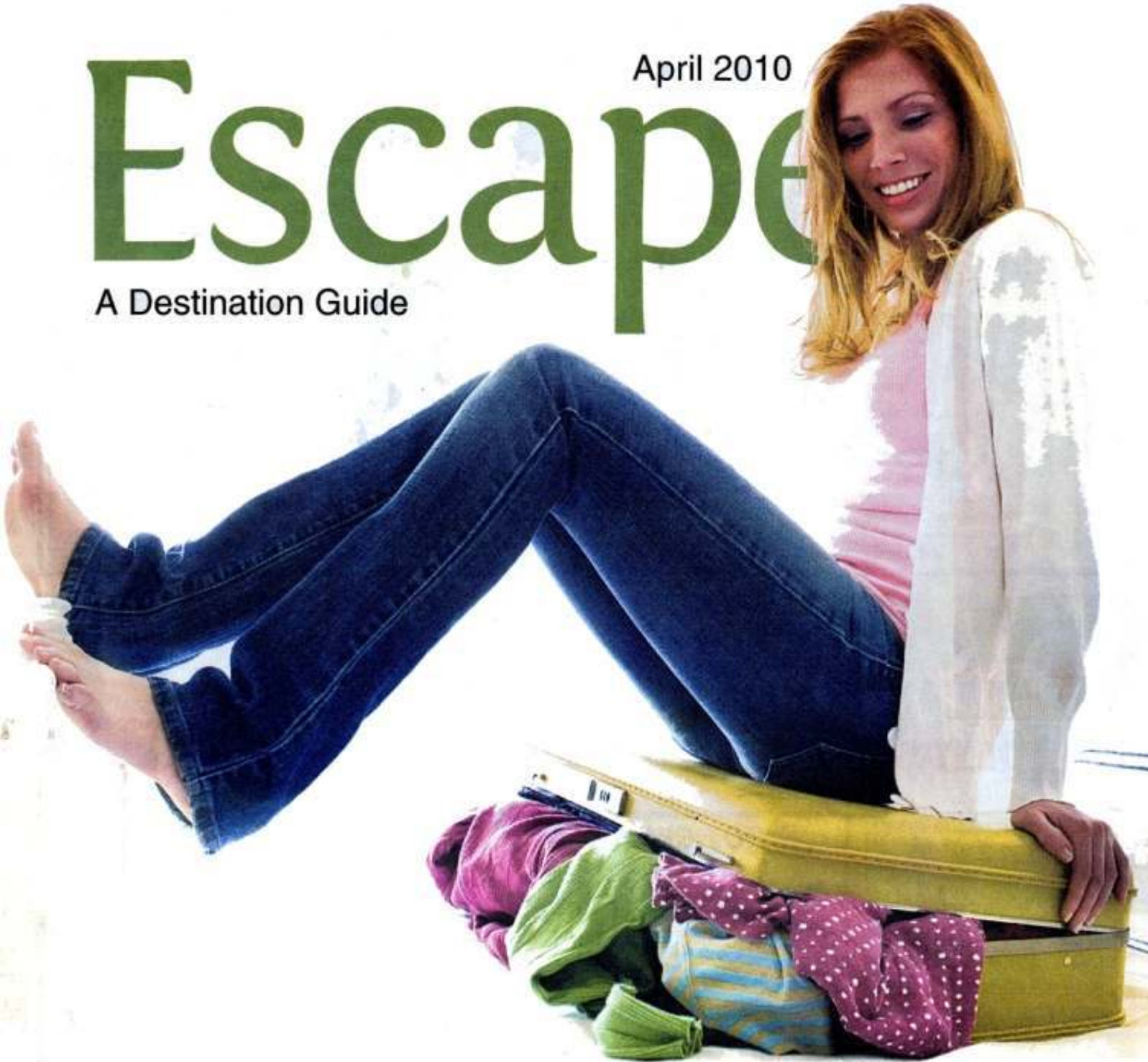


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Escape

A Destination Guide



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Stepping back on Nantucket

When you step off the boat and walk onto the cobblestone streets of Nantucket, you may feel as if you are entering another world. Located thirty miles off the coast of Cape Cod, the island seems a world away. Thanks to a strict building code, the architecture in the downtown area looks very much like it did 250 years ago when whaling was the engine that drove the economy. At the head of Main Street sits the Pacific Bank, named for the rich whaling grounds of the Pacific Ocean where Nantucketers earned their wealth. At the foot of Main Street is the Pacific Club, once home to whaling captains, who would gather around a fire, play some crib-

bage and pass the time of day. Today it is an antique store and houses a BankofAmerica ATM.

People come to Nantucket for its history, fine dining, natural beauty and shopping. Boutiques and artisan shops line the cobblestoned streets and Nantucket has some of the best fine dining on the East Coast – everything from sushi and rice bowls to lobster dinners, and New American, global and creative coastal cuisine. There are no chain stores on the island and no MacDonal'd's, but Nantucket has its own version of fast food on "the Strip," of Steamboat Wharf. There you'll find tacos and burritos, pizza, New York deli sandwiches and homemade ice cream.

It's a good idea to take a tour of the island with one of the island's tour buses. Or you can rent a motor

scooter or a bike and travel the bike paths that traverse the island east to west and take you to the villages of Sconset on the east end to Madaket on the west end. From Memorial Day through the summer season, each village has a general store where one can buy a snack after the seven-mile bike ride.

Over a third of the island is in permanent land conservation thanks to the good works of the Nantucket Conservation Foundation, www.conservationfoundation.org, and the Nantucket Land Bank, www.nantucketlandbank.org. You can check out their websites for maps of walking trails on their properties.

Weather in the spring can be chilly and damp, with winds out of the west. Be sure to bring a jacket and warm sweater as well as a hat if you plan on doing any biking or hiking.

In addition, many restaurants and museums have abbreviated hours before the season starts in June, so it's a good idea to call for hours of operation before stopping by. ■



Madaket Road bike path. Jim Powers photo

Nantucket

A Few of our Favorite Things:
Places to go and so much to see

RESTAURANTS FOR CASUAL DINING

AK DIAMONDS, 16 Macys Lane; 508-228-3154; www.akdiamonds.com: This is where locals go for good, inexpensive family dining, or to sit at the bar downstairs to catch the Red Sox while winding down with a beer and a burger. An extensive menu of chowder, salads and sandwiches and daily specials for lunch is expanded at dinner to include more traditional entrées.

CENTRE STREET BISTRO, 29 Centre St.; 508-228-8470; www.nantucketbistro.com: This downtown eatery owned and operated by Ruth and Tim Pitts is a favorite for lunch, dinner and weekend breakfasts for its generous portions of high quality food.

CY'S LOBSTER POT, 15 South Water St.; 508-228-8011; www.cyslobsterpot.com: Formerly The Atlantic Café, this downtown bar and grill was brought back to life last spring. The menu focuses on chowder, fried fish dishes, burgers, sandwiches and appetizers.

DOWNEYFLAKE, 18 Sparks Ave.; 508-228-4533: Nantucket's closest thing to a diner, this out-of-town restaurant is home of the famous Downeyflake doughnuts, a cake-style confection that comes plain, frosted in chocolate or dipped in sugar. The "Flake" serves breakfast all-day long, from 6 a.m. till closing at 2 p.m. Lunch service starts at 11:30.

PI PIZZA, 11 West Creek Rd.; 508-228-1130; www.pipizzeria.com: Evan Marley created a warm and friendly Italian trattoria that serves exquisite thin-crust designer pizzas as well as traditional red-sauce dishes. Open for lunch and dinner most nights. Takeout available.

RESTAURANTS FOR A SPECIAL NIGHT

AMERICAN SEASONS, 80 Centre St.; 508-228-7111; www.americanseasons.com: The inventive menu of Michael LaScola earned him a spot this year as a finalist for the James Beard Award of Best Chef in the Northeast. This cozy, sophisticated spot features regional American cuisine from New England, the South and the Pacific.

BRANT POINT GRILL, at The White Elephant, Easton St.; 508-325-1320; www.whiteelephanthotel.com/restaurant: Nantucket's premier steak and seafood restaurant features an unparalleled view of Nantucket Harbor. Watch the comings and goings of ferries and sailboats while savoring selections from the raw bar and the freshest seafood, as well as prime steaks and chops.

FIFTY-SIX UNION, 56 Union St.; 508-228-6135; www.fiftysixunion.com: Owners Peter and Wendy Janelle are celebrating ten years of serving the island community with their popular global cuisine in this comfortable restaurant just 5 minutes from Main Street.

LOLA 41, 15 South Beach St.; 508-325-4001; www.lola41.net: A sophisticated, yet fun atmosphere permeates Lola, which features global cuisine from the 41st parallel (where Nantucket sits).

SFOGLIA, 130 Pleasant St.; 508-325-4500; www.sfoagliarestaurant.com: Savor the cuisine of Ron Suhanosky, featured recently in Martha Stewart Living, The New York Times and Bon Appetit.

MUSEUMS

NANTUCKET LIFESAVING AND SHIPWRECK MUSEUM, 158 Polpis Road; 508-228-1885; www.nantucketshipwreck.org: Over 700 vessels have been shipwrecked in the shoal waters around Nantucket over the last 300 years. This museum recounts heroic rescues and displays some of the equipment used by the men in lifesaving stations whose motto for rescues was, "You have to go out, but you don't have to come back."

NANTUCKET LIGHTSHIP BASKET MUSEUM, 49 Union St.; 508-228-1177; www.nantucketlightshipbasketmuseum.org: Five minutes from Main Street and the wharves, this museum is dedicated to preserving Nantucket's rich history of basket-making as an art form. Classes in the summer.

NANTUCKET WHALING MUSEUM, 13 Broad St.; 508-228-1894; www.nha.org: Step off the ferry at Steamboat Wharf and into a history

lesson of Nantucket's glorious past as the world's whaling capital in the 1800s. See the skeleton of a sperm whale and watch the mini-documentary "The Bones of History." Scrimshaw collections, the famous Folger clock, implements from whaleboats and the lens from a lighthouse are some of the standout items on exhibit.

HOT SPOTS FOR NIGHTLY ENTERTAINMENT

STARLIGHT THEATRE, 1 North Union St. (Coal St.); 508-228-4435; www.starlightnantucket.com: Nantucket's 99-seat movie theater also boasts a bar and café serving lunch, an all-day menu and dinner. Check the website or call for current films and show times.

THEATERS

THEATRE WORKSHOP OF NANTUCKET, 2 Centre St.; 508-228-4305; www.theatreshop.com: Nantucket's local community theater, housed in May downstairs at The Methodist Church's Fellowship Hall, mounts Thornton Wilder's "Our Town," directed by Meredith Martin. ■

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