

my perfect escape



Mount Vernon Belvedere Association

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baltimore is my great escape. When I was a graduate student living in Bologna, Italy, I would occasionally get away from the city by taking an hour-long train ride to Florence. Although Bologna is a charming medieval city, I would need a break from it and Florence, a Renaissance city, provided the perfect refuge. When I moved to Washington, DC, I searched for another Florence, a city radically different from Washington that I could flee to when I wanted a change of pace. I found my perfect escape in Baltimore.

After having lived for over 15 years in the Washington area, I still love going to Baltimore. It's still a refreshing tonic from the stresses of DC, and the city still charms me.

What I love about Baltimore is that it is a real city in the way that New York, Philadelphia, and Boston are. These cities all have a distinct personality to them, brewed from years of history. With its unique downtown areas, its regional dishes, and its distinctive accent, Baltimore has character—strong character that pulls at my senses.

The harbor particularly draws me to Baltimore. It has an air of mystery. I get a thrill taking the water taxi from Fells Point to the Inner Harbor or looking at the large ships anchored around the harbor, wondering what tales they shield behind their stern facades.

I find the romance of Baltimore in the Mount Vernon area. When I walk around this neighborhood, I am engulfed in old-world charm. Here, there's a gothic touch to the city. Remove the cars and modern trappings and you can easily imagine what the area looked like a hundred years ago. It's no wonder that the Cone sisters saw it as a place of art and culture.

There's still so much for me to explore in Baltimore—a labyrinth of neighborhoods. Some are so full of homespun places and quirky people that I feel like I've walked into an Anne Tyler novel. Others have an off-beat sophistication to them. And then there are those, like Little Italy, that take to me to different worlds altogether.

My husband and I sometimes talk about moving to Baltimore because of our mutual fondness for the city. We see it as more livable and affordable than the Washington area. But then, I think, if I lived in Baltimore, where would I escape to?

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