



**Rats Restaurant and Grounds for Sculpture Trip Notes**  
**Tuesday November 27, 2018**

**Weather** – it was cold and windy but we bundled up and had 2-3 hours walking the grounds.

**The Gardens** -- <http://www.groundsforsculpture.org>

From [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grounds\\_For\\_Sculpture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grounds_For_Sculpture)

Grounds For Sculpture (GFS) is a 42-acre sculpture park and museum located in Hamilton, NJ, on the former site of the New Jersey State Fairgrounds. Founded in 1992 by John Seward Johnson II, the venue is dedicated to promoting an understanding of and appreciation for contemporary sculpture by organizing exhibitions, publishing catalogues, and offering a variety of educational programs and special community events.

In July 2000, GFS became a nonprofit organization open to the public. Operation revenues come from visitors, art patrons, donations, and grants. GFS maintains an ever changing collection of sculptures, with works by Seward Johnson and other artists.

**Rats Restaurant**, info from Wikipedia -

Rat's Restaurant is located on the grounds, and was conceptually designed by Johnson with an **Impressionist Claude Monet**-styled atmosphere. The scenery surrounding the restaurant features Johnson's own impressionist-inspired sculptures, including a bridge over a lily pond which is an homage to Monet's painting *Water Lilies and Japanese Bridge* (1897-1899). The restaurant is named after the character "Ratty" from **Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*** which is one of Seward Johnson's favorite books.

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Stewart Johnson – a character and apparently a good one to form such a treasure:

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Seward\\_Johnson\\_II](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Seward_Johnson_II)

His father, Stewart Johnson Sr., was such the character and often in news, the more recent being his marrying his nursemaid, leaving everything to her, and the subsequent an naturally lawsuits.

**Worthy of a trip.** Check out more pictures by looking at Google Images.





These are life-size and when one turns a corner to find them, you're stunned that they are just art. Many are clearly copies of art, with a particular fascination for work of Rubens Paris in the Park type pictures, and of Manet such as the Picnic in the Park.



Yes these are all sculptures. A picnic table next to the lake, a sailboat in the background and even ducks, then an exercise area with a bathhouse complete with sculptures of the gal's hanging clothes. Note the amusing mirror placement at her behind.



The restaurant named Rats is only one of about four places to eat, with more outside during the warm season. It looks old and European as they used old wooden beams and most rooms are smallish.

We ate with a view of the lake and a copy of Monet's bridge in Givernay France. Behind the bridge but at the lake was the nude bather. Full size as are most of the sculptures other than those bigger than life. The 'party table' is amazing with a plaque nearby identifying the persons.

We will return in the spring time!

**Itinerary**

- 10:30am Depart home – approximately 1 hour drive
- AM Stroll Sculpture Grounds – or cancel day if weather bad
- 1:30pm Rats Restaurant – dinner/lunch reservations for 3  
16 Fairgrounds Road, Hamilton, NJ 08619 Tele: 609 584 7800

A relaxing and exotic escape featuring delightful cuisine, spectacular views and elegant ambiance, Rat's Restaurant is the perfect dining destination. Named for the fabled entertaining character in Kenneth Graham's children's classic, The Wind in the Willows, Rat's Restaurant is designed to give visitors the sense they have stepped into a village reminiscent of the impressionist painter Claude Monet's beloved town of Giverny. From the moment you arrive you'll see why this extraordinarily charming venue is a favorite for fine dining, celebrations and corporate events. Rustic fireplaces, country French cuisine, seasonal hand-crafted cocktails and an eclectic beer and wine list are just the beginning. Regarded as one of the most romantic restaurants in our region, Rat's was named Philadelphia Magazine's "Most Romantic Restaurant. Rat's Restaurant and catering is proudly managed by Constellation Culinary.

- PM After the restaurant – Stroll Sculpture Grounds