

La Trappe Creek & Oxford

Sailing up from Solomons Island the previous day, we had 18 knots on the nose, four-foot seas, and gusts up to 25 knots, so when we woke up to a sunrise illuminating an orange, lazy fog hovering over a calm, blue, glassy La Trappe creek, we decided to stay for the day and enjoy this sweet spot.

One of the keys to successful cruising is down time. You have to stop and smell the roses. I've long been guilty of too much sailing and not enough hanging (sailing the Cyclades in two weeks, sailing from St. Martin to Antigua in seven days). On this

the night. The next day, we ate a casual breakfast, pulled anchor, and motored around the corner to Oxford to pick up some groceries. Our next destination was Trippe Creek, which was only a few nautical miles away — no stress, no rushing. We had all day to enjoy.

Since we were well into September, we knew we wouldn't find any crowds at Oxford or Trippe Creek. As expected, we had Oxford practically all to ourselves. When we glided up to the empty fuel dock at Mears Yacht Haven, they not only lent us some bikes to ride into town,

more for it. So don't expect to "stock up" here, but you could buy some ice cream and enjoy the town's sandy beach.

Oxford is a perfect example of why we like to get off our boat once in a while. Getting on shore and walking or biking around lets your mind and your body expand and equalize. People drive all the way from Philadelphia and Baltimore just to wander the streets of Oxford.

I've also brought *Merritt* to race in this sleepy little town. Racing sailors come from around the Bay to experience racing to Oxford, and the log

■ Robert Morris Inn in Oxford.
Photos by Michaela Urban



■ Sandy beach at Martin Point at the entrance to La Trappe Creek.



trip, we pushed hard the first days just to get south, but we quickly realized we were falling into that trap again. So, we turned down the volume and started to chill. That's what's great about long sails, it gives you time to settle in and find your "zone." The day-to-day stress of the rat race slowly fades, the Bay's wonders wash away your troubles, and you realize you don't really have to be or go anywhere. You're fine just where you are.

After a very lazy and relaxing morning on La Trappe, we took the dinghy to a sandy spit that separates La Trappe from the Choptank and soaked up some afternoon sun. In the evening, we caught a few crabs off the back of the boat, made risotto, and watched the sun settle in for

but also let us park in a slip for an hour while we shopped. In the height of the season, this would likely not happen, but in September, as things are slowing down, the staff seemed happy to have visitors to break up the boredom.

Oxford is one of my favorite spots on the Bay, but don't expect to find much nightlife here. It is a conservative, quiet town that doesn't like noise or fuss. If you're looking to rip it up, St. Michaels is a better bet. If you want to relax and wander around a gorgeous classic Eastern Shore town, you'll love Oxford.

As far as provisioning goes, the little town grocery store has some nice specialty items and will get you what you need, but you'll pay a bit

canoe races of the Oxford Regatta can be both dramatic and beautiful. After the regatta, the party at a local mansion could be a scene out of "The Great Gatsby," only instead of tuxes and spats, everyone wears blue blazers, shorts, and pastel-colored ties.

Whether you're here for cruising or for racing, you have got to love Oxford.

Where La Trappe Creek on the north side of the Choptank River: 38.6269, -76.1200.

Why Near Tilghman Island, Oxford, and Cambridge; great anchorage just inside the mouth.

Drawbacks Popular on summer weekends, not much room for boats.