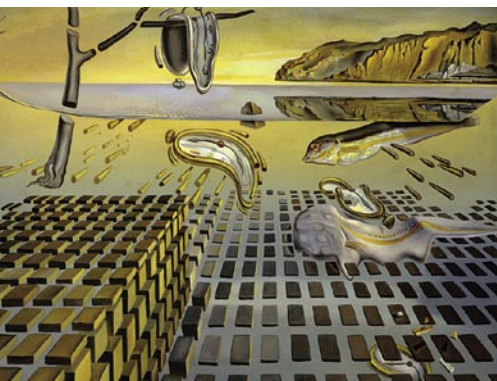


CHEW DOWN THAT WALL: In the years when the infamous wall separated the western and eastern sides of **Berlin**, Germans still knew where to find the city's sweet center. From a gold-rimmed shop in the historic Gendarmenmarkt, confectioners **Fassbender & Rausch** make delectable chocolate scale models of local landmarks like the Brandenburg Gate and the Reichstag building that are as intricate as their inspirations — and infinitely more savory. The secret ingredient in all the store's intoxicating creations — from the exquisite assortment of truffles to the exotic pralines and creamy bars — is a rich imagination. Last September, they brought their renowned specialties to dinner, opening Europe's first fine chocolate restaurant, serving a variety of sumptuous cocoa-infused entrées. Just be sure to save room for dessert. fassbender-rausch.com
— Owen Baker

CLOCKWORKS AND ORANGES: Time melts when you're viewing art. This year the **Salvador Dalí Museum** in St. Petersburg, Fla., 22 miles southeast of **Tampa**, celebrates its 25th anniversary with a series of



exhibits showcasing some of the more than 2,100 pieces in what has become the most comprehensive collection of works by the flamboyant surrealist outside of his native Spain. The museum's spacious galleries display a wide range of Dalí's output, including witty, sometimes grotesque, but always thought-provoking works from his surrealist period, like his famous melting clocks and "living" still ➤



ALBANY

A Bird in the Hand

I KNOW WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS. It's because she wants to be fed. And now she descends upon me, wings spread, talons outstretched. She lands gracefully on my gloved hand and nips quickly at the bit of meat that lured her to perch on my arm. Her weightlessness and strong grip are both startling; the effect is like attaching a balloon to your arm using a binder clip.

Her name is Miss Piggy, and she is a Harris hawk at the **British School of Falconry** in Manchester, Vt., one of only a couple of places in the United States that teaches falconry. Manchester, located between Albany, N.Y., Rutland, Vt., and Manchester, N.H. (and a lovely drive through New England greenery from both Burlington, Vt., and Boston), is also home to the **Equinox**, a resort and spa that offers a variety of packages in conjunction with the school.

Dawn Kelly, one of the instructors, goes over the falconry gear — a glove worn by the handler and a bell, band, and leash worn by the bird. "All these things, except for the band, have been more or less the same over the 3,000 or 4,000 years that falconry has been practiced," she says. "It started in the Far East — China and Mongolia — moved to the Middle East, and then during the Crusades it was brought to Europe, where it became a sport of kings. But originally it was a way of putting food on the table."

The school boasts 15 birds of prey, including Miss Piggy, who could care less about her handler so long as there's a morsel in it for her. The birds are motivated by food, so the school constantly manages their weight to compel them to hunt. Lessons are offered year-round, and group programs, which make for a unique business retreat, are available. Summer activities at the school include Hawk Walks through the area's woodlands and hunting expeditions accompanied by a bird dog.

On the hunts, the birds do most of the work, but the Equinox provides plenty of rewards for handlers after a day of flushing out game and beating the bush. Breakfast in the Colonnade is great for fueling the hunt, and the dinner options in the Marsh Tavern match fine New England cuisine with decor reminiscent of the Green Mountain Boys. It's an experience almost as engaging as the Equinox's Spa, which offers everything from a fitness center and indoor heated pool to saunas, steam baths, and massage treatments. You deserve all this pampering; after all, you're participating in the sport of kings.
— John Patrick Pullen