

# MD Life

May 2025





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## Significant Achievement

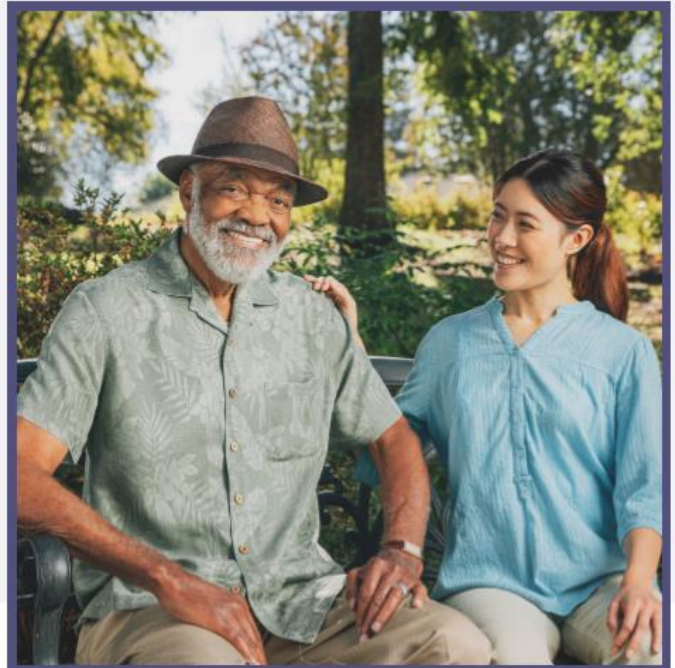
Always Best Care is one of a very select few chosen in the greater Houston area to be part of the

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License Number: 017770

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# How Trade Wars Could Destroy the U.S. Health Care System

Arthur Lazarus, MD, MBA

The term “core competency” was coined by management experts C.K. Prahalad and Gary Hamel in their influential 1990 article titled “The core competence of the corporation,” published in the Harvard Business Review. Prahalad and Hamel defined core competencies as the unique capabilities or advantages that a company possesses, which are critical to its ability to achieve competitive advantage and long-term success. These competencies are not just about the skills or technologies themselves but are the collective learning and coordination across various business units that allow a company to deliver unique value to customers.



On average, a company typically possesses between three to five core competencies. For example, Sony’s core competency in imaging and sensing technologies has been crucial in the development of high-quality camera sensors used in smartphones and professional cameras. Apple’s core competency in design and user experience has been central to the success of products like the iPhone and Apple Watch. Honda’s expertise in engine design and manufacturing has enabled it to excel not only in the automotive industry but also in producing motorcycles and power equipment. These competencies are integral to the company’s ability to innovate and adapt, providing a sustainable competitive edge in the marketplace.

The concept of “core competency” is generally applied to a company or business—not to a country. But let’s think in broader terms. What about the United States? America’s core competencies are often highlighted by its significant strengths in various sectors, which contribute to its global influence and leadership. One of the primary areas of excellence is innovation and technology. The United States is home to leading technology companies and research institutions that drive advancements in fields such as information technology, biotechnology, and aerospace. This innovation is supported by a robust ecosystem of entrepreneurship and business, characterized by a strong entrepreneurial culture and a legal and financial system that encourages innovation and development.

Higher education and research are also pivotal components of America’s core competencies. American universities are renowned for their quality of education and research output, attracting students and scholars from around the world. This educational prowess feeds into the country’s ability to innovate and adapt, further bolstering its technological advancements. Additionally, the U.S. exerts significant cultural influence through its entertainment industry, including film, music, and television, which shapes trends and popular culture globally.

The United States also maintains a formidable military power, with one of the most advanced and powerful military forces in the world, providing strategic influence and defense capabilities. Economically, the U.S. benefits from a highly diversified economy that includes a wide range of industries from agriculture and manufacturing to services and technology. Rich in natural resources such as oil, natural gas, minerals, and agricultural land, the U.S. leverages these assets to strengthen its economic position. Furthermore, as a leading global power, the U.S. plays a crucial role in international diplomacy, trade, and governance, influencing global policies and agreements.

However, when it comes to health care, the United States faces significant challenges that prevent it from being universally recognized as having a core competency in this area. While the U.S. is a leader in medical research, innovation, and technology, the health care system as a whole is marked by critical issues. Access and coverage remain problematic, as the system does not provide universal coverage, leaving many Americans uninsured or underinsured and limiting access to necessary health care services.

The cost of health care in the U.S. is among the highest in the world, yet health outcomes do not always reflect the level of spending, indicating systemic inefficiencies. Compared to other developed nations, the U.S. often ranks lower on key health indicators such as life expectancy and infant mortality. Moreover, the health care system is highly complex and



fragmented, with a mix of public and private payers and providers that can lead to disparities in care. Significant inequities in health outcomes and access to care based on socioeconomic status, race, and geography further highlight the challenges within the system.

So, while the United States excels in certain aspects of health care, such as cutting-edge medical research and the development of new treatments and technologies, system-wide issues hinder the recognition of health care as a core competency on a broad scale.

My question is: What aspects of Trump's trade wars with other nations will improve our broken health care system? In the long run—and I stress the long run—tariffs may bolster the economy. But that still leaves most other core competencies untouched—ones that could use a proverbial shot in the arm. As for health care, which I consider mission critical, it's not even on Trump's radar. Not only that, but tariffs will not repair broken health systems. They will only make them worse.

Tariffs will hurt the U.S. health care system by increasing the cost of imported medical supplies, equipment, and pharmaceuticals. Many of these products are sourced from global supply chains, and higher tariffs could lead to increased costs for health care providers, which may be passed on to patients in the form of higher health care expenses. Furthermore, tariffs will cause disruptions in the availability of essential medical products.

Tariffs could conceivably incentivize domestic production of medical goods, potentially leading to a more robust local manufacturing sector. This could enhance supply chain resilience and reduce dependency on foreign goods and products. However, the transition to increased domestic production will take years and, in the interim, could result in unsustainable supply shortages or increased costs.

The U.S. health care system is on the brink of collapse. Trump's dangerous domestic policies and unfathomable purge of federal health care workers, coupled with unqualified hires in leadership positions, have pushed it there. Now he wants tariffs imposed on our trading partners. I'm less concerned about a trade war than I am about the extinction of health care as we know it.

[Arthur Lazarus](#) is a former [Doximity Fellow](#), a member of the editorial board of the *American Association for Physician Leadership*, and an adjunct professor of psychiatry at the Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. He is the author of several books on narrative medicine, including [Medicine on Fire: A Narrative Travelogue](#) and [Story Treasures: Medical Essays and Insights in the Narrative Tradition](#).



# 3 Ways to Instantly Look Smarter on Video Calls

By Kim Komando

Have you ever joined a Zoom call and thought, “Why do I look like a vampire who doesn’t know where the camera is?” Since it’s the start of a new week, here are easy tricks to make you look brighter, smarter and significantly less like you’re broadcasting from a cave.

## Fix your camera placement

The fastest way to look smarter is simple: Stop looking down at your screen.

1. Position your webcam **at eye level**, even if that means stacking some books under your laptop.
2. Sit **18 to 24 inches** from your camera. Too close = awkward giant face. Too far = tiny distant speck.

★ **Bonus move:** Drag whoever’s talking to the top-center of your screen, right under your webcam. This way, you’re naturally looking *at* the speaker *and* into the camera. No more looking down, off to the side or like you’re secretly reading something else.

Turns out the fastest fix is good old eye contact. Not like “date night,” but like “I’m kinda interested.”

## Master your lighting

Good lighting is an instant upgrade.

1. Face a natural light source like a window if possible.
2. No window? Place a soft lamp **behind your monitor** shining toward you, not overhead. Overhead lighting makes you look like you’re telling ghost stories. 🧛 Save the oOoOoOoO for the Halloween campfire.
3. Avoid bright lights **directly behind you**, they turn you into a mysterious silhouette.

★ **Bonus move:** In Zoom, turn on **Touch up my appearance** under **Settings > Video** for a little automatic soft-focus magic. Google Meet has “**Apply visual effects**” > “**Slight**” or “**Studio Lighting**” options.

## Clean up that background

You don’t need a Pinterest-ready office. You just need less distraction.

1. Tidy up what’s behind you. Go for neutral walls, simple art, maybe a plant.
2. Avoid virtual backgrounds unless they’re high quality and don’t glitch around your head.

★ **Bonus move:** In Zoom, try “Blur” background under **Settings > Background & Effects**. In Google Meet, click **Apply Visual Effects > Blur**.

The trifecta of camera, lighting and background is your shortcut to looking 10x more confident and polished. It’s not about vanity, it’s about making sure people focus on what you’re saying, not wondering why you look like you’re lost in space.

 **Turning off your Zoom camera** is like getting food from a buffet. You want to do it, but you don’t want to be the first, and you definitely don’t want to be the only person.





# Why It's Time for Doctors to Become Performance Coaches

Michael Day, MD

The American public has lost its faith in the traditional U.S. health care system. Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) President Dana White's statement is representative: "Do not talk to a doctor about your general health."

This is not a fringe sentiment.

A 2022 survey of 4,208 adults in the U.S. revealed that only 54 percent of respondents placed "a great deal" of trust in doctors as sources of information.

I have patients who tell me they wouldn't go to a doctor for advice on their health. (After I remind them that I am a doctor, they give me a pass.)

What does health mean in 2025? Increasingly, health represents a personalized goal. This trend holds promise. Americans are rejecting the notion of health as the absence of disease. Our traditional health care system functions as a disease-care system, through no fault of the individuals doing excellent work within it. The education, economics, diagnostics, and delivery of care pivot on the identification of specific pathology and application of the corresponding treatment. Proactive prevention takes a backseat to reactive treatment. The result is a system with astounding ability to treat critically ill and traumatized patients. Sadly, we have not moved the needle on the prevention of chronic diseases. Forty percent of adults meet criteria for obesity. Those without chronic disease (only about half of the U.S. adult population) are turning away from traditional health care in pursuing their personal health. Rightly so.

They are turning to those they believe exemplify the life that will make them feel how they want to feel. What do our patients live for? It's a component that's missing from all but the best physician-patient relationships. Beyond mere awareness of our patients' occupation, we must question how they will perform at that job, or their sport, or their hobby, or their ability to fulfill a family role in a meaningful way. Our patients are looking to high performers to help them conceptualize and pursue optimal health.

As physicians, we have erred in dismissing the influencers of social media simply based on their position outside the medical establishment. Yet we do our patients a disservice if we don't contextualize what they see on social media.

Longevity and performance can be complementary. But traditional medicine falters in the gap between rehabilitation and performance. After anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury, for example, a motivated patient can hope to return to sport nine months after surgery. However, only 70 percent of patients return to sport. And less than half self-rate their performance as equal to their pre-injury level.

Pursuit of elite performance currently resides outside of our health care system. I believe it should not. The ways we measure elite athletic performance hold value for the non-elite. We need to measure performance on a continuous spectrum and on a continual basis. When beset with an injury or illness, we have a great system to react and mobilize treatment. The remainder of the time, we need to proactively pursue performance.

We learn from edge cases. Iñigo San Millan at the University of Colorado studies elite cyclists and those with metabolic syndrome. The title of one of his 2018 papers on the subject charitably refers to those with metabolic syndrome as "Less-Fit Individuals." This juxtaposition of elite endurance athletes and couch potatoes at first seems a non sequitur. It is not. San Millan takes lessons from how the muscle cells of elite athletes handle glucose, and how their training enables the efficiencies they demonstrate. Elite athletes can burn fat at higher exercise intensities, whereas the less-fit



individuals transition earlier to burning carbohydrate. Fat burning is the most efficient way for a cell to produce energy. The ability to do so is a reflection of the health of the cell's powerhouses: the mitochondria.

Exercise is not just for training. It is a critical component of the prevention and treatment of chronic disease. Fitness is the best predictor of longevity. Non-elites can take cues on how to assess and improve fitness from elites.

Americans are swimming in a deluge of data, with the number of data points only increasing. Any number of wearable technologies can now give you anything from sleep metrics to heart rate variability to gait stability. Online sources of advice and information abound.

The average American desires to know more about their health status. This is a good thing. With our traditional care system set up to be reactive, a proactive approach requires the patient to be the captain of their ship, the quarterback of their care. They don't need to know everything about human physiology and disease. I don't need to know how to repair my car's engine, but I do need to know how to safely operate it and responsibly maintain it. Patient ownership of health will be tech-enabled in many ways. But data and even knowledge will not drive increased ownership and agency. The desire for directorship coupled with a sense of personal responsibility will be the difference in the sea change of how we conceptualize health. The patient will be the chief executive officer of the corporation of their body.

Where does the physician fit in? Are we the chief operating officers? The highly skilled wage laborers? In any case, we need to fulfill a role from sport: coach. We can provide support, accountability and specialized knowledge. We can provide context and perspective on the strategies and tactics available for the pursuit of health. We can take our patients' goals as our mutual aim, but we can't play the game for them. Filling a coaching role would start to rebuild what our profession has in large part lost: the trust of our patients.

If we can use that trust to build agency and resilience in our patients, we can support their pursuit of performance. We can't all be elite performers. But we can all pursue peak performance. And the time for performance to merge with medicine is now.

*[Michael Day](#) is an orthopedic surgeon.*



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- **Limited Tax Strategy Awareness:** Many doctors are unaware of advanced tax-saving strategies that could significantly reduce their taxable income, primarily because traditional CPA firms don't offer these sophisticated approaches.

## **Our Solutions We Offer:**

- **Advanced Tax Strategies:** Our firm specializes in sophisticated tax strategies that are not typically available through traditional CPA firms. These strategies are tailored to minimize your tax exposure, ensuring you keep more of what you earn.
- **Customized Financial Planning:** We provide bespoke tax planning that considers your unique financial situation, helping you optimize your income, investments, and overall financial health. Your plan is managed with the precision and care you would expect from a specialist.

### Why Physicians Do Business With Us:

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- **Proven Outcome:** We have a track record of delivering significant tax savings for our physician clients, enabling them to reinvest in their practice, secure their financial future, and improve their quality of life.
- **Personalized Service:** Unlike traditional firms, we provide a hands-on, personalized approach, ensuring that your tax strategy aligns perfectly with your financial goals.
- **Proactive Advisory Service:** Forget about once-a-year check-ins. We will be meeting quarterly to address current strategies and proactively planning out the rest of the year – No more unpleasant surprises on April 15th.

### About Our Firm:

- **Experience & Credentials:** Our team consists of seasoned tax advisors with a deep understanding of the unique financial challenges faced by physicians. With years of experience in working with high-net-worth clients, we have developed a suite of advanced strategies that deliver real, measurable results.
- **Commitment to Your Success:** We are dedicated to helping you achieve financial freedom through smart, effective tax planning. Our goal is to ensure you're not overpaying on taxes and are fully equipped to grow and protect your wealth.
- **Proven Tax Strategy Successes:** Our most recent assessment found \$234k – \$975k in tax savings for our clients.

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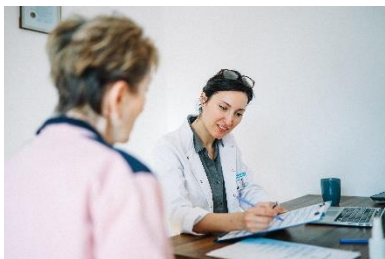


The Faces of Detroit's Top CPA Advisers  
— John A. Sanchez & Company



# Asset Protection for Physicians: How to Safeguard Wealth from Creditors and Predators

*As physicians accumulate assets, they become more susceptible to personal and professional liability, lawsuits, and external threats. We live in a very litigious society; preserving one's wealth through various financial, tax, and estate planning asset protection strategies can be invaluable. Let us review some of the underappreciated techniques that physicians can employ to safeguard their wealth from various threats.*



## Retirement Plan and IRA Creditor Protection

Maintaining a 401(k) or 403(b) qualified retirement plan under ERISA (“Employee Retirement Income Security Act”) affords many built in creditor protection features. These accounts are typically protected from judgements from creditors. Non-ERISA qualified retirement accounts do not have the same level of protection.

**Case Study:** For instance, a physician with \$3 million in a properly structured 401(k) would have complete protection against a malpractice judgment. In contrast, the same amount in an IRA might be vulnerable depending on the state of residence.

Non-ERISA qualified retirement plans include, but are not limited to the following:

- Traditional IRAs
- 403(b) plans for public school/academia
- Roth IRAs
- SEP IRAs

Despite non-ERISA plans being more vulnerable to creditors than ERISA qualified retirement plans, there are exceptions, and they may be protected based upon state law. States may set their own limits on how much you can protect in your Traditional IRA or Roth IRA.

**Traditional and Roth IRAs have protection limited to \$1,711,975 in 2025 that is exempted from bankruptcy.**

This traditional and Roth IRA protection limit is typically adjusted for inflation every three years. The \$1,711,975 **does not include** funds rolled into the IRA, such as from a 401(k). Former employer plan dollars remain 100% protected from bankruptcy within the IRA and does not reduce the \$1,711,975 cap.

Inherited IRAs (unless inherited from a spouse) do not have this protection and are generally at risk from creditor claims, including bankruptcy.

***It is best you speak with the appropriate legal advisor before making any retirement investment decisions based on asset protection.***

ERISA-qualified plans provide robust protection against creditors and lawsuits, making them a valuable tool for asset preservation. If you have significant assets or face heightened liability exposure, these plans can offer peace of mind and financial security.

## Asset Protection Trusts

Creating a trust can also provide asset protection if it is drafted properly. There are two main types of trusts – grantor and non-grantor trusts. Grantor trusts are trusts where the grantor (the person giving up or transferring property to the trust) retains certain control and power over the trust. These are more commonly known as **revocable or living trusts**.

These trusts are not considered a separate entity and income typically passes through to the Grantor. Creditor protection is minimal since the grantor does not relinquish control of trust assets. The Grantor can also remove assets from the trust and retitle them in their own name without restriction.

Non-grantor trusts are **irrevocable trusts** where the grantor gives up most powers and control. A Form 1041 will need to be filed which establishes the trust as a separate tax entity where income, gains, and losses can be recorded. The property or assets contributed are owned by the trust unlike a grantor trust. As a result, creditor protection is significant depending on the type of non-grantor trust. There is a significant caveat though, the marginal tax brackets for a trust are very different from those for an individual.

**Trust income is taxed at the highest marginal tax bracket (37%) if the trust has over \$15,670 in retained income (not distributed to the beneficiary).**

Physicians should also be aware of the new IRS Revenue Ruling 2023-2. This provision states that assets transferred by a decedent into an irrevocable trust where the individual creating the trust retains a power that causes the individual to be the owner of the entire trust (for income tax purposes), but does not cause the trust assets to be included in the individual's gross estate<sup>1</sup> – **does NOT receive a step up in basis** to its fair market value. This can result in a large capital gains tax and may negate some of the protection benefits.

DAPTs or Domestic Asset Protection Trusts are irrevocable trusts designed to offer significant creditor protection. States like Nevada, Alaska, and Delaware offer some of the most protective state statutes. Creditor protection may be restricted (exceptions depend on state) for alimony/support from a former spouse, prior creditor claims before trust creation, and from fraudulent conveyances (transfers made with intent to avoid creditors that are present or potential to be creditors).

Careful consideration should be given before contributing property to trusts. There are significant tax and estate planning implications when contributing property, particularly to irrevocable (non-grantor) trusts.

There is also a significant loss of control over assets when you contribute to these trusts.

**We suggest you retain an attorney with significant experience in drafting such a trust if you are considering it.**

## Limited Liability Companies

LLC's certainly have their advantages - they can be used to protect a person from liabilities associated with business debts. If your medical practice is owned by an LLC and you default on your debts, only the assets within the LLC will be at risk. There is a caveat to that -you need to make sure you do not mix personal assets and business assets within the LLC.

LLC's will not protect you from a default on a loan that you personally guaranteed, and they do not protect you from professional malpractice; therefore, having malpractice insurance is critical.

Consider using LLC's not just for your medical practice but also for direct investments, for example rental properties. If someone slips and falls on your property you want to make sure you aren't sued personally. However, maintaining property in an LLC is not bullet proof. The LLC's corporate veil could be pierced if you do not maintain proper records and disregard certain required LLC formalities.

***If you are considering using an LLC to help protect your personal assets from liabilities associated with your practice, we strongly suggest you hire an attorney with significant experience in creating LLC's.***

## Umbrella Coverage

### Why You Should Have Umbrella Insurance

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. Rul. 2023-2's impact on estate plans, The Tax Adviser, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023



**1. Extra Liability Protection** Umbrella insurance provides additional liability coverage beyond the limits of your home, auto, and other insurance policies. This can be crucial if you face a lawsuit where the damage exceeds your existing policy limits.

**2. Protects Your Assets and Future Earnings** In the event of a significant liability claim, your assets and future earnings could be at risk. Umbrella insurance helps protect your savings, investments, and even future income from being seized to cover legal costs and settlements.

**3. Affordable Coverage** Despite offering substantial protection, umbrella insurance is relatively affordable. You can typically add \$1 million of coverage for about \$200 to \$400 per year, with each additional \$1 million costing around \$200. Reach out to your Fee-Only Financial Planner to get an idea of how much coverage you should purchase.

**4. Covers a Wide Range of Incidents** Umbrella insurance covers various incidents, including those not covered by your primary policies. This can include libel, slander, false arrest, and certain lawsuits related to rental properties.

**5. Peace of Mind** Knowing you have an extra layer of protection can provide peace of mind. Whether it's a car accident, an injury on your property, or a lawsuit stemming from a social media post, umbrella insurance ensures you're covered.

**6. Essential for High-Risk Situations** If you have teenage drivers, own rental properties, or have significant assets, umbrella insurance is particularly valuable. These situations increase your risk of being sued, making the additional coverage even more important.

Umbrella insurance is a smart investment for anyone looking to protect their assets and future earnings from unexpected liability claims. It's affordable, comprehensive, and provides peace of mind in a world where lawsuits can happen at any time.

If you would like to learn more about these various asset protection strategies, don't miss our upcoming webinar on Asset Protection for Physicians Wealth Webinar on June 12<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) at 12 Noon. Scan the QR Code below to register now.



#### About the authors:

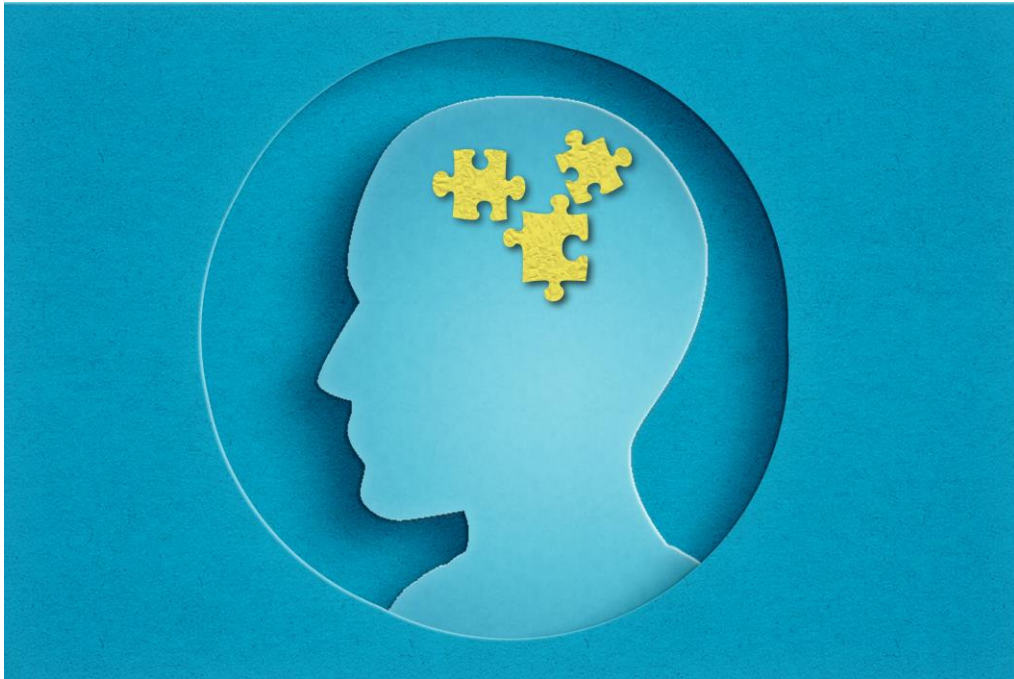
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# BRAIN FOOD

By Shane Parrish



## Tiny Thoughts

The most valuable skill isn't inspiration but the ability to work without it.

\*\*

What you find interesting is a better predictor of success than what you're good at.

Curiosity isn't random; it's a compass.

\*\*\*

What separates good work from great isn't talent but persistence.

The most successful people aren't those who feel motivated all the time; they're the ones who work even when they don't feel like it. Too often, waiting to feel ready means never starting.

Outliers act despite their feelings, not because of them.

## Insights

Steve Jobs explains why motivation can't be forced:

*"I've never found in my whole life that you could convince someone who doesn't want to work hard to work hard."*

\*\*

A timely reminder from [Clear Thinking](#):

*"One reason the best in the world make consistently good decisions is they rarely find themselves forced into a decision by circumstances."*

\*\*\*

Alexi Pappas on the battle that we are all fighting:

*"We go through life thinking everyone else has it better than us until we grow up and realize we're all in our own tiny boats of self-doubt and second-guessing."*

### The Knowledge Project

How long does it take to spot a billion-dollar idea? According to Y Combinator President Garry Tan, 10 minutes.

*"If in 10 minutes you cannot understand what's going on, it means the person on the other end doesn't understand what's going on and there isn't anything to understand."*

In this episode of TKP, he breaks down YC's famous ten-minute interviews, shows why earnest founders beat slick ones, explains how a few AI-armed builders can win against the biggest companies in the world, and so much more.

### The Repository

Found in a letter to Peter Cundill, this reminder captures the quiet strength behind truly admirable people:

*"The measure of a person is the congruence between their words and actions, their kindness, their confidence, and their decisiveness about who they are in the world and who they intend to remain."*

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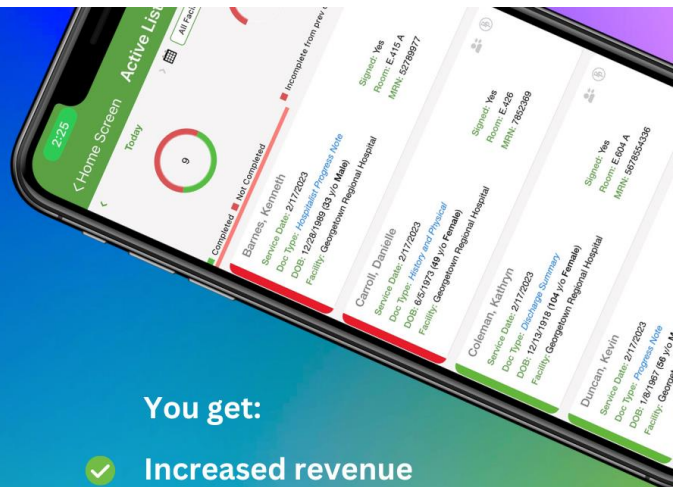
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- ✓ Gain hours back into your week
- ✓ Increased accuracy
- ✓ Reduced claim denials



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# Doctors Don't Need Yoga, They Need Time to Smoke

Salim Afshar, MD, DMD

Walking through the expo floor at yet another health care technology conference, I couldn't help but feel like I was in some weird mix between a tech convention and a futuristic farmers' market. Stalls displayed shiny new AI technologies that promised to revolutionize health care—in theory, at least. But somewhere between the AI-powered ambient scribes and smart scheduling systems, I started to wonder where we're actually headed.

Maybe it's just age, but I've been thinking a lot lately about the forces that shaped me into the doctor I am today. The old "pressure makes diamonds" saying gets thrown around a lot, but I've always found it a little pretentious. I'm no diamond, that's for sure. I'm more like one of those rocks you trip over on the sidewalk—rough edges, generally unremarkable.

But could it be that the hardest times in life are what help shape us? I've spent an obscene amount of time writing or dictating patient notes, often not in a timely fashion. But maybe the hours alone, reliving that patient visit in my head, forced me to actually crystallize my thoughts about that patient.

There's this growing concern about how technology is turning us into mindless drones, but honestly, I don't think it's the machines. It's us. We've become mentally lazy.

I mean, when was the last time someone really sat down and wrestled with a tough question? Even more, how often do you see people making time to just wonder? The kind of questions that keep you up at night, staring at the ceiling, wondering?

These days, thinking feels like a lost art. Everyone's too busy scrolling, clicking, and swiping their way through life. Smartphones, social media, endless notifications—it's like we've created this giant vacuum of distraction. And don't get me started on multitasking. It's like we've collectively decided that doing one thing at a time is for suckers. And guess what? Doctors are generally highly capable people—people who can adapt and persevere at a probably higher rate than the average person. Give us less time, more clicks, more tasks, and we quietly accept as we push through the pain for our patients. But it sucks—we are taking on moral injury, and our brains are quietly overheating.

It's not just the distractions, though. There's this cultural obsession with being "productive," as if filling every second with something vaguely useful is the secret to happiness. But let's be honest—it's exhausting. We've traded contemplation for busyness, and somehow we're surprised that everyone's stressed and miserable.

Who could have seen that coming?

I'm not going to sit here and blame technology. God knows, I'm all for anything that makes life easier. AI in health care should be used for three things: things I don't want to do, things I don't do well consistently as a doctor, and finally, things that I can't do, such as predicting who will need an intervention.

So clearly, I have zero qualms about letting AI or a robot take over some of the more mind-numbing tasks in my day.

**Then the real issue is how should we use the time that technology is supposed to free up?**

Perhaps we should bring back smoking. There was a time when doctors smoked. No, I'm not advocating for a return to lung cancer. But those smoke breaks? They represented something valuable—time.

Time to pause, to think, to wonder, and to chat with colleagues. Whether in a break room, outside the hospital, or crammed into a poorly ventilated lounge, those moments of informal connection were where the magic happened.



People consolidated thoughts, swapped ideas, shared observations and learnings, and occasionally stumbled on breakthroughs. Fast forward to today, and those spaces have all but vanished.

Now, nurses spend more time with paperwork than with patients. And doctors? We're drowning in a sea of administrative tasks, with little room for reflection or collaboration. We've gotten so caught up in making health care more "efficient" that we've accidentally squeezed out the humanity.

### **Let me hit you with some stats, because why not?**

Nurses now spend only 31 percent of their time with patients. The rest of their time is sucked up by coordination, paperwork, and, I assume, trying to find a functioning printer.

This is insane. I remember having this aha moment as a surgeon:

I asked myself, *Why do my patients stay in the hospital after an operation?* It's because they need nursing care—that's it.

Everything else can be done as an outpatient, so if the backbone of hospitals is nursing, why are we "managing nurses" as a cost center first of all—and why so poorly?

Meanwhile, inefficiencies in health care coordination cost the system over \$12 billion a year. And while we're busy trying to figure out how to leverage technology to fix the system, patients are delaying care, getting sicker, and, in some cases, dying.

### **OK, back to smoking.**

Those smoke breaks, which might have been terrible for our lungs but were oddly beneficial for our collective brains? Long gone. What else is long gone are the spaces that once fostered those meaningful conversations. Hospital libraries? Gone or shoved into some digital corner. Surgeon lounges? A relic of the past.

Technology, as wonderful as it can be, isn't going to fix this. Sure, we can automate tasks, streamline processes, and slap an AI on every problem we can think of. But none of that is going to restore the culture of reflection and connection we've lost. And without that, we're just spinning our wheels—more efficient, sure, but also more robotic, less innovative, and, dare I say it, less human.

### **Reflections on AI, health care, and beyond**

So, what's the answer? Do we need more yoga in the break room? Maybe a weekly cookie celebration? No. What we need is real time to connect. Time to have actual conversations—conversations that aren't squeezed in between tasks or interrupted by a pager. Time to think critically about the work we're doing, to wrestle with tough questions, and to hash out ideas with colleagues. You know, the kind of stuff that leads to breakthroughs.

The good news is that there are signs of a shift in the right direction. More executives are waking up to the consequences of a decade's worth of strategic decisions, and we're beginning to see the creation of spaces for more meaningful discourse. I'm writing this now because of the thoughtful conversations that have emerged recently. Thanks to the support of organizations like the AMA, which made a deliberate effort to bring physicians to the table, we are now reflecting. It's a reminder that when health care professionals are invited into the conversation, real progress can happen.

Doctors and nurses don't need to start smoking again. But they do need to reclaim what those smoke breaks represented: a chance to pause, reflect, wonder, and engage with each other in a meaningful way. Without that, we risk losing something irreplaceable—the spontaneous, organic flow of ideas that has always driven innovation in medicine.

And if we lose that, well, we might as well hand the whole thing over to the robots and call it a day.

[Salim Afshar](#) is a physician executive.



# **An Asheville Home Tour – An Ideal Luxury Mountain Home With Expansive Outlook**

Asheville, North Carolina is a vibrant city situated in the Blue Ridge Mountains in the western portion of North Carolina. It is known for its unparalleled architecture, its amazing natural features, and its delicious dining opportunities. It is also home to a burgeoning real estate market with plenty of luxury options available.

Asheville has a population of approximately 95,000 people living at an elevation of 2,134 feet, or 650 meters. The city has a population density of approximately 2,000 people per square mile.

Asheville has a wide variety of popular attractions that bring visitors from all over the country. One of the biggest attractions is the Biltmore Estate, which is the largest home in the United States. It spans more than 8,000 acres and it was constructed by George Vanderbilt. It is a beautiful place to explore at any time of the year, but there are a lot of special events that take place around the holidays.

Asheville is also home to the North Carolina Arboretum, one of the most beautiful botanical gardens in the country. The Arboretum has flowers, plants, and trees from all over the world, so this is a great opportunity for people to learn more about nature. This is also a fun place to host events, particularly weddings.

The city is home to a wide variety of breweries as well, with one of the most popular being New Belgium. New Belgium Brewing Company is known for its flagship beer, Fat Tire, but they also have plenty of other delicious options available for people who are of age. The brewery also provides tours for people during the day, and it is a popular place to host events.

Asheville is also a great location for people who love pinball. The city is home to one of the largest pinball museums in the world, and there are plenty of rotating exhibits at the museum. Even for those who don't love pinball, this is a great opportunity to explore creative designs.

The Blue Ridge Mountains are known for their outdoor opportunities, and Asheville is no different. The city is home to endless hiking trails, but some of the best ones are located along the Blue Ridge Parkway. Anyone who wants to get in touch with nature should consider going for a hike or a bike ride along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Along the way, there are beautiful waterfalls to stop and admire. The state of the waterfalls can vary depending on the season, so it might even be a good idea to sign up for a professionally guided tour. Those who want to swing from the treetops might also be interested in a zipline tour.

Asheville is known for its strong school system. Some of the best high schools in Asheville include Asheville High School and Reynolds High School. Asheville has several strong private schools as well, including The Asheville School, which also provides boarding opportunities to students.

Because of everything that Asheville has to offer, there are luxury properties available in beautiful neighborhoods. The downtown neighborhood is perfect for families who want to live close to the heart of the action. It provides easy access to shopping and dining opportunities. The Biltmore Park area is perfect for those who want to live close to the Biltmore Estate. It provides easy access to special events that take place throughout the year. Haw Creek and Lakeview Park are ideal for families who want to have easy access to hiking trails, waterfalls, and bike paths.

**Ideal Luxury Mountain  
Home With Expansive  
Outlook in Ashville**

**4508 ft<sup>2</sup>**

**TOTAL BEDS 4**

**FULL BATHS 3**

**HALF BATHS 1**

**YEAR BUILT 2009**





























# Why Female Physicians Are Done Asking for Permission

Preyasha Tuladhar, MD

Today I want to speak into something we don't talk about enough. In a world where female physicians are constantly pulled in every direction—as doctors, mothers, wives, daughters—we often forget our own personhood.

Between closing charts, answering endless patient messages, kissing boo-boos, and making sure every event has the right outfit, we forget to eat, to sleep, to breathe. And no one is doing this to us maliciously—but it happens, because sacrifice and over-functioning come so naturally to so many women that when we do it, no one questions it. Least of all, ourselves.

So what's the solution? I've been thinking about this a lot lately, and it comes down to three words: guilt, shame, and permission.

We feel guilty taking time for ourselves, even though solitude and rest are not luxuries—they are oxygen.

We feel shame because we think we're the only ones struggling, while everyone else seems to be vacationing in Paris with toddlers who don't scream on airplanes.

And we don't give ourselves permission to be human. To rest. To eat. To just exist. To not answer that message. To breathe.

So maybe it starts here:

We leave guilt and shame behind. They were never ours to carry. And we give ourselves permission to be exactly who we are. The kind of women who need sleep. Who go on vacation without our toddlers. Who sometimes miss messages. And who are allowed to.

## **Sacred feminine energy**

We live in a world that exalts masculine energy: Productivity, efficiency, logic, discipline. We've had to adapt to survive in it. But in doing so, we've dulled down our feminine knowing. We've quieted our intuition, our rhythms, our rest, our bodies.

We've ignored our cycles. Pushed through our fatigue. Numbed our hunger for pleasure, beauty, softness. And it's burning us out.

What if we gave ourselves permission to return to our feminine essence? To move in waves. To slow down. To flow. To listen to the moon. To cry when we're full. To say no without explaining. To take up space.

Because the world doesn't need more efficient women.

The world needs more authentic ones.

## **We are not machines**

I tried really hard to be one.

It was easier to run on autopilot than face the truth of how disconnected I felt from my life. From myself.

Being a machine means you get things done. But it also means you stop asking the most important question:

Is this actually the life I want to be living?



As women, we are conditioned to give our power away. It starts early. Be polite. Don't be difficult. Don't take up too much space. Smile more. Don't ask for too much.

Even in medicine, it shows up.

We're asked to take on more patients. More emotional labor. More documentation. And we do it—because no one wants to be labeled the “difficult woman.”

But here's the truth: There is nothing more dangerous to the system than a woman who knows what she wants and is not afraid—or ashamed—to ask for it.

### **Power, reclaimed**

Power doesn't have to mean overthrowing governments (though, why not?). Sometimes it just means:

Saying no when you mean no.

Asking for rest when you need it.

Not apologizing for wanting more.

Letting someone else handle it.

Leaving the group chat.

Wearing what makes you feel alive.

Daring to be too much.

And maybe, in the end, that's the ultimate manifesto:

To show up as our full selves. Loud, soft, sacred, tired, radiant.

To let parenting be a team sport.

To say no to guilt.

To stop performing and start being.

To wear the big earrings.

To put on the red lipstick.

To go to Paris alone.

To leave the messages unanswered.

To rest.

To play.

To live.

Because we were never meant to live inside lines drawn to keep us small.

And the power we've been waiting for?

We've held it all along.

[Preyasha Tuladhar](#) is a family physician.





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# Grilled Holy Moly Chicken Breasts

bbqpitboys.com



🔥 Fire up your grill and get ready for the juiciest grilled chicken ever! In this BBQ Pit Boys episode, we show you a mouthwatering chicken breast recipe with a twist. 🍴 We cut holes in the chicken to let our secret marinade seep deep into every bite, ensuring explosive flavors and perfect tenderness.

## Ingredients

3 lbs Boneless, skinless chicken breasts

Soy Sauce: ½ cup

Honey: 3 tablespoons (adjust to taste)

Minced Garlic: 1 tablespoon (adjust to taste)

Poultry Perfection Chicken Rub: 2 tablespoons

Chipotle Peppers in Adobo Sauce: 1-2 peppers (depending on size)

Red Wine Vinegar: 2 tablespoons

Apple Corer: For creating holes in the chicken breasts

## Directions

1. Cut Chicken: Cut the boneless, skinless chicken breasts in half.
2. Core Chicken: Use an apple corer to create holes in the chicken pieces. Retain the plugs for marinating as well.

**Prepare the Marinade:**



1. In a large marinating bag, combine:

½ cup soy sauce

3 tablespoons honey

1 tablespoon minced garlic

2 tablespoons Poultry Perfection chicken rub

1-2 chipotle peppers in adobo sauce (chopped)

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

#### **Marinate the Chicken:**

1. Add Chicken: Place the cored chicken breasts and plugs into the marinating bag.
2. Coat Chicken: Seal the bag and mix thoroughly to ensure all chicken pieces are well-coated.
3. Refrigerate: Marinate in the refrigerator for at least 4-5 hours, preferably overnight for best flavor infusion.

#### **Grill the Chicken:**

1. Preheat Grill: Preheat the grill to medium-high heat (about 375°F to 400°F).
2. Place the marinated chicken breasts on the grill.

Grill for about 6-7 minutes on each side, or until the chicken is cooked through and has nice grill marks.

3. Turn occasionally to avoid burning and to ensure even cooking.
4. Cook until the internal temperature reaches 165°F.
5. Rest Chicken: Let the grilled chicken breasts rest for a few minutes before serving to retain their juices.
6. Serve: Enjoy the flavorful, juicy grilled chicken breasts with your favorite sides.



# Navigating 20 AI Use Cases in Healthcare: From Hype to Evidence!

Dr. Bertalan Mesko, PhD

To see what is really going on and what we can realistically expect from AI to deliver in practice, we have mapped the rapidly expanding universe of AI use cases in healthcare from early-stage “on the horizon” innovations to “safe bets” that are already backed by strong evidence.

## Key Takeaways

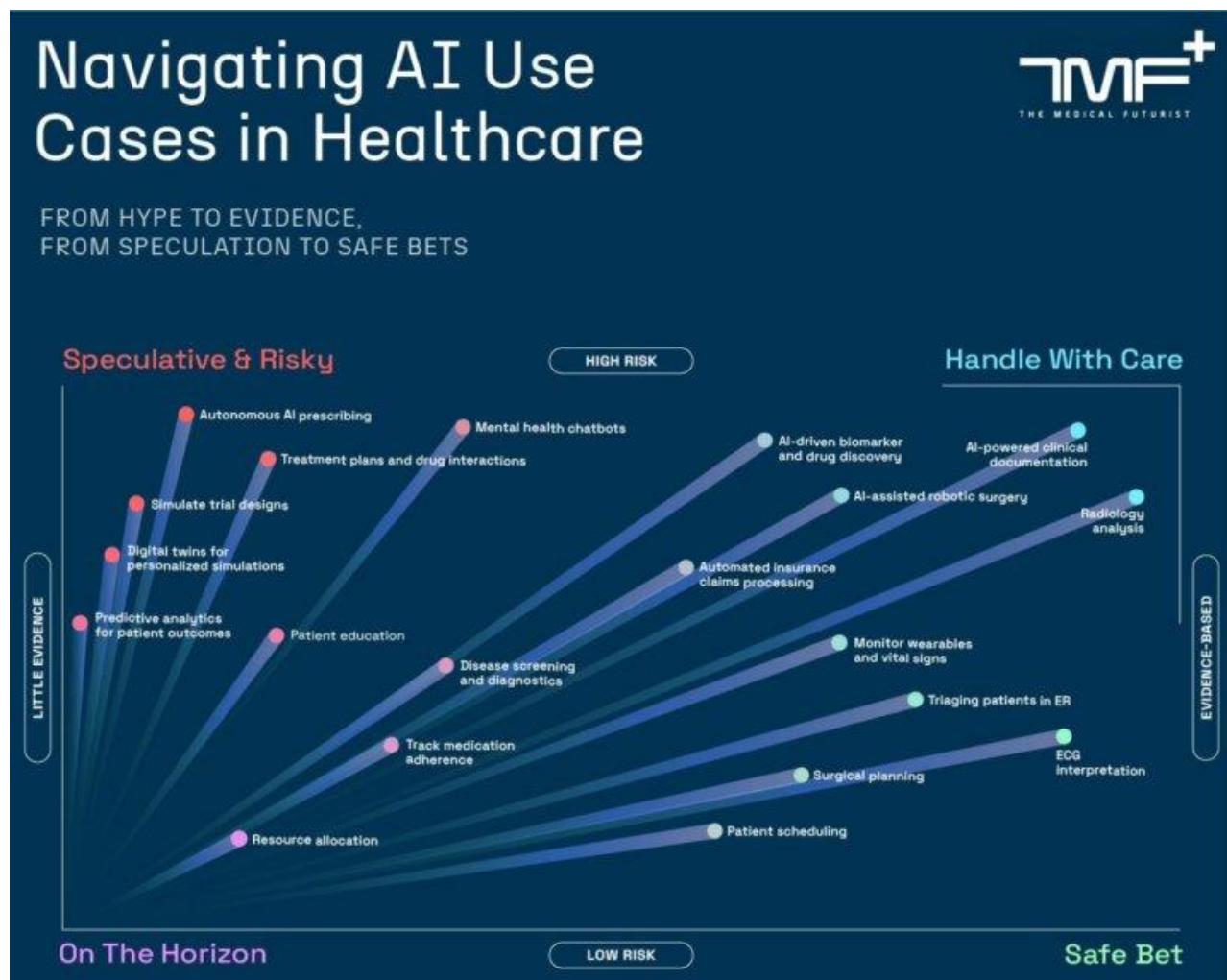
It’s incredibly hard to see through the current AI hype in healthcare.

To facilitate that, we have mapped the rapidly expanding universe of AI use cases in healthcare from early-stage “on the horizon” innovations to “safe bets” that are already backed by strong evidence

It’s incredibly hard to see through the current AI hype in healthcare. Myriads of potential uses cases, a lot of companies with commercial interest and changing regulations dominate the field.

To see what is really going on and what we can realistically expect from AI to deliver in practice, we have mapped the rapidly expanding universe of AI use cases in healthcare from early-stage “on the horizon” innovations to “safe bets” that are already backed by strong evidence.

We analyzed them on two scales, little evidence to evidence-based (meaning there are studies and peer-reviewed papers proving their efficiency and safety); and low risk to high risk (meaning patients’ lives might be at stake in case of an error).





This yielded four groups:

- 1) Speculative and risky (little evidence, high risk)
- 2) On the horizon (little evidence, low risk)
- 3) Handle with care (evidence-based, high risk)
- 4) Safe bet (evidence-based, low risk)

### **Use cases and their categories**

#### **Speculative & Risky**

- Autonomous AI prescribing
- Mental health chatbots
- Treatment plans and drug interactions
- Simulate trial designs
- Digital twins for personalized simulations

#### **On The Horizon**

- Predictive analytics for patient outcomes
- Patient education
- Disease screening and diagnostics
- Track medication adherence
- Resource allocation

#### **Handle With Care**

- AI-driven biomarker and drug discovery
- AI-powered clinical documentation
- AI-assisted robotic surgery
- Radiology analysis
- Automated insurance claims processing

#### **Safe Bet**

- Monitor wearables and vital signs
- Triage patients in ER
- ECG interpretation
- Surgical planning
- Patient scheduling

We hope this infographic helps clarify the path ahead: which solutions demand more research and caution (e.g. autonomous AI prescribing, mental health chatbots), and which are ready for prime time (e.g. AI-powered clinical documentation, radiology analysis, ECG interpretation).



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# Spring Wines: What to Drink This Season

Written by Haley Mercedes, [winefolly.com](http://winefolly.com)

The sun is out. How long has it been? It's still cold, but the heavy boots can finally hit the back of the closet. This morning it was two-sweater-weather, but now it's warm and sunny. The future looks very bright.

Spring is a weird time of year. Our bank accounts have recovered from the holiday season, but there's still no need to splurge. Buying a case of thoughtfully selected wines to get you through this turbulent weather is really the only logical option.



## Making a Case of Spring Wines

Our mixed case is very much inspired by the weather. It's totally unpredictable... One moment it's "rosé all day" and the next, "where's my big ol' bear-hug of a red?" We also wanted to pick things that you could get for under \$20 (and preferably less).

So, here are 12 of some of the best wines possible to fit this undulating, two-faced season that pair perfectly with spring's verdant cuisine.

### The Shortlist

1. **Grüner Veltliner** – an herb-crusted white from Lower Austria
2. **Vinho Branco** – a citrusy white blend from Portugal
3. **Lambrusco di Sorbara** – the lightest red of the Lambrusco family
4. **PNW Rosé** – a group of zesty, fruit-forward rosé wines from the Pacific Northwest
5. **Gewürztraminer** – a rosy, aromatic white that's best consumed fresh
6. **Gamay** – a light-bodied red that smells like flowers and berries
7. **Cool-Climate Pinot Noir** – the classic springy red wine choice – elegant
8. **Primitivo** – like drinking fruit wine on an Italian leather sofa
9. **Nerello Mascalese** – the un-Pinot all the somms are talking about from Sicily
10. **Languedoc-Roussillon GSM Blends** – giving Côtes du Rhône a run for its money
11. **Bonarda** – the Argentinean grape (not Malbec!) that no one's ever heard of
12. **Right Bank Bordeaux** – when you're in need of a big old bear hug

### PNW Rosé

*A group of zesty, fruit-forward rosé wines from the Pacific Northwest.*

Rosé is a spring and summer staple, heck, even for winter...don't judge.

Besides the obvious ethereal [Provençal rosé](#), Pacific Northwest wines offer ample acidity, making them a perfect match for spring harvest veggies. Washington features blends, Oregon specializes in Pinot Noir, and British Columbia shows potential with Merlot and Cabernet Franc.

- **What to Expect:** Ranging from sultry and rich to light and bright, rosés tend to the red fruit side of the spectrum. Wines can be light and mineral driven, or full and lushly fruit-forward.
- **Pair it With:** Mid-weight rosé is perfect with salmon, or a Niçoise salad. Think strawberry salad or sashimi with lighter styles of rosé. For fuller expressions (even those with a hint of sweet), go for BBQ fare.
- **Geeky Alt:** Rosé is one of the most versatile wines for pairing, but check out [orange wine](#) for an earthier, funkier alternative.

### Primitivo

*It's like drinking fruit wine on an Italian leather sofa.*



The genetic twin of Zinfandel, this [Puglian grape](#) produces wines both high in alcohol and full in body, but with [higher acidity](#) than its North American brethren.

- **What to Expect:** A deeply colored wine, with flavors of juicy plum, black cherry, blackberry, and spice.
- **Pair it With:** Primitivo (or Zin) is fantastic when paired with hamburgers, eggplant Parmesan, pizza, or aged cheeses.
- **Geeky Alt:** Do a side-by-side with a California Zin for perspective.

## Languedoc-Roussillon Reds

*Giving Côtes du Rhône a run for its money.*

Historically known for bulk-production, there's been a massive shift toward quality with [Languedoc-Roussillon](#) red wines. The regions of Pic St. Loup, Faugères, Collioure, Maury, and Terrasses du Larzac are now becoming known for wines with serious character and virtue. You can also find great values labeled *Coteaux du Languedoc*. These wines feature Syrah, Grenache, Carignan, and Mourvèdre.

Overall, we're continually impressed with the quality-to-price ratio of Languedoc and Roussillon!

- **What to Expect:** Generally medium plus to full bodied, showing notes of candied red and black fruits, plum, peppery spice, and leather.
- **Pair it With:** Try these wines with grilled meats and roasted vegetables for a winning combination.
- **Geeky Alt:** Pick up a bottle of [Spanish Priorat](#) for a dustier take on Grenache

## Grüner Veltliner

*An herb-crusted white from Lower Austria.*

Straight outta' Austria, [Grüner Veltliner](#) is a delicious alternative to Sauvignon Blanc that screams green.

- **What to Expect:** Brimming with bright citrus, white pepper and a wet-stone sort of minerality, Grüner showcases screaming acidity and textural phenolics.
- **Pair it With:** This wine plays nicely with a host of fresh spring dishes, from bitter greens to citrus dressings.
- **Geeky Alt:** Look for the high-acid Greek grape, [Assyrtiko](#), for a slightly more aromatic option.

## Nerello Mascalese

*The "un-Pinot" all the somms are talking about from Sicily.*

The cool-climate, high altitude Mount Etna is located on the eastern side of the warm island of Sicily. This is where we find the Etna DOC. These wines are made from [Nerello Mascalese](#), and a smaller portion of Nerello Cappuccio.

- **What to Expect:** Medium to light body, tart red and black fruits, herbal undertones, and a distinct slate-like, volcanic minerality.

- **Pair it With:** Use the age-old “grows together, goes together” rule here, and try cooking up some Sicilian fare. Think oily fish and tomato sauces, or even rustic vegetable dishes.
- **Geeky Alt:** Check out Austrian Zweigelt. It’s deliciously different and falls somewhere between a Pinot Noir and a Syrah.

## Gamay

*A light-bodied red that smells like flowers and berries.*

Gamay Noir is at home in [Beaujolais](#). At its most basic level, this wine is light, refreshing, and full of juicy fruit. So, level up to any of Beaujolais’ ten crus and see how these provide a wine with more substance and strength.

- **What to Expect:** These tend to showcase refreshing red fruit, sometimes with a hint of pepper and an underlying earthy note.
- **Pair it With:** Gamay is stellar with anything picnic related (think cured meats, pâté, cheeses, spreads) as well as grilled glazed salmon or roasted vegetables.
- **Geeky Alt:** Check out the rare and juicy [Pelaverga](#) from Piedmont for another interesting light bodied choice.

## Vinho Branco

*A citrusy white wine blend from Portugal.*

Look into those [Portugal](#) blends that feature any of these spectacular indigenous white wine varieties: Arinto, Loureiro, Encruzado or Antão Vaz.

- **What to Expect:** Generally dry, ranging from light and spritzy Vinho Verde to rounder, fuller single varietal expressions. Wine from Portugal is epic value.
- **Pair it With:** See what you can find in your local bottle shop and tell us what you’d pair with it – other than a sunny day, of course! But, no one’s judging if that’s the move.
- **Geeky Alt:** Look for a Spanish [Verdejo](#) for another unique style.

## Pinot Noir

*The classic springy, elegant red.*

Spring isn’t complete without at least one bottle of Pinot Noir. If you haven’t had one from Oregon or New Zealand, now is the time.

- **What to Expect:** Pinot’s flavors range from bright red fruits to darker black cherries, always displaying a hallmark savory note. Try New Zealand or Oregon for outstanding non-Burgundian options.
- **Pair it With:** With bright acidity and fine-grained tannins, try Pinot with grilled fish, lighter meats, duck, pork, as well as pâtés or terrines.



- **Geeky Alt:** Check out Trousseau from the Jura region, located just east of Burgundy for another light, French option.

## Right Bank Bordeaux

*When you're in need of a big bear hug.*

The right bank of Bordeaux includes the over-arching [Libournais area](#), which includes the famous appellations of Saint-Émilion and Pomerol. What's surprising, is that there are many producers here offering outstanding wines around \$30 a bottle. (Surprisingly, this is not the case in Napa Valley!)

- **What to Expect:** Merlot-dominant blends from the right bank are an ever so slightly plusher style of Bordeaux. Expect flavors of plum, black cherry, licorice, tobacco, cedar, and smoke.
- **Pair it With:** With softer tannins than its left bank brother, Merlot-dominant blends play well with grilled meats, as well as smoked or grilled fish, especially those with Mediterranean flavors such as olives or herbs de Provence.
- **Geeky Alt:** Look for wines from new world countries labelled as "[Meritage](#)" for a riper, richer style made in the Bordeaux model.

## Gewürztraminer

*A rosy, aromatic white that's best consumed fresh.*

This distinctly aromatic variety originated in either northern Italy or Germany – the debate is on-going. It is also found in Alsace, France, as well as British Columbia, USA, and Australia.

- **What to Expect:** A bold nose of lychee and roses, Gewürz at its best is an aromatic explosion. Notorious for high alcohol and low acidity, these wines can become flabby in a warmer climate. Look to cooler regions (Northern Italy, Coastal CA, etc.) for more restrained styles.
- **Pair it With:** Wines with [residual sugar](#) and aromatics beg for spicy or spiced foods: Thai, Vietnamese, and Sichuan, especially. Or, opt for rich dishes like French onion soup, foie gras, and strong cheeses like Muenster to cut the sweetness.
- **Geeky Alt:** The intensely perfumed [Torrontés](#) from Argentina is a great alternative, lending slightly higher acidity and less weight.

## Lambrusco (di Sorbara)

*The lightest red of the Lambrusco family.*

Sparkling red wine, baby! At home in Emilia-Romagna, Sorbara is one of the three most popular types in [the Lambrusco familia](#). Grasparossa and Salamino (the grape bunches are shaped like salami) are the two other most commonly seen.

- **What to Expect:** These wines are seriously refreshing and lightly sparkling (frizzante.) They show zippy red fruit and high acidity. The key is freshness: drink young.

- **Pair it With:** Bright acidity and light tannins cut through richness and complement fatty meats. Or, try with charcuterie when having a picnic in the park... whatever makes you happy [is pairing 101!](#)
- **Geeky Alt:** If you're as enthused with sparkling red wines as we are, try Australian sparkling Shiraz, or the sweeter [Brachetto d'Acqui](#).

Bonarda

*The Argentinean grape (not Malbec!) that no one's ever heard of.*

If you call it Bonarda outside of Argentina, someone will correct you and call it after its French name: Douce Noir. Just smile and say "yes, I know," and slowly back away.

This bright, succulent, little grape is actually one of the most planted grapes in Argentina. Wines can taste similar to Malbec (in fact, many lower-end Malbec bottlings blend with Bonarda), but it's slightly lighter, more snappy. Some Bonarda wines have an herbal finish, while others are smooth and fruity.

- **What to Expect:** Expect bright plum and cherry, underlying spice, and hints of violet. These wines have relatively low tannin and bright acidity.
- **Pair it With:** Try it with papaya chicken, roast pork with pineapple, grilled fish, or beef. All things BBQ play really well here.
- **Geeky Alt:** Try a Bonarda side by side with a California Charbono and check out the stylistic and climactic differences.

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# Best Memorial Day Weekend Getaways

By VacationIdea.com



Most of us can't wait until Memorial Day [weekend](#) at end of May because it marks the start of summer. Whether your idea of a dream vacation is relaxing on a [beach](#) by the sea or mountain biking through a national park, longer days and warm weather make it easy to have fun outdoors.

We recommend that you call the attractions and restaurants ahead of your visit to confirm current opening times.

## Utah - Desert Pearl Inn

Commanding a spectacular location on the banks of the Virgin River at the entrance to the famous Zion National Park in Springdale, Desert Pearl Inn is a luxurious haven in the western desert that promises an unforgettable getaway. You will be surrounded by the spectacular scenery of sun-drenched cliffs, manicured lawns and Navajo Sandstone. Relax in the freeform outdoor swimming pool and hot tub to the sounds of a nearby waterfall, or stroll through the tranquil gardens in search of butterflies and birds. Impressively large rooms and suites offer sophisticated style and are beautifully furnished with natural materials that blend with the surrounding landscape. Guest accommodations offer the convenience of fully equipped kitchens, individual climate control, wireless Internet and breathtaking views. Start the morning with gourmet coffee and freshly baked muffins from the Periodic Table. Lunch and dinner is served at the Highway Restaurant, where you can dine on gourmet locally-inspired dishes.



*707 Zion Park Blvd., Springdale, UT 84767, Phone: 435-772-8888*

## Wisconsin - Camp Wandawega

With a rich history that dates back to 1925, Camp Wandawega is a unique guest camp on the shores of Lake Wandawega in Wisconsin. The property offers a rustic camp experience and a true escape from the hustle and bustle of daily life. Choose from a variety of accommodation, ranging from vintage cabins, bunkhouses and bungalows to treehouses, teepees and tents, all of which are simply furnished with the bare essentials, inviting you to let go and re-connect with nature. There is a private beach, fishing pier, boating, canoeing, biking, fishing, hiking, tennis and shuffleboard. Outdoor grills and barbecues are available around the resort for cookouts under the stars.

*W5453 Lake View Dr, Elkhorn, WI 53121*



## South Carolina - Montage Palmetto Bluff

Montage Palmetto Bluff is a luxury getaway with suites, cottages and homes surrounded by forest and water views. Amenities include verandahs with gorgeous views, fireplaces, and high ceilings. Spa Montage Palmetto Bluff relies on natural inspiration to help guests relax, offering a range of body therapies, massages and facials.



Palmetto Bluff is set on over 20,000 acres which you can explore by bike on the 32 miles of waterfront. There resort provides access to the Palmetto Bluff Shooting Club, May River Golf Course, Wilson Lawn and Racquet Club, and Longfield Stables. Throughout the community, you will get to admire a wide range of sculptures and seasonal community art shows. In addition to optional in-room dining, guests can enjoy seasonally-inspired cuisine made with native ingredients and a reverence for the Southern classics at The Carolina Room. The Canoe Club provides beautiful views and features southern comfort dining, with emphasis on seafood, while Buffalo's, set within Wilson Village, offers casual southern cuisine.

*476 Mount Pelia Road, Bluffton, SC 29910, Phone: 843-706-6500*

## Idaho - The Wallace Inn

Nestled at the foot of the towering Bitterroot Mountains, the newly renovated Wallace Inn is a contemporary mountain retreat in the heart of North Idaho's spectacular Silver Valley. Surrounded by breath-taking natural beauty, dense forested slopes, and endless blue skies, this modern hotel is the perfect place to recharge over a long weekend.





Fifty-nine well-appointed guest rooms and four luxurious suites are spacious and bright, with modern décor and an array of deluxe amenities, including individual climate control, cable TV, and an in-room coffee service. All rooms have beautiful mountain views and there is complimentary wireless Internet throughout the hotel. The indoor pool has a skylight through which you can enjoy the view while going for a swim. Facilities include a sauna, steam room and a fitness room. Molly's at the Inn serves delicious farm-fresh fare throughout the day in a sunny setting, where cozy booths and lovely mountain views add a special touch to your meal. The quiet ambiance of O'Rourke's Lounge is ideal for relaxing over a nightcap and chatting with fellow guests.

*100 Front Street, Wallace, ID 83873, Phone: 208-752-1252*

## **North Carolina - WhiteGate Inn & Cottage**

Exuding a wonderful historic charm that is echoed in the surrounding town of Asheville, WhiteGate Inn & Cottage is an award-winning bed and breakfast that offers a romantic escape from the hustle and bustle of city life. Eleven beautifully appointed rooms and suites are individually decorated with rich, luxurious furnishings,



modern amenities, and offer wonderful garden views. Named after famous poets, each room boasts volumes of poetry by the same author and lavish bathrooms with whirlpool tubs. Cozy fireplaces set into stone walls create warm and welcoming ambiance and separate entrances to some of the guest rooms add an element of privacy. Pampering spa and salon treatments are available in the comfort of your suite, where you can relax under the expert touch of a trained masseuse, as well as a fully equipped exercise room where you can work out. Curl up next to the fire in the parlor against a backdrop of live piano music or relax in the solarium and soak up the beautiful views. Stroll through the award-winning gardens, which are home to an extensive collection of unique flora.

*173 E. Chestnut Street, Asheville, NC 28801, Phone: 800-485-3045*

## **Sausalito - Casa Madrona**

Casa Madrona is one of San Francisco's timeless and beloved icons with a 125 history. Perched on a hillside overlooking the bay in the charming town of Sausalito, this luxurious boutique hotel seamlessly blends style and innovation to offer a luxurious escape.



Unparalleled grandeur is reflected in Casa Madrona's signature 11-roomed residence, The Mansion. Built in 1885, the exquisite Victorian estate has been redesigned to create a private, ethereal ambiance with spectacular panoramic views. The hotel also offers apartment-style accommodation in the Hillside Suites, complete with modern amenities and overlooking Richardson Bay. Welcoming hospitality and outstanding service greets you on arrival at this luxurious hotel. Guests have access to a private spa and steam room, a swimming pool and a range of services including daily newspapers, porter assistance, and 24-hour room service. Classic Italian fare is served at Poggio Trattoria next door to the hotel.

*801 Bridgeway, Sausalito, CA 94965, Phone: 800-288-0502*



## Vermont - The Wildflower Inn

Overlooking rolling green hills, tree-lined pastures and breathtaking Vermont farm country, the Wildflower Inn is a glorious sanctuary in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom. Once a 100-cow dairy farm, the Wildflower Inn has been lovingly transformed into a quaint, village-like setting with renovated carriage barns, country collectibles, and wonderful countryside views. Twenty-four comfortable guest rooms and suites have been decorated to provide a peaceful countryside ambiance. Rooms do not have televisions;



however, there is wireless Internet throughout the retreat. A hearty farmhouse breakfast is served every morning and afternoon snacks are available in the lounge where you can relax in style. The surrounding Northeast Kingdom is a veritable outdoor adventure heaven with a plethora of activities to enjoy year-round, from hiking, mountain biking, swimming and fishing to cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and sledding. After a busy day outdoors, re-energize with pampering treatments from the Stepping Stone Spa.

*2059 Darling Hill Road, Lyndonville, VT 05851, Phone: 802-626-8310*

## Georgia - W Atlanta – Buckhead

W Atlanta - Buckhead offers the perfect place for visitors to rest while enjoying fine entertainment, dining, or shopping in the city, all from a convenient location. This hotel offers five different types of rooms: Wonderful Room, Spectacular Room, Fabulous Room, Wow Suite, and E-Wow Suite. Each provides luxurious pillow top mattresses, 350-thread-count sheets, BlissSpa products in the room, an iPod docking station, complete media library, Munchie



Box, and a work area. Within the hotel, you will find a spa, which guests are able to access for free as well as the FIT 24/7 fitness center with top-of-the-line equipment for all athletes, ranging from ellipticals and treadmills to free weights and weight machines. The Living Room is open to hotel guests – it's an excellent place to hang out, read one of the many books, play a board game, and listen to music. Cook Hall serves handcrafted cocktails and beer poured from the vintage taps. You can create a custom drink, share platters or order individually-portioned snacks. Whiskey Blue Atlanta serves lighter fare and signature cocktails. Its hip atmosphere, cutting-edge design, and rooftop location with its own terrace make it a unique experience.

*188 14th Street, NE Atlanta, GA 30361, Phone: 404-892-6000*

## The Gasparilla Inn and Club

The Gasparilla Inn and Club is an elegant, historic golf resort located on Gasparilla Island, about 53 miles from Sarasota. Stately and ornate and built in 1913, this classic upscale resort is a reminder of the “Old Florida” of more elegant times. The resort’s 142 luxury suites and rooms are decorated with vintage pieces, brightly colored and comfortable, and equipped with all modern amenities. Villas and cottages have screened porches, living areas, and kitchenettes. The guests can enjoy the beach club, private golf club, several tennis courts, a gym, and a spa. There is also a croquet lawn, a bakery, a marina, and an upscale gourmet restaurant called Pink Elephant.



*500 Palm Ave, Boca Grande, FL 33921, Phone: 941-964-4500*

## Colorado - Leroux Creek Inn & Vineyards

Surrounded by rolling green vineyards and fruit-laden orchards with breath-taking views of the West Elk mountains, Canyons and Mesas, Le Roux Creek Inn is a beautiful bed and breakfast tucked away in the heart of Colorado's North Fork Valley. Five tastefully decorated rooms are comfortably furnished with king or queen sized beds, private bathrooms, and bespoke amenities for pure home-away-from-home comfort. Mountain, desert or vineyards views can be enjoyed from each room and a guest refrigerator with complimentary beverages is available. A secluded hot tub promises romantic evenings under the stars, while the spacious deck overlooking landscaped gardens is the perfect breakfast spot. Spend days exploring the vineyards, tasting wine and hiking or biking along the numerous trails in the area. In the evening, sit back and relax by the roaring fire with a glass of a local wine.



*12388 3100 Road, Hotchkiss, CO 81419, Phone: 970-872-4746*

## EAST COAST

The Sagamore in the Adirondack Mountains is planning a Chowderfest where you can learn how to make great chowder and eat it too. On Sunday, the hotel is going to host a regatta. .If you are looking for a romantic trip, the [Mirror Lake Inn](#) has a 3-day package. You'll be able to relax and rejuvenate in a natural setting overlooking a lake.

## WEST COAST

Want to get in shape for the upcoming beach season? At La Costa resort in California, you can play golf, relax at the spa, or participate in over 50 daily fitness classes. [Click here](#) for more weight loss retreats. Visit the scenic Snoqualmie Falls 30 miles from Seattle, get pampered at the spa and dine in style at the [Salish Lodge and Spa](#).

[San Ysidro Ranch](#) is a secluded hideaway in Southern California. [Shutters on the Beach](#) is set on a sandy beach overlooking the ocean. Relax next to the outdoor pool and with a massage at the spa. Rancho Valencia is a relaxing resort in Rancho Santa Fe, California. Treatments utilize fresh ingredients, pure essential oils, and healing benefits from the sea to relax and rejuvenate. Choose from facials, body therapy, skin care treatments and couples treatments. In addition to the spa, the resort offers tennis, golf and other activities. Guests are accommodated in 49 spacious suites set on 20 landscaped acres. [Hyatt Regency Monterey](#) features championship golf and a new 12,000 square foot spa. Dine at the scenic Penthouse restaurant at [The Huntley Hotel](#) overlooking the ocean.

## THE CARIBBEAN

Since the Memorial Day weekend signals the start of the summer, if you want to head straight to the sandy shore, check out one of the packages at The Meridian Club. You can learn to scuba dive, or just relax in the sun. [Sandy Lane Resort](#) in Barbados is just a 4.5-hour flight from New York City. The resort has a spa, golf and a variety of watersports.

## HAWAII

Although airfare prices to Hawaii tend to be steep, there is no better way to greet the summer than with a surfing lesson in Waikiki. Fly to Honolulu and stay at one of the hotels right on the water.

## MONTANA

[Paws Up in Montana](#) offers a wilderness vacation with a luxury twist. Guests can explore 37,000 acres of wilderness by day and return to their luxury home or tent at night. With an average of 422 acres per guest, you can spend your days wildlife watching, hiking, mountain biking and fly fishing surrounded by nature. Guests are accommodated in luxury tents for two with feather beds, electricity, bathrooms with hot water and original art on the walls. And to help ensure that you will not have to rough it, the 'Canvas Concierge' stands by to help you start a fire as well as answer any other requests. Ask about the historic Morris Farm House. Located on the bank of Elk Creek, the farmhouse offers privacy and seclusion.

## SAN JUAN ISLAND

Views of the San Juan Channel, a fireplace and an oversized whirl-bath jetted tub are standard in all of the twenty guest rooms at [Friday Harbor House](#). This small inn is located on a prominent bluff in the quaint town of Friday Harbor on San Juan Island. Eat at the harbor view dining room and enjoy a meal of farm-fresh produce and herbs from the inn's garden. If you plan your trip in the quiet season from October through June 15th and you will enjoy a totally different getaway. The room rates are much lower and the island, although chilly, will be much less crowded.

## THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

The [Grove Park Inn](#) is a place for anyone looking to relax, play some golf, and enjoy a wide range of spa treatments. Stay in room with a view of the Blue Ridge Mountains and eat at the Dining Room. If your going to play golf, you might be interested in knowing that all of the golf carts are equipped with a GPS system that will tell you how far your ball is from the hole, the front of the green, and the back of the green.



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