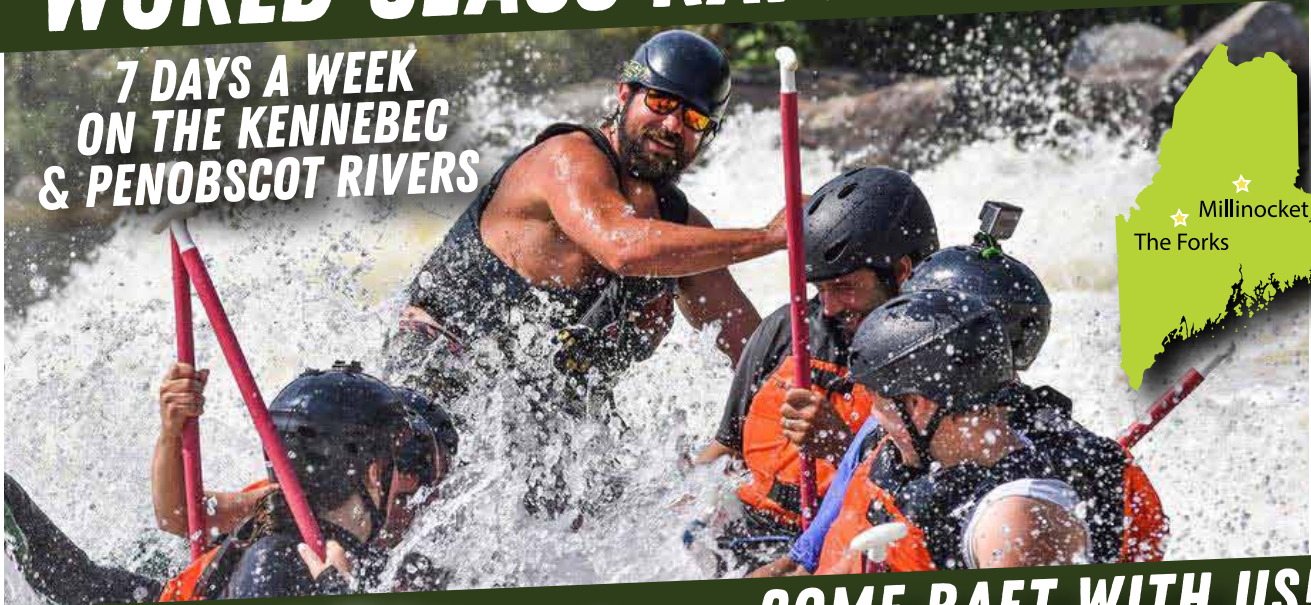
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ALL ABOARD

Hang on to your paddles—it's going to be a bumpy ride! Maine rivers are calling, and the Kennebec and Penobscot rivers provide prime Class IV and V rapids throughout the summer.

At **Northern Outdoors**, based in The Forks, arrive Friday night and set up your tent along the Kennebec (\$13 per night) in a prime spot (hopefully with Kennebec River Pub & Brewery within walking distance). Hold off guzzling too many Let 'er Drift Summer Ales, though. "The Kennebec trip is an all-day activity," says Russell Walters, who joined Northern Outdoors as a kayak guide in 1983. "You're on the river at 10 a.m. We raft for a few hours until noon, then pull ashore for a cookout on the beach. We get back on the river before 1 p.m. and reach The Forks around 2:30 p.m. or so. You're on the river for three hours, traveling 12 to 13 miles."

Prices for rafting range from \$69 to \$134 per person. On Wednesdays, Maine residents raft at half price. ■



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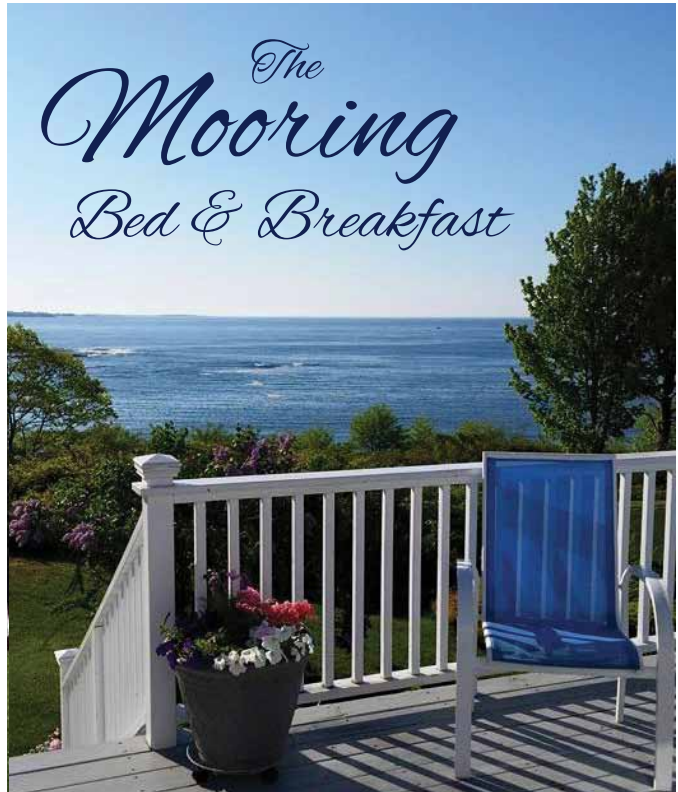
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