



New Jersey

BY ANDREA LYN VAN
BENSCHOTEN

New Jersey is the subject of many jokes, and many who do not live in Jersey, as it is known to its residents, usually think of crowded, urban areas; but we know better. This wonderful state is home to many local yarn shops, farms, and flocks who provide fiber to spinners across the country, as well as wonderful fiber festivals.



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1. Nonna's Yarn Café is a great yarn shop in northern New Jersey in Morris County. Located on Broadway in the heart of Denville Center, sisters Nickie and Josephine opened the shop in 2005 in memory of their mother who taught them to knit, crochet, and sew. During one of my recent

visits on a busy Saturday afternoon, Josephine and Nickie were assisting several customers with yarn selections while simultaneously leading a class of knitters varying in age from a young child to several adults. The ladies were quick to tell me how much they enjoy coming to the class and improving their skills. "This is the happiest place on earth," Nancy Pool from Denville, New Jersey, pointed out. Rachel Rosenbeck from Parsippany said, "I came here and I found a family." Josephine and Nickie plan on doing more knit-alongs to increase the social aspect of fiber arts and also plan to continue to increase their handspun and hand-dyed yarn offerings.

2. Another wonderful local yarn shop is **Woolbearers** in Mount Holly. The shop opened in May 2004, and owner Myra can help you pick just what you need for your spinning, weaving, or knitting project. "I have dreamed about having my own yarn shop since I graduated college," Myra said. "I have been knitting since I was nine and have been spinning for about ten years and love all sorts of fiber." In 2008, the *Courier-Post* voted Woolbearers the best knitting store in South Jersey, and Myra loves every aspect of her business.

3. The Spinnery is a warm and inviting fiber-arts shop in a lovely historic building in Frenchtown. You can find everything you need for spinning, knitting, crochet, felting, and weaving. The staff is very helpful and they have a great selection of fiber and yarn. During a visit earlier this year, I was able to



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1. Nonna's Yarn Café

26 Bloomfield Ave.
Denville, NJ 07834
(973) 983-9276
info@nonnasyarncafe.com
www.nonnasyarncafe.com

2. Woolbearers

90 High St.
Mount Holly, NJ 08060
(609) 914-0003
woolbearers@verizon.net
www.woolbearers.com

3. The Spinnery

33 Race St.
Frenchtown, NJ 08825
(908) 996-9004
www.spinnery.net

4. Laurie's Lambs

98 Sykesville Rd.
Chesterfield, NJ 08515
(609) 324-0487
laurie@laurieslambs.com
www.laurieslambs.com



purchase a support spindle and check out the latest new wheels on the market.



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4. If you would like to visit one of the many public farms in New Jersey, I highly recommend **Laurie's Lambs** in Chesterfield. Owned and operated by Scott and Laurie Andreacci, Laurie's Lambs is a wonderful ten-acre family farm with Tunis, Shetland, and Gotland sheep. I had the opportunity to spend an early summer afternoon with Laurie and her sheep, and it is just obvious how much she loves them! Laurie has been spinning for about six years and is also the president of the American Gotland Sheep Society. Laurie's flock increased by twenty-eight lambs this year—she quickly describes how each has its own personality and voice. She especially enjoys having children visit the farm so she can educate them about the sheep, their wool, and its different properties.

5. **The Fiber Fiesta** takes place during June in Lambertton and is sponsored by Alpaca Heritage Events. Admission is free, and there are great free seminars available to the public as well as fiber shopping opportunities! Alpaca Heritage Events sponsors several events in New Jersey throughout the year so a look at the website is highly recommended.

6. September 2009 marks the 15th Annual **Sheep & Fiber Festival** sponsored by the Garden State Sheep

Breeders Association. This two-day event includes knitting and spinning classes taught by the North Country Spinners and a fleece auction. The festival is located at the Hunterdon County Fairgrounds.

7. **WoodsEdge Wool Farm**, located in Stockton, has several events throughout the year open to the public, including the shearing festival each spring and the fall fiber festival in October. This working fiber farm is home to llamas and alpacas.



LAURIE ANDREACCI

8. Each fall the North Country Spinners host their **Fiber Fallout** in Johnsonburg. This weekend-long retreat offers classes in spinning, knitting, crochet, weaving, and more, all taught by wonderful teachers.

New Jersey offers plenty to the fiber enthusiast, regardless of whether you are a spinner, knitter, weaver, crocheter, or felter. Once you check out all there is to offer, you will definitely come back again and again!

Andrea Lyn Van Benschoten is a fiber artist living in Morris County, New Jersey, with her husband of fifteen years, Glenn, and her cockatiel, Mendelssohn. She writes a blog called The Fiber Forum (<http://thefiberforum.com>) and has had several crochet patterns published in books and magazines. She will be launching her own crochet pattern line this fall. You can also review her portfolio of work on her website, www.alvbfiberart.com.



INGRID WOOD

5. Alpaca Heritage Fiber Fiesta

Lumberton, NJ 08048
www.alpacaheritage.com/bnas.html

6. Garden State Sheep Breeders Sheep & Fiber Festival

Hunterdon County Fairgrounds
 1207 Rte. 179
 Lambertville, NJ 08530
 (908) 730-7189
sevensprings7@hotmail.com
www.njsheep.org/festival/index.html

7. WoodsEdge Wool Farm

78 Bowne Station Rd.
 Stockton, NJ 08559
 (609) 397-2212
wwfalpaca@aol.com
www.alpacasllamaswoodsedge.com

8. Fiber Fallout

Johnsonburg Presbyterian Center
 822 Rte. 519
 Johnsonburg, NJ 07846
FibreFallout2010@aol.com
www.northcountryspinners.org/retreat.htm