

The IMPROPER BOSTONIAN

JUNE 22-JULY 5, 2011

Celebrating 20 Years

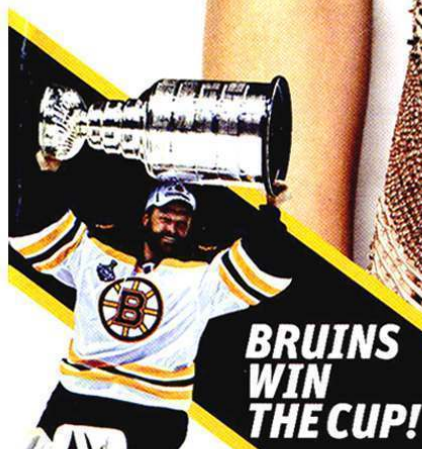
METRO BOSTON'S ADVENTUROUS GUIDE
TO ENTERTAINMENT, CULTURE
AND THE OPEN ROAD

Up & Away

Our Favorite
New England
Summer
Escapes

Tune In
An Interview
with *Glee* Star
Jessalyn
Gilsig

**+ HOT
SWIMSUIT
FASHIONS**



The IMPROPER

A Great Escape

About 15 seconds after the Bruins won the Stanley Cup, I got a text from a friend in Vancouver. "Congrats," he wrote. "People are pretty gutted over here." He added that the streets were filling with smoke. "Sorry to hear that," I replied. "People are pretty happy here. I'm watching an impromptu orgy strike up outside the bar." It's all perspective. There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.



The mind makes for a handy escape hatch. For instance, when I'm slumped in my office on airless afternoons, a stack of unread music listings gnawing at my sanity, I like to imagine that I'm 19th-century cultural critic and poet Matthew Arnold. It's awesome. I love the late-Victorian idea that, even though the old verities of religion and class are receding against the onslaught of chill modernity, I can still sport handsome side-whiskers. There's also the thrill of believing we can achieve a perfect society if everyone attends edifying lectures. And, oh, to wear a fez with a smoking jacket in the evening! I imagine that I take a thoughtful pull from my pipe before picking up pen and inkpot for a flight of poesy. In no time at all, I've scribbled out *Dover Beach*, in which I draw together threads of uncertainty and loss of faith, yet poignantly hope that, by remaining true to love, there may yet be some meaning on this "darkling plain." Then I sip a cup of tea and die a little of repression.

Or better, I imagine I'm a ninja. That's actually a hell of a lot more entertaining.

Andrew Rimas, Editor
andrew@improper.com

HIGH COLOR
Jessalyn Gilsig photographed exclusively for The Improper by Cheyenne Ellis. Wardrobe styling: Eric Niemand; hair: David Gardner/Solo Artists; makeup: Spencer Barnes/Solo Artists; dress: Blumarine.
Tim Thomas: UPI/Heinz Ruckemann/LANDOV

“

I FEEL THIS VERY MATERNAL NEED TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION AND SAY, 'IT'S NOT THAT INTERESTING THAT I'M ON GLEE.'" Page 29

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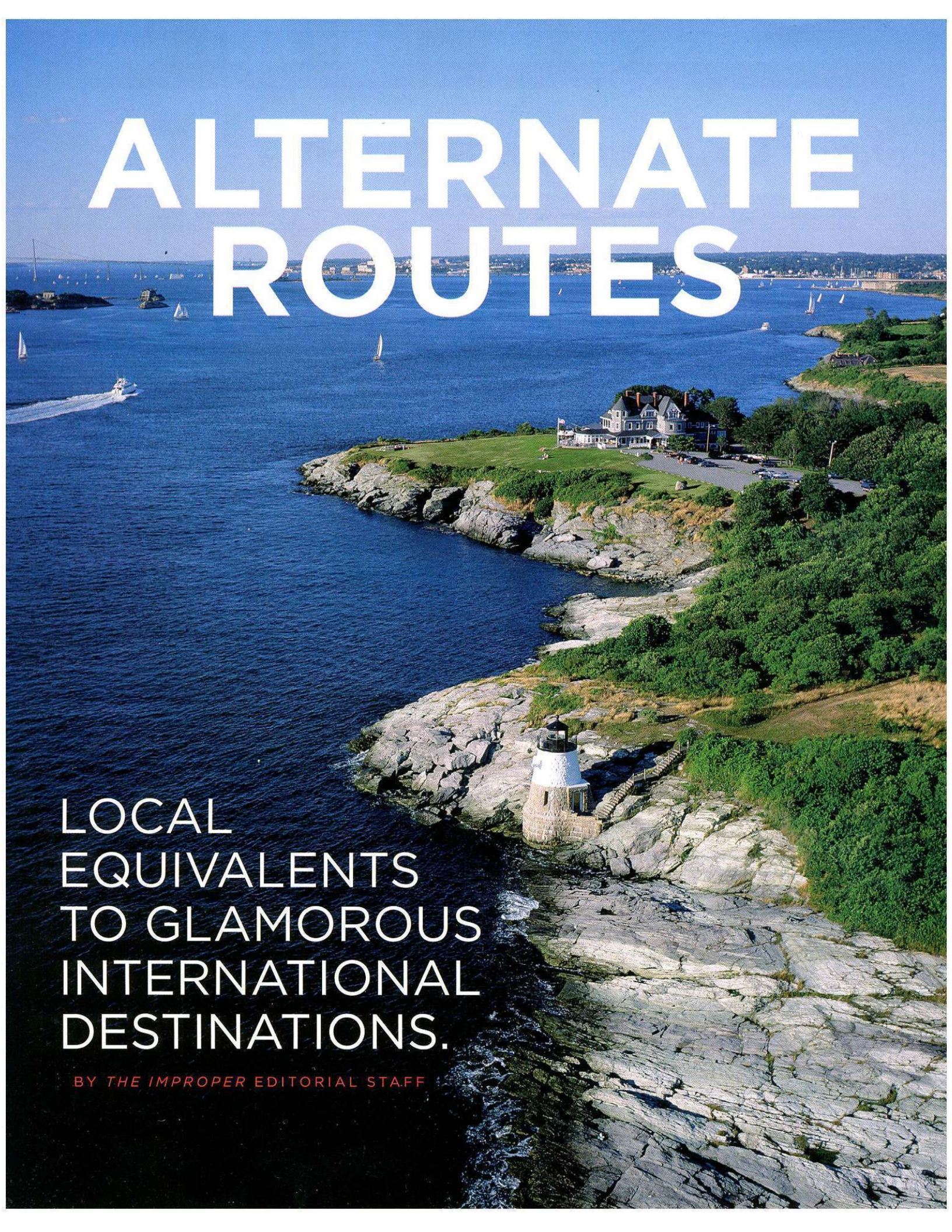


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ALTERNATE ROUTES



LOCAL
EQUIVALENTS
TO GLAMOROUS
INTERNATIONAL
DESTINATIONS.

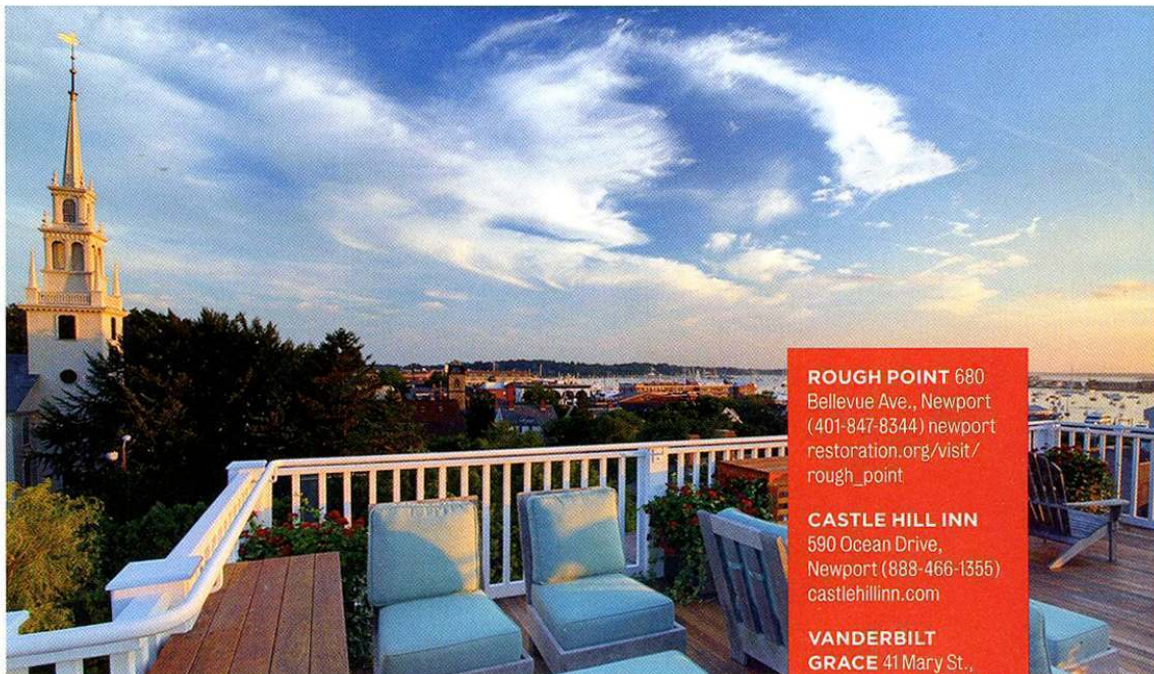
BY THE IMPROPER EDITORIAL STAFF

MOVIE BUFFS AND gossip junkies dream of strolling the streets of Cannes, France, in search of stars, but you don't need to hit the Riviera to get your Hollywood-by-the-sea fix. Try the 90-minute drive to Newport, R.I., playground of bolded names like Ed Norton, Brad Pitt and Bruce Willis.

Steeped in the decadent history of America's Gilded Age, Newport boasts top-notch shopping, snacking and sunning. Most of the Bellevue Avenue mansions, one-time homes to Bancrofts, Astors and Vanderbilts, are open for public gawking, the most intriguing being Rough Point. The summer cottage of tobacco heiress Doris Duke houses her hodgepodge of tapestries, antiques and opulent accoutrements before splitting off into a year-long exhibit dedicated to her clothing—a collection of mid-century sportswear from labels like Gucci, Halston and Valentino.

A short trip down Ocean Drive brings you to Castle Hill Inn, a sprawling resort complete with its own lighthouse and coastal walking trail. Each manicured inch of the 40-acre peninsula encourages guests to take a breather and enjoy the views of the mainland across the bay. The turret-topped main house was once home to renowned scientist Alexander Agassiz, and has hosted guests from Mark Twain to momentary Celtic Shaquille O'Neal and his *Flavor*-ful girlfriend, Hoopz.

The building holds nine guest rooms and four dining rooms overlooking the lawn, but the property stretches to include a private chalet and cottages. The luxurious beach-house rooms are equipped with kitchenettes and private decks that look directly out onto the shore and are connected by a path leading to the resort's private sand.



IF YOU CAN'T DO CANNES... TRY NEWPORT.

Although Castle Hill offers in-room treatments, massage connoisseurs should try the spa at the Vanderbilt Grace hotel. A hot stone massage uses local stones and lava rocks as tools rather than as simple heat conductors. Nearby, a strip of recently revamped storefronts houses boutiques like Angela Moore and Calvet Sacs & Bagages, a chi-chi handbag collection whose quality and exotic skins rival Hermès.

For dinner, the farm-to-table trend is evoked wonderfully at hot spots like Tallulah on Thames, Fluke Wine, Bar & Kitchen and the dockside Mooring Seafood Kitchen & Bar. At Castle Hill, executive chef Jonathan Cambra plates up dishes that showcase vegetables grown on-site and locally sourced proteins. And there's a special luxury in knowing your tautog was caught just yards from where you're sitting. ✱

ROUGH POINT 680 Bellevue Ave., Newport (401-847-8344) newportrestoration.org/visit/rough_point

CASTLE HILL INN 590 Ocean Drive, Newport (888-466-1355) castlehillinn.com

VANDERBILT GRACE 41 Mary St., Newport (401-846-6200) vanderbiltgrace.com

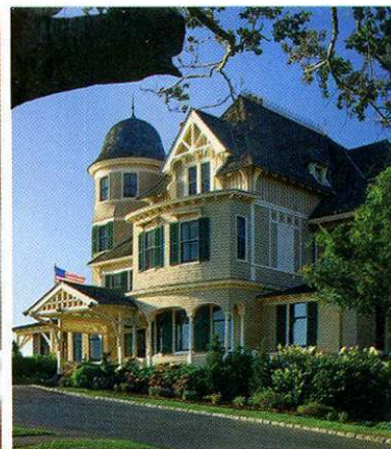
ANGELA MOORE 190 Bellevue Ave., Newport (401-619-1900) angela.moore.com

CALVET SACS & BAGAGES 172 Bellevue Ave., Suite 314, Newport (401-207-5329) marcela.calvet.com

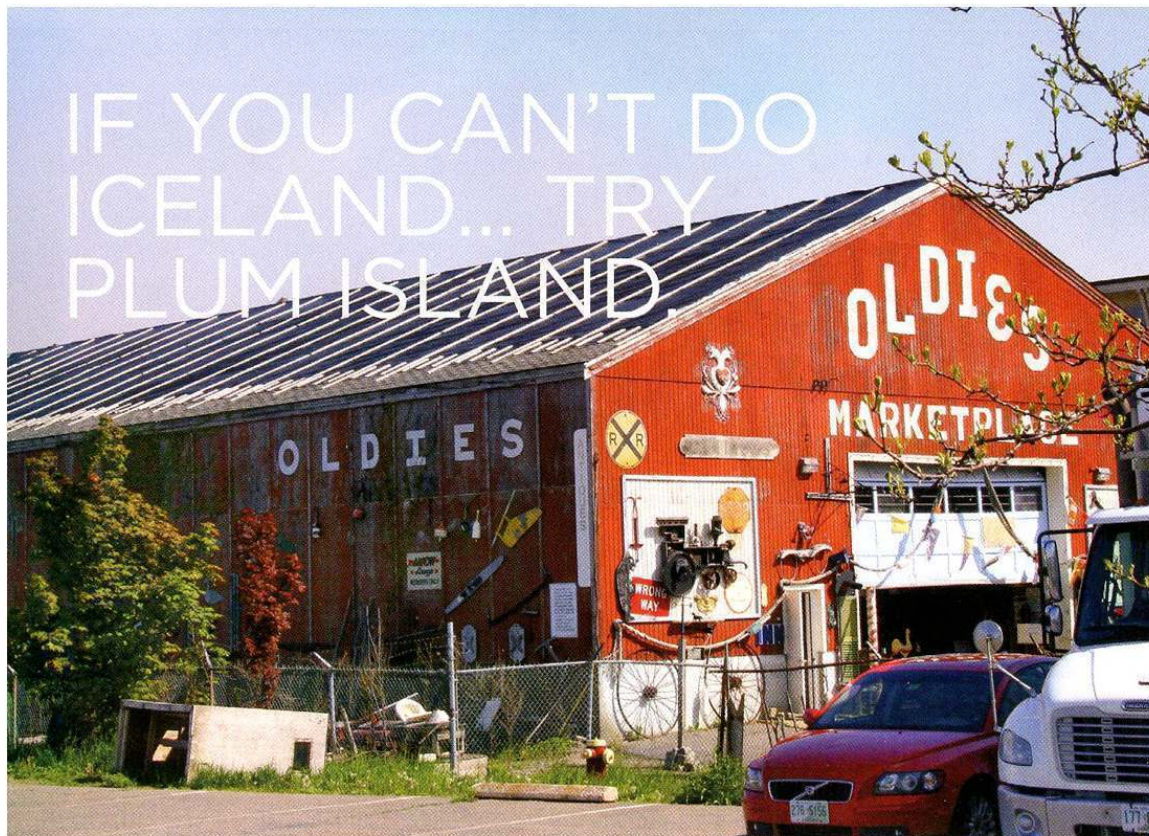
TALLULAH ON THAMES 464 Thames St., Newport (401-849-2433) tallulahon.thames.com

FLUKE WINE, BAR & KITCHEN 41 Bowens Wharf, Newport (401-849-7778) flukewinebar.com

THE MOORING SEAFOOD KITCHEN & BAR 1 Sayers Wharf, Newport (401-846-2260) mooringrestaurant.com



IF YOU CAN'T DO ICELAND... TRY PLUM ISLAND.



IF YOUR IDEAL VACATION is a mix of simple pleasures and outdoor adventure, a trip to Iceland is probably on your bucket list. Visitors flock there for its nature tourism (the island's a prime location for hiking and bird-watching), seafood and bargains on Scandinavian designs. The problem is that Iceland's practically in the Arctic Circle, and it keeps erupting with lava. For a less geothermal getaway, try Newburyport. The commuter rail or bus will get you there

faster than you can say *Eyjaflajökull*, while taxi company London Livery eliminates any need for a car as it shuttles visitors throughout the area and onto nearby Plum Island in London-style cabs.

Everyone's first destination on Plum Island should be the 4,662-acre Parker River National Wildlife Refuge. It boasts miles of hiking trails where you can spy birds like bald eagles and snowy owls. Inside, Mass Audubon's Joppa Flats Education Center

features marine tanks, art exhibits and butterfly gardens. Alternately, get a duck's-eye view on a boat tour of the area's salt and freshwater marshes led by Plum Island Kayak.

Adjacent to the refuge, Blue, the Inn on the Beach is an elegant seaside spot offering cool amenities like outdoor Jacuzzis that overlook the Atlantic. From a walkway paved in blue glass marbles to the picnic-basket breakfast that's delivered each morning, the inn's details balance simplicity with refinement. The deck overlooking a private beach is the perfect spot to watch the fog roll over the island.

For fresh seafood, try the "grille board" at Plum Island Grille and enjoy the catch of the day dished up with your choice of sauces from chef/owner Francis Broadbery (try the pickled jalapeño tartar). Or just sit at the deck bar with the crowd of locals that gathers each evening to watch the sunset. The only other on-island evening establishment, the Beachcoma, is supposed



LONDON LIVERY 126 Merrimac St., Newburyport (978-462-4442) londonliverytaxi.com

PARKER RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE 6 Plum Island Turnpike, Newburyport (978-465-5753) fws.gov/northeast/parkerriver

JOPPA FLATS EDUCATION CENTER 1 Plum Island Turnpike, Newburyport (978-462-9998) massaudubon.org

PLUM ISLAND KAYAK 92 Merrimac St., Unit 101B, Newburyport (978-462-5510) plumislandkayak.com

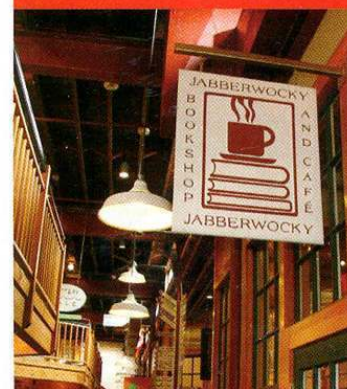
BLUE, THE INN ON THE BEACH 20 Fordham Way, Newbury (855-255-2583) blueinn.com

PLUM ISLAND GRILLE 2 Sunset Blvd., Newbury (978-463-2290) plumislandgrille.com

PLUM ISLAND BEACHCOMA 23 Plum Island Blvd., Newbury (978-255-3069) plumislandbeachcoma.com

MAD MARTHA'S BEACH CAFE 51 Northern Blvd., Newbury (978-462-7707) madmarthasbeachcafe.com

TANNERY MARKETPLACE 50 Water St., Newburyport (978-465-7047) tannerymarketplace.com



JABBERWOCKY BOOKSHOP 50 Water St., Newburyport (978-465-9359) jabberwockybookshop.com

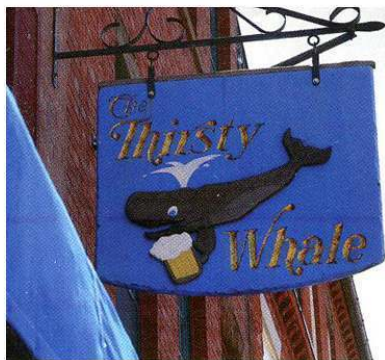
OLDIES MARKETPLACE 27 Rear Water St., Newburyport (978-465-0643) oldies-ma.com

SPA PARADISO AND SALON 18 Titcomb St., Newburyport (978-426-5530) spaparadisoandsalon.com

CEIA KITCHEN + BAR 25 State St., Newburyport (978-358-8112) ceia-newburyport.com

GROG 13 Middle St., Newburyport (978-465-8008) thegrog.com

THIRSTY WHALE 24 Market Square, Newburyport (978-462-1140)



to reopen this month after a seven-and-a-half year hiatus, but you can always arrange a private dinner atop the Newburyport Lighthouse, or have a funky, frantic breakfast or lunch at Mad Martha's Beach Cafe. Arrive early, and be patient.

For a break from Plum Island's "everybody knows your name" vibe, cross the Wilkinson Bridge into Newburyport. Despite its pocket size, Newburyport has cultural depth and cosmopolitan charm. The Tannery Marketplace combines independent galleries, home decor stores and cafes inside a repurposed mill. Be sure to visit its Jabberwocky Bookshop, which, with its wide range of art, travel, fiction and used books, embodies the town's cultural mélange. More whimsical, perhaps, is Somerby's Landing Sculpture Park and Oldies, a treasure trove of antiques like cocktail hats from the '40s, suits of armor, old woodworking tools and tchotchkes galore. Then rest your shopping-bag muscles at Spa Paradiso and Salon, a friendly, holistically inclined day spa with a knack for massage.

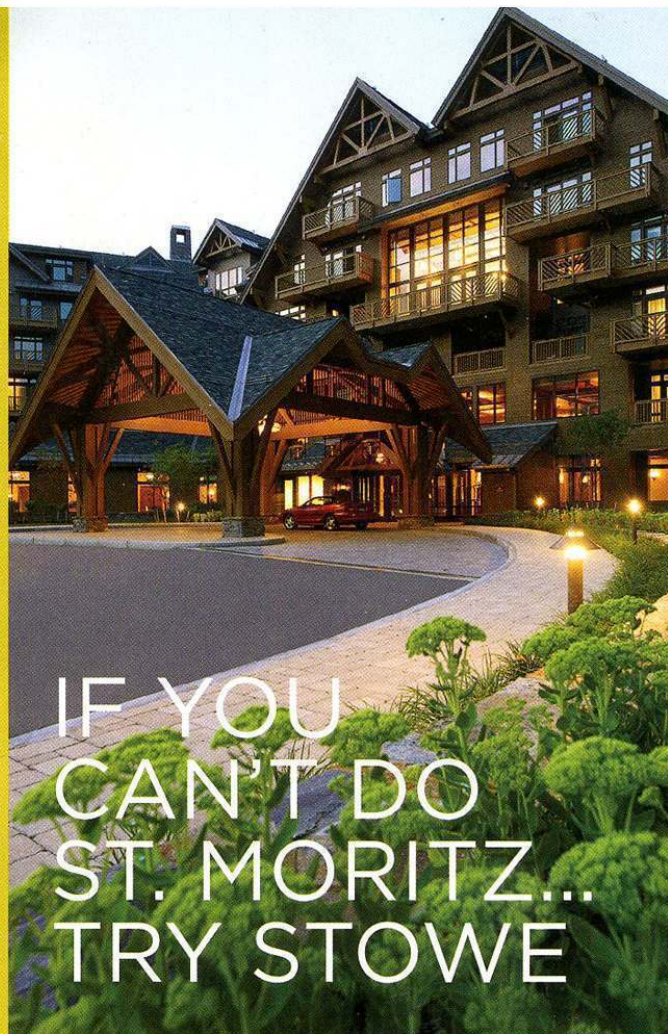
Within earshot of Market Square's street performances, Ceia Kitchen + Bar features sophisticated fare from executive chef Billy Brandolini. Since opening the restaurant in December, the 23-year-old's banana brûlée has become a town favorite. After dessert, raise a glass at the Grog and Thirsty Whale pubs. *

TODAY IT'S A HAVEN for the rich, the titled and the paparazzi, but the cash-soaked playground of St. Moritz wasn't always built on snow. As far back as the Middle Ages, travelers trudged up the Swiss mountainsides for their health, to take the mineral waters and the pristine air. It was only when 19th-century hoteliers invented the winter sports industry that the Alps became synonymous with hurtling downhill on sticks.

Closer to home, clean air and luxury mud wraps draw summer tourists to Vermont's Stowe Mountain (it's one of New England's great clichés that the Green Mountains are the local equivalent of the Swiss Alps, but it's true). At the base of the grassy slopes sits Stowe Mountain Lodge, a \$125-million confection of timber, high-end amenities and Polo Ralph Lauren boutiques. The six-story hotel cribs from summer camp aesthetics with its open layout, birch bark columns and cyclopean fireplaces, but the rooms are five-star urban comfort.

Driving up Route 108 to the Lodge takes you past scores of restaurants and maple syrup boutiques, but once you valet your car, there's little reason to leave the shadow of Mount Mansfield. Entering the lobby, the mountains are drawn into the interior decor, framed by giant windows that flood the hotel with light, color and a sense of crippling inadequacy in the face of nature's overwhelming grandeur. Luckily, there's a bar to assuage any existential crises.

Many of the rooms are located a brisk 5-minute trot to the south, which takes you past the outdoor swimming pool—heated to 86 degrees in the summer, although its accompa-



nying Jacuzzis are significantly hotter. Mark the fire pit and make a mental note to take a poolside cocktail at sunset.

Stowe Mountain Lodge's rooms are decked with the inevitable LCD screens, iPod docks and stone-framed fireplaces, but they also nod to Vermont's greenery by stocking organic cotton towels and environmentally friendly bath products. An ideal of "wellness," too, carries over in the state-of-the-art, 21,000-square-foot spa. Like the rest of the Lodge, the spa is designed with an eye towards the environment. The changing rooms, for instance, exit onto a snaking stone corridor that evokes the feel of flowing water. It's the "Signature Sacred Rituals," however, that are most distinctive. In the "Sacred Journey," you're heavily mas-

saged, cocooned in a hot mud wrap and rubbed with oils of bergamot, basil, nutmeg, lemon and cardamom, like a pampered Sunday roast. Particular emphasis is placed on working the hands, feet and head, which, when combined with the pungent spices and the smothering mud, leaves you with all the tension of a wet sponge.

The natural theme carries over to the hotel restaurant, Solstice, where Chef Cody Vasek's menu leans heavily on nearby farms and organic foods. He distills Vermont onto a plate with dishes like spring lamb with local blueberries and watercress puree, and his selection of local cheeses is profound. *

STOWE MOUNTAIN LODGE
7412 Mountain Road, Stowe (802-253-3560) stowemountainlodge.com

IN THE WARM CHURN OF THE harbor at Puerto Banus, Spain, the king of Saudi Arabia anchors his yacht against a backdrop of marble shopping malls, coke-dusted dance clubs and Vuitton. An ocean away in Nantucket Sound, hygienic couples with matching Labradors stroll a marina in which the flashiest attraction is the Ms. Pac-Man machine at Cap'n Tobey's Chowder House. Both towns are playgrounds for the rich, and if the lilies are more thickly gilded in the Mediterranean, the fenced driveways on Cliff Road hide many a secret Bentley.

After disembarking from one of the fast ferries ("Welcome to Martha's Vineyard!" is the inevitable chestnut delivered by the sailor on the gangplank), stroll up the cobbles past carefully tended 18th-century architecture toward the Nantucket Island Chamber of Commerce for a map and events guide. Do not wear heels, as the cobbles seem to have been planted by a deranged bonesetter. Immediately around the corner, the Union Street Inn is a 1770 whaling captain's house that's had the draftiness and fish smell removed, and amenities like Frette linens and cooked-to-order breakfast in bed added. The result is a boutique B&B with a French accent, run by Ken and Deb Withrow (Ken used to manage Chicago's Le Méridien, Deb was at Henri Bendel in New York City). It's intimate enough that you hear the other guests' footsteps creaking on the stairs, but the Fresh bath products, afternoon baked treats and understated charm more than make up for any unexpected neighborliness.

For less emphasis on homemade carrot cake and more on sea algae facials, the White Elephant is a sparkling luxury "inn" with one foot in the resort world. Rooms are decked in tasteful whites and nautical art, with ocean views brushing the scene in cobalt. Its restaurant, the Brant Point Grill, commands a lordly view of the harbor and an even lordlier steak and seafood menu. The spa, too, is noteworthy. Nantucket isn't overwhelmed with massage

IF YOU CAN'T DO THE COSTA DEL SOL...TRY NANTUCKET



Jeff Allen

NANTUCKET ISLAND CHAMBER OF COMMERCE Zero Main St., Nantucket (508-228-1700) nantucketchamber.org

UNION STREET INN 7 Union St., Nantucket (888-517-0707) unioninn.com

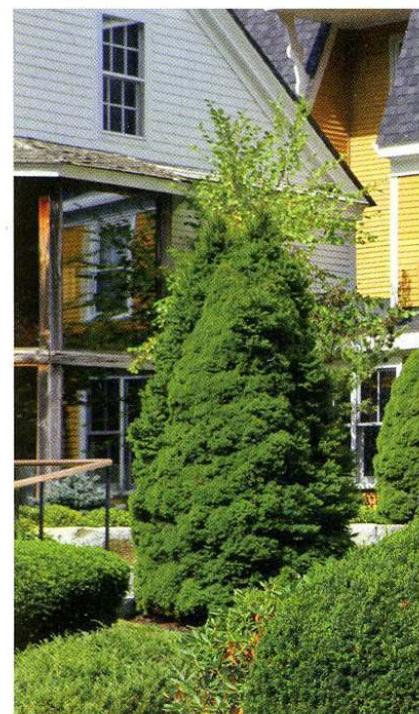
THE WHITE ELEPHANT 50 Easton St., Nantucket (508-228-2500) whiteelephanthotel.com

VENTUNO 21 Federal St., Nantucket (508-228-4242) ventunorestaurant.com

AMERICAN SEASONS 80 Centre St., Nantucket (508-228-7111) americanseasons.com

options, and the treatments here are delivered with the grace and service of a big city hotel.

A short stroll up Federal Street is Ventuno, a new Italian venture from chef/owners Gabriel Frasca and Amanda Lydon. The colonial architecture, dark wood and muted decor keep the dining room in the tradition of 21 Federal—the space's previous, yachty incarnation. As would be expected, fresh-made pastas are the true standouts here, although the roasted beef marrow with pine nuts and pickled vegetables is worth at least a trip to the bar. Alternately, walk to the top of Centre Street, where American Seasons has long established itself as a destination for creative reinventions of classic dishes like New England fluke with lobster vinaigrette and lemon confit. *



JET-SETTERS LIKE TORY Burch, Lenny Kravitz and Elle Macpherson are drawn to the Bahamas' Harbour Island for its breezy glamour, while some of the world's most prestigious bloodlines—aristocrats, politicians, celebrities, magnates—have made the WASPy enclave their vacation hub since the 1950s. Of course, trains don't run there from North Station, and there's no convenient interstate across the Caribbean. Better to just hit Maine's Kennebunk and Kennebunkport.

A good place to begin a visit is by checking in at the resort village of Hidden Pond, near the secluded Goose Rocks Beach and situated on 60 acres of beach forest. Celebrity chef Ken Oringer chose the spot for his first restaurant outside of Boston—Earth, launched earlier this month—and Cellardoor Winery recently installed a satellite vineyard on the grounds. The rustic-chic complex, complete with daily breakfast baskets, private cottages, screened porches, a tree-house spa and outdoor yoga classes, keeps visitors content on the grounds.

In town, the White Barn Inn offers a different vision of luxury—more claw-footed bathtub than



IF YOU CAN'T DO THE BAHAMAS' HARBOUR ISLAND... TRY KENNEBUNKPORT.

outdoor beach shower—culminating in executive chef Jonathan Cartwright's nine-course tasting menu. It's an easy walk from there to Gooch's Beach and the town center, where some of the state's best boutique shopping can be found in Dock Square. Oh-so-sweet flower and homewares shop Anniebells has Wonderland-like blooms that look ready to burst into song. Daytrip Society sells a well-curated selection of outdoor-inspired goods that range from pétanque sets and Orla Kiely totes to Pamela Barsky luggage tags. For unique finds, petite boutique Minka boasts art and apothecary items made by owners Christopher Larochelle and Michelle Rose-Larochelle and a variety of local artisans.

If you're hoping for croquet with the Bush family, take the Intown Trolley to Walker's Point overlook. Or try to intercept the

famous clan at their regular haunt (and Rachael Ray favorite) Mabel's Lobster Claw, which offers simple but exceptional seafood. For uncooked crustaceans, take a trip on the mahogany-planked lobster boat Rugosa, which runs tours along the Kennebunk River and the seal-and-wildlife-dotted coast.

A definite stop should be Old Salt's Pantry, an informal takeaway shop specializing in breakfast sandwiches and lobster rolls. And before the drive home, don't miss H.B. Provisions, where you can buy local delicacies like cinnamon-blueberry coffee cake and wild beach plum jelly to tuck into your suitcase. *

HIDDEN POND 354 Goose Rocks Road, Kennebunkport (888-967-9050) hiddenpondmaine.com

WHITE BARN INN & SPA 37 Beach Ave., Kennebunk (207-967-2321) whitebarninn.com

ANNIEBELLS 27 Dock Square, Kennebunkport (207-967-9099) anniebells.com

DAYTRIP SOCIETY 4 Dock Square, Kennebunkport (207-967-4440) daytripsociety.com

MINKA 5 Union St., Kennebunkport (207-204-1014) minkahome.com

INTOWN TROLLEY 21 Ocean Ave., Kennebunkport (207-967-3686) intowntrolley.com

MABEL'S LOBSTER CLAW 124 Ocean Ave., Kennebunkport (207-967-2562) mabelslobster.com

RUGOSA Departs from the Nonantum Resort, 95 Ocean Ave., Kennebunkport (207-468-4095) rugosacharters.com

OLD SALT'S PANTRY 5 Ocean Ave., Kennebunkport (207-967-4966)

H.B. PROVISIONS 15 Western Ave., Kennebunk (207-967-5762) hbprovisions.com



IF YOU CAN'T DO MYKONOS...

TRY PROVINCETOWN.

IT'S NOT A COINCIDENCE that you recently burned through *Mamma Mia!* on Blu-ray—your subconscious is telling you it's time for a Grecian getaway. Athens has history, but anybody (and a lot of nobodies) aiming to become a dancing queen among the queens heads to Mykonos. The Cycladic island is a playground for celebrities and Tara Reid, but if you can't swing the airfare, we suggest heading to Massachusetts' own sin-city: Provincetown. The 90-minute journey from the Seaport isn't quite the same as ferrying from Santorini, but there's a stocked bar aboard the Provincetown III, and Metaxa looks innocent in a water bottle.

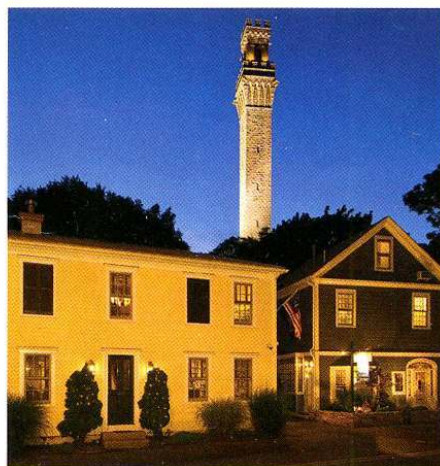
P-town isn't all drag queens and leather nights... you'll also find video bars, cruise spots and tea dances! Sarcasm aside, the 9.7-square-mile village at the end of the Cape is rich with theater, food and art. Populated by outcasts in the early 1900s, the town promotes an all-inclusive atmosphere that it backs up by offering something for everybody.

Though there are a few bigger hotels, Provincetown's bed and breakfasts are the popular choice for visitors. Situated directly beneath the only-slightly-phallic Pilgrim Monument, Gabriel's at the Ashbrooke Inn is well-appointed and within walking distance of both ends of town. Freshly baked cookies in the afternoons are a sweet touch after day-drinking or lounging on the beach.

The town lacks flashy luxury, but it boasts miles of galleries

and oddball boutiques for the well-heeled. Mandates allow sidewalk and tag sales twice annually—at the beginning and end of the summer—so plan your trip accordingly if you're looking to stock up on housewares from shops like Roots Home & Garden or Chadington's, or duds from Coffey Men or Rogues Gallery.

Like any beachside destination, restaurants range from clam shacks to high-end bistros. Locals take their food very seriously, emphasizing fresh catches and native flavors. The newest Ten Tables incarnation puts Boston's stamp on the scene; if lauded restaurateur Krista Kranyak eats here, so should we. Across town, Victor's plates up shareable portions of tender braised short ribs and lobster potstickers. Generously spiked cocktails will set the standard for the rest of your night.



PROVINCETOWN III
FAST FERRY SERVICE Bay State Cruise Company, 200 Seaport Blvd., Boston (877-783-3779) baystatecruise.com

GABRIEL'S AT THE ASHBROOKE INN 102 and 102A Bradford St., Provincetown (508-487-3232) gabriels.com

ROOTS HOME & GARDEN 193 Commercial St., Unit 1, Provincetown (508-487-2500)

CHADINGTON'S OF PROVINCETOWN 240 Commercial St., Provincetown (508-487-0040) chadingtons.com

COFFEY MEN 199 Commercial St., Provincetown (508-413-0454) coffeymen.blogspot.com

ROGUES GALLERY 208 Commercial St., Provincetown (508-413-9477) roguesgallery.com

TEN TABLES RESTAURANT & BAR PROVINCETOWN 133 Bradford St., Provincetown (508-487-0106) tentables.net

VICTOR'S 175 Bradford Street Extension, Provincetown (508-487-1777) victorsptown.com

THE CROWN & ANCHOR 247 Commercial St., Provincetown (508-487-1430) onlyatthe.crown.com

P-town certainly lives up to the party-place reputation it's earned over the years, but theater and film festivals (one weekend already brought *Up in the Air* actress Vera Farmiga and *Black Swan* director Darren Aronofsky to town) mean there's a lot more to do than drink and dance. For a low key evening, check out veteran cabaret crooner Bobby Wetherbee at the mammoth Crown & Anchor. The piano man parks it in their Cabaret Room most nights performing show tunes... and maybe even a few ABBA standards. ✨

L ENOX MAY LACK THE grandeur of "the Capital of the Alps." While vast in number, Western Mass. galleries don't have the same stature. Tanglewood and the rest of our classical music scene shall be defended until our shoulders burst through the seams of our suit jackets, but we concede that Italy holds all the history. If what you're after, however, is a vigorous hike and some good cheese, the Berkshires have all you need.

For an opulent start, check in at Cranwell, a sprawling campus designed by Frederick Law Olmstead of Emerald Necklace fame. The resort began as a solitary home in the Gilded Age, back when a stone-and-stained-glass structure large enough to host a Civil War reenactment was referred to as a "cottage." Nowadays, there's an 18-hole golf course and 35,000-square foot spa. But your exotic-date-and-wild-honey buff must be earned.

Twenty miles north stands Mount Greylock, the tallest peak in Massachusetts. A trip to the summit and the Massachusetts Veterans War Memorial Tower gives hikers soaring views and the chance to spot birds with amusing names, like the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker or Red-breasted Nuthatch. Rich Woller, president of Greylock Discovery Tours, recommends a ramble along the Hop-

per and Money Brook trails. "It's a get-away-from-it-all kind of hike," says Woller.

Afterward, a martini—with Berkshire Mountain Distillers' Greylock gin—at the nearby Mezze Bistro + Bar would mark a civilized end to the day's outdoor adventures. Partnered with dozens of community purveyors, Mezze can fortify you just as well as the Alpine taverns slinging wild boar and agnolotti. For rugged Bostonians, there's East Mountain Farm smoked ham steak with mutton kielbasa hash and a 60-minute

**CRANWELL
RESORT, SPA AND
GOLF CLUB** 55 Lee
Road, Lenox (413-637-
1364) cranwell.com

**MEZZE BISTRO +
BAR** 777 Cold Spring
Road, Williams-
town (413-458-0123)
mezzorestaurant.com

**RUBINER'S
CHEESEMONGERS
& GROCERS** 264
Main St., Great Bar-
rington (413-528-0488)
rubiners.com

**CASTLE STREET
CAFÉ** 10 Castle St.,
Great Barrington (413-
528-5244) [castlestreet
cafe.com](http://castlestreet
cafe.com)

Mighty Food Farm egg. These are heartening local flavors enjoyed on a beautified Williamstown plot, perhaps best paired with a Dolcetto D'Alba or Barbera D'Asti.

Peak-baggers can trek 30 miles south of Lenox to Mount Frissell, the apex of Connecticut. But for a more scenic, luxurious expedition in the dirt, stop by Rubiner's for provisions before making the brief scramble to nearby Bash Bish Falls. The falls, the highest in Massachusetts, draw their name from a romantic Native American legend, something to discuss with a fellow attractive, sweaty hiker over sheep's-milk cheese and house-made pâté.

In the evening, head to the Castle Street Café (next door to the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, should you want to end a weekend in the woods with a staging of Handel's *Acis and Galatea*). Chef Michael Ballon's menu is, of course, pastoral in approach, but he'll thank you not to make a fuss. "We were farm-to-table before that phrase existed," he says. "What makes the Berkshires stand out is 20 years ago, all our restaurants were doing that." ♦

