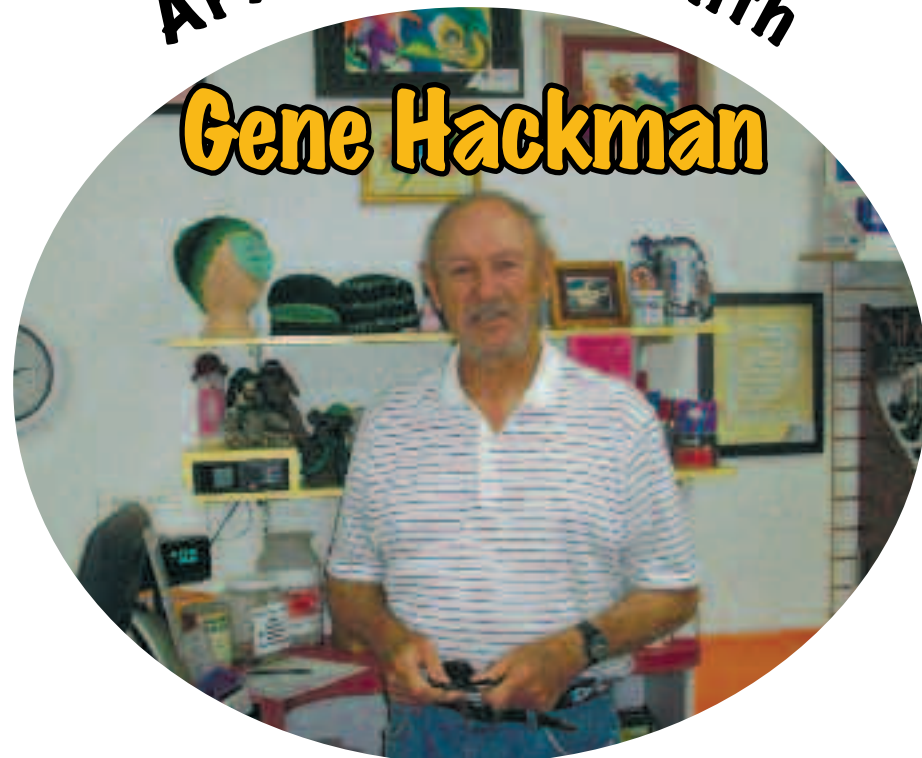


Artist of the Month

Gene Hackman

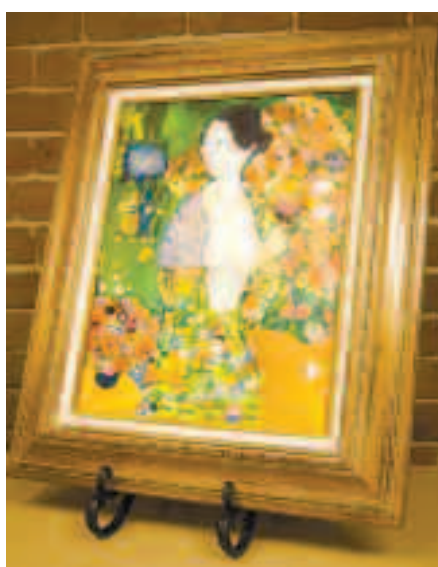


If we searched the world over it would be hard to find an artist as accomplished and successful as Gene Hackman. With almost 100 movies and television shows under his belt, 2 Oscars, 3 Golden Globes, and author of 3 books. His first book, "Wake of the Perdido Star" was published in 1999 and co-authored with his friend Dan Lenihan who is an underwater archaeologist. It is an exciting adventure story on the high seas.

In 2004 they penned "Justice for None," a gripping story of race and murder set in the 1920s midwest depression era. Together they also wrote "Escape from Andersonville" in 2008, a civil war novel about one man's escape from a Confederate prison camp and his dramatic return to save his men.

I recently met Mr. Hackman at the Tropical Arts and Crafts store at the Tradewinds Plaza where he often shops for his art supplies when he is in the Keys. He is a very polite and nice man, still as handsome as ever and looks much younger than his age. I was intrigued. With a little research I learned that he had studied art at the Art

Students League in New York city while struggling to become an actor. I was only able to find a photograph of one of his paintings which he donated to benefit the Emeril Lagasse Foundation Carnivale du Vin 2008 online auction. It is rare indeed because Mr. Hackman is quoted on his painting, "It's something that I can do without 90 people standing around and watching. I've always painted. It's always been a love of mine. I don't like showing my work because I like to keep it private. It's just something that I can do that I can call my own."



Although you can't walk into an art gallery and purchase any of his paintings you can order his books at Moore Books in Key Largo.

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Gene Hackman posed with Carol at the Tropical Arts and Crafts store. We are proud to have this kind, gracious and handsome gentleman in Key Largo.

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Short Getaways Take a Day Trip

When vacations are not possible, consider a daytrip as an alternative for renewal and feeding your soul.

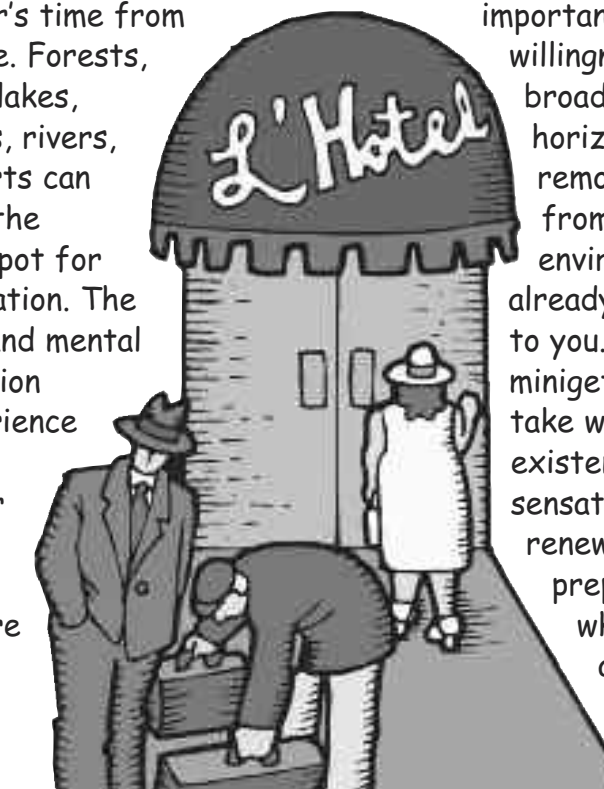
We tend to think of a vacation as something that requires an enormous amount of preparation, but small daylong excursions can be just as refreshing and fulfilling as their lengthier counterparts. A short drive can be the channel that transports you into a world of novel experiences and blissful relaxation. Solo day trips can be a wonderful way to unwind from the stresses of routine existence while simultaneously feeding the soul. And when you choose to share your day trip with someone you care about, a leisurely drive becomes a chance to talk about childhood, recall favorite songs, or simply spend time enjoying one another's presence.

You may be surprised to see how many day-trip possibilities exist within a mere hour's time from your home. Forests, beaches, lakes, mountains, rivers, and deserts can serve as the perfect spot for a minivacation. The physical and mental rejuvenation you experience in an unfamiliar and engaging setting are enhanced

by meditation, journaling, deep breathing, or just being still with nature. Though the cost of gasoline can make taking a day trip seem frivolous, and our commitment to environmental well-being may cause us to hesitate before utilizing our cars in this manner, there are numerous ways we can effectively offset our carbon signature while still seeing to the needs of ourselves on a soul level.

Since day trips tend to require much smaller investments of time and money than traditional outings, you can enjoy a diverse range of experiences day by day. On one weekend, you may be motivated by a need to connect with your natural heritage to explore a vast state park or nature preserve. On another, your curiosity can inspire you to visit a historical site that has long piqued your interest. In the end, where you go will often be less

important than your willingness to broaden your horizons by removing yourself from the environment already so familiar to you. Each minigetaway you take will imbue your existence with a sensation of renewal that prepares you for whatever lies ahead.



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