

# TIME

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## WORLD'S GREATEST PLACES 2024



COURTESY OF THE OMNI HOMESTEAD RESORT

The Omni Homestead Resort.

## THE OMNI HOMESTEAD RESORT AND WARM SPRINGS POOLS

WARM SPRINGS, VA.

BY **DEVORAH LEV-TOV**

Visitors to the aptly named Bath County get a healthy dose of history and wellness thanks to a plethora of mineral springs that have attracted visitors for centuries. Welcoming travelers since 1766, Omni Homestead Resort is America's oldest resort and was a favorite of Thomas Jefferson's, who resided here for three weeks to help his rheumatism. Today, the grand dame property is set on 2,300-acres within the Allegheny Mountains of southwestern Virginia, and has more than 10 bars and restaurants focused on local bounty; a vintage movie theater; an expansive spa and pool utilizing the mineral springs; and two championship golf courses. The resort recently completed a \$150 million property-wide renovation with newly designed rooms and public spaces. Guests revel in the bygone days here, with formal dinners, horseback riding, a daily afternoon social hour in the Great Hall, and classic movie screenings, while also enjoying modern ame-

nities like a game room, Virginia wine tastings, and skiing and ice skating in winter (the resort even has its own lift and ski slope). Of course, one can't visit Bath County without indulging in the natural warm and hot springs that dot the landscape. The best place to do so is about five miles down the road from the hotel, at the iconic Warm Springs Pools, which dates to 1761 and was a favorite of Franklin D. Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy. Also owned and maintained by Omni, the Reception House and the Ladies' and Gentleman's Bathhouses, which are octagon-shaped wooden buildings surrounding two pools, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and Virginia Landmarks Register. Last year, the pools, which are fed by four mineral-rich warm springs, underwent a 14-month, \$4 million rehabilitation to save and restore as much of the historic building as possible, while also ensuring that the structures are prepared to serve for many more years.