



◀ **RENAISSANCE PERIOD:** Counterclockwise from above: riders in the Chilli Challenge; a scenic shot of Danville; Mill Street.

# NITTANY LION NEIGHBORS

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From a half hour to an hour and a half away from Penn State University, the towns of Danville and Philipsburg offer a unique alternative stopover on the way to a college visit or football game – and the towns themselves are students of the Main Street Program, with a curriculum of community-based revitalization.

## DANVILLE

Montour may be Pennsylvania’s smallest county, but what it lacks in size, it makes up for in history and character – especially in Danville, the county seat. Situated on the banks of the Susquehanna River, this rural community stands at the cusp of a small-town-America renaissance, offering welcoming enhancements to complement a football weekend at Penn State or nearby Bloomsburg University.

Danville rose to early prominence as an iron-making center. By the mid-1800s, foundries producing the nation’s first iron T-rails fueled the expansion of American railroads. A hospital founded in 1915 by Abigail Geisinger has evolved into Geisinger Health System, the region’s largest employer.

Although the mills and blast furnaces have long been quiet, an annual summertime Iron Heritage Festival ([ironheritagefestival.net](http://ironheritagefestival.net)) held in July celebrates the town’s industrial legacy – and school athletic teams sport the Ironmen insignia.

Handsome, ironwork-embellished homes of the **1 West Market Street Historic District** provide an architectural narrative of Danville’s prosperous past. (Find walking tour information at the **2 Montour County Visitors Center:** 570.284.4455; [itourcolumbiamountour.com](http://itourcolumbiamountour.com)) Lodgings are even available at one Victorian beauty, **3 The Doctor’s Inn B&B** (570.275.1821; [thedoctorsinn.com](http://thedoctorsinn.com)).

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Danville Business Alliance Executive Director James Wilson

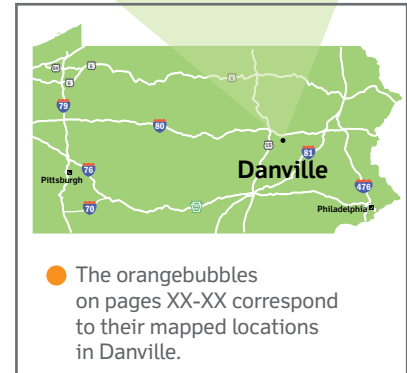
Revitalization is evident along Mill Street, the town’s main artery. Appointments such as vintage-style street signs and benches, plus colorful planters and flags, create a nostalgic atmosphere. The Danville Business Alliance (DBA), working with Pennsylvania Downtown Center’s Main Street

**1 The Bite**  
City Girl Bakery Market offers artisan baked goods and stellar sandwiches >> 572.275.6778; [citygirlbakery.com](http://citygirlbakery.com)

**2 The Buy**  
Todd Jeffrey’s handcrafted pottery at Stoneware studio-gallery embodies an earthy elegance >> 570.275.0604

**3 The Bed**  
Modern amenities pair with rustic ambiance at The Pine Barn Inn >> 800.627.2276; [pinebarninn.com](http://pinebarninn.com)

**4 The Bait**  
Local artistry feeds all the senses at Old Forge Brewing Company >> 570.275.8151; [oldforgebrewingcompany.com](http://oldforgebrewingcompany.com)



Program, has facilitated commercial façade restorations, and new businesses are flocking to the rejuvenated downtown. “Within an 18-month window, a dozen new stores and businesses will have opened,” says DBA Executive Director James Wilson. “A new Geisinger [medical] office downtown has increased foot traffic and income, bringing a larger customer base.”

Top stops for shoppers include **4 Lemon A’peel** (570.275.4575) for chic giftware, **5 The Wee Home Shoppe** (570.275.6538; [weehomeshoppe.com](http://weehomeshoppe.com)) for all-things-dollhouse, and **6 The Tea Gallery** (570.284.3032; [the-teagallery.com](http://the-teagallery.com)) for a cup of chai, an eyeful of amazing digital art and friendly conversation with co-owner/artist Tom Repasky.

One major downtown attraction, **7 Old Forge Brewing Company** (570.275.8151; [oldforgebrewingcompany.com](http://oldforgebrewingcompany.com)), is expanding its location by 25 more seats. Founded in 2008 by home-

brewer-turned-pro Damien Malfara and his wife, Maria, this cheery, bi-level brewpub focuses on craftsmanship, from stellar handmade beers to fresh-and-local foods like Amish cheddar and fresh-baked pretzel rolls. Area artisans crafted everything from the restaurant’s furniture and dishware to carved and forged tap handles, creating a delicious experience for guests.

Another DBA-driven project, a huge river-themed mural, presides over the Susquehanna by **8 River Front Park**. Community volunteers assisted in the effort, and a second mural is planned. Ambitious plans for further development of the park are also in the works.

Special events include a Fall Arts & Crafts Fair (see [visitdanvillepa.org](http://visitdanvillepa.org) for more information) on September 11, a 30-year tradition that brings 100-plus artisans and thousands of visitors to Danville. The geographically diverse River Towns Race Series ([rivertownrace.com](http://rivertownrace.com)) – cross-discipline competitions for

athletes of all ages and skill levels – includes a festive, Halloween-costumed Danville Area Community Center 5K run on October 30 and the much-anticipated Chilli Challenge Adventure Triathlon, taking place at Lake Chillisquaque on October 16. Peddling, paddling and running through the gorgeous **8 PPL Montour Preserve** (570.437.3131; [pplweb.com/montour+preserve](http://pplweb.com/montour+preserve)) may be the healthiest way ever to enjoy spectacular fall scenery.

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▲ **THE 'BURG, FLIPPED:** Counterclockwise from above: cross-country skiing; Heritage Days, the dining room at the 1921 Restaurant at The Philips Hotel.



Rooftop dining eight stories up at the 1921 Restaurant offers a great perch to see the colorful fall foliage blanketing the surrounding mountain ridges and valleys.

## PHILIPSBURG

Settle in at the 1921 Restaurant at the Philips Hotel filled with light from shiny original brass light fixtures above the marble-topped bar, and windows nearly as high as the 24-foot ceiling, and it's easy to daydream back to Philipsburg's Roaring Twenties. Then, coal barons would have strolled by those tall windows, headed to the train station – or come in for a bite.

Philipsburg, a half-hour from State College at the junction of Routes 53, 322 and 504, is building upon those glory days to reinvent itself. The \$2 million Philips Hotel renovation represents

Philipsburg's rich history, and new investment into its vision as a hospitality hub. Chances are those coal barons didn't have nearly the delicious menu choices found today at the ① **1921** (200 E. Presqueisle St., 814.342.7445; [thephilips1921.com](http://thephilips1921.com)): for lunch, crepes with strawberries and bleu cheese salad, and for dinner, steaks, seafood – the crabcakes are divine – and brie-stuffed pork chops, grilled and served with a berry compote and sweet potato fries.

This fall, with 12 newly renovated hotel rooms (and 12 more planned for development), a new casual pub and a weekend rate of \$129/night, the Philips offers Penn State football fans a unique,

classic hotel and dining experience. Owners Faith Luchesi and Tony De Boef, husband-and-wife attorneys, plan rooftop dining eight stories up, a great perch to see the colorful fall foliage blanketing the surrounding mountain ridges and valleys.

If it's an afternoon game you're heading to Penn State for, you'll have plenty of time when you return to explore this town in transition. Take a stroll in ② **Black Moshannon State Park** (nine miles east on Route 504, 814.342.5960; [dcnr.state.pa.us](http://dcnr.state.pa.us)) with the Black Moshannon Creek and 16 miles of trails. Don't miss seeing a first-run flick at the historic 1917 ③ **Rowland Theater**, with

🚗 **The Bait**  
With a parade, flower and car shows, food, and crafts, Philipsburg celebrates its past during **Heritage Days** in July. >> 814.342.3440; philipsburgheritagedays.com

🍷 **The Bite**  
The culinary combinations of Chef Robert Vogely sparkle at **1921 Restaurant**, at **The Philips Hotel**. >> 814.342.7445; thephilips1921.com

🛏 **The Bed**  
Rooms with personalities of their female namesakes at **Whispering Sisters B&B** add to the charm. >> 814.342.5335; whisperingsisters.com

🛒 **The Buy**  
Browse for hours in a jam-packed Amish barn at **Conklin's Corner Antique & Gift Barn**. >> 670 Tyrone Pk., Route 350; conklinscornerbarn.com

○ The orange bubbles on pages XX-XX correspond to their mapped locations in Philipsburg.

the largest screen between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh. The Philips' renovation sparked renewed vigor in the town's revitalization, underway since 1999. A new coffee shop, used bookstore and events space – ④ **1 North Front Street** (1 N. Front St., 814.342.3113; [1northfrontstreet.com](http://1northfrontstreet.com)) – opened nearby. It joins longtime local family dining favorites like ⑤ **Bock's Dining, Tea Room and Village Store** (429 N. Centre St., 814.342.4751, [bocksdining.com](http://bocksdining.com)), known for plate-sized breakfast pancakes, French onion soup and homemade everything, along with 17 vendors selling a variety of collectibles, handbags and jewelry.

Downtown, you'll also find the ⑥ **Simler House**, (100 N. 2nd, 814.342.7115, [philipsburgpa.org/history/tour.shtml](http://philipsburgpa.org/history/tour.shtml)) a restored log cabin home of an original settler who arrived in 1797. The Simler House is open Sundays 2 - 4 p.m., between Memorial Day and Labor Day, or by appointment. Lumbering, coal and the railroad helped usher in the town's heyday, but manufacturing took over in the 1950s and '60s. First-time visitors will see a downtown still shaking off a dated look, and note the potential of its 1920s architecture. There's more here than meets the eye, as old-fashioned craftsmen have established niches in the 21st-century

economy: Jim Ricotta at ⑦ **Ricotta Jewelry** (105 N. Front St., 814.342.3709) is well-known for antique pocket watch repair, musicians seek out ⑧ **Richard Sleigh** (205 E. Pine St., 814.342.9722; [customharmonicas.com](http://customharmonicas.com)) for custom-built harmonicas, and when a colorful celebrity built like Hulk Hogan, MC Hammer or Gene Simmons wants a well-made, great-fitting suit to match his vibrant personality, he visits Chuck Navasky at ⑨ **Falcone Clothing and Menswear**, (124 Walton St., 814.342.1160; [falconesuits.com](http://falconesuits.com)) a 110-year-old family-run business. You never know who you might spot in Philipsburg.