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ON THE COVER

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Inside Jardim Botânico
with the architect who
imagined it

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A slice of island living
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PLUS

Over 190 exceptional
properties from
around the world



NOTES *from a* SMALL ISLAND

Nantucket is tangible proof of the old adage "small but perfectly formed." A mere dot on the map, the island has become an enclave of exclusivity, a summer colony for the well-to-do with some of the most expensive real estate in the US. Join us for a whistle-stop tour...

The first time I visited Nantucket I arrived in the midst of a fog. All that was visible from the deck of the ferry were the widow's nests of the old houses and the masts of the million-dollar yachts in the harbor. You might not think this unusual given that Nantucket is a speck of an island in the Atlantic, 30 miles off the coast of Massachusetts, and a famously windswept former whaling outpost. But what was odd – and utterly alluring – was that it was 4pm on a mid-summer afternoon and Cape Cod, which we had left from barely two hours earlier, had been bathed in bright sunlight. Nantucket is different like that; it's a world of its own.

The island was settled in the late 1600s by English seamen, whalers, and Quakers. From the 18th to the mid 19th centuries, when whale oil was king, it was the richest dot on the map. Then, in the second half of the 19th century, the whaling industry went into decline and the island sank into obscurity, a poor fishing village. In the 1920s it was discovered by New York's Broadway set, who came for summer singalongs in cedar-shingle cottages at Siasconset, but it was really only in the 1990s, during the Clinton boom, that the new money arrived. And how! Today, its history and seclusion are part of its charm; it's an exclusive summer resort for politicians, tycoons, and celebrities, with the priciest real estate in the US.

Walking the Historic District is like stepping into a corner of Victorian London, only with

WORDS
DOUGLAS ROGERS

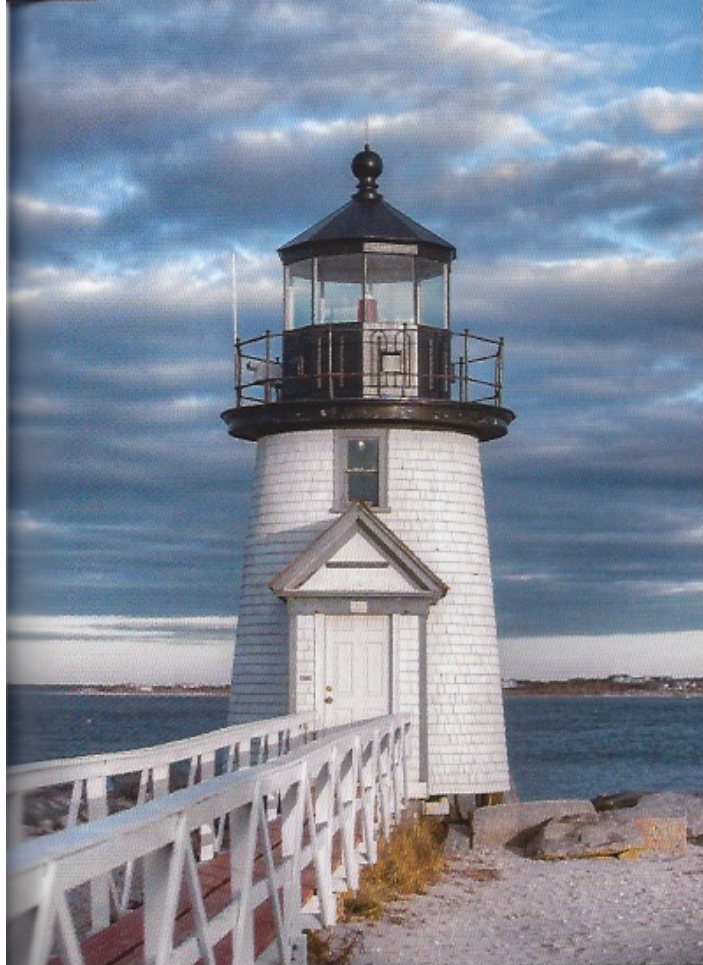
boutiques and better bars. Cobble streets – the stone is said to be from ships' ballast – are lit by vintage lamps. There are no traffic lights.

The island has its own dress code and language. Faded red shorts and caps are known as Nantucket Reds and come summer, every second shirt and over-the-shoulder sweater will have a whale insignia or the letters ACK on it – Nantucket's airport code. These are the ultimate in preppy signposts: code to an entire class of Americans who spend their leisure time here.

So, who are some of the chosen few? US Secretary of State John Kerry, husband of the Heinz heiress; Eric Schmidt of Google; New England Patriots football coach Bill Belichick; financier George Soros – or his brother, no one is quite sure. The owners of Johnson & Johnson and Procter & Gamble are here, as are scores of hedge-fund titans. It helps that since JetBlue began a daily peak-season service, New York is now only a 45-minute flight away. Others visit when they need to: Bill Gates might live in Seattle but he's a member of the Nantucket Golf Club – \$300,000 a pop. As the joke goes: "Nantucket is where millionaires mow the lawns of billionaires."

And yet, for all the money, it retains its style and grace – often forcefully. Aside from a single Ralph Lauren, chain stores are not allowed. Tommy Hilfiger had a home here, but was not allowed to open a shop. There are strict building »

Opposite, clockwise from top right: Cobblestone Hill Cottage, built in classic Nantucket gray cedar shingle; "Bridal Veil" flowers; Old North Wharf; the Unitarian Church steeple stairwell, etched with history; Commercial Wharf; Brant Point Lighthouse at the entrance to Nantucket Harbor.



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codes – homes are all done in that simple gray cedar shingle – and a group called the Nantucket Islands Land Bank commands a two per cent levy from any new buyer, which then goes towards purchasing new land to be protected.

"This prevents overbuilding," says Sam Parsons of Great Point Properties/Christie's International Real Estate, who has lived on the island for 19 years. "But there are lots of active buyers – everyone wants to be here – and with not as much inventory in certain price points as past years, the prices will likely get higher." So what's on the books? A seven-bed, seven-bath cedar-shingle home on Lincoln Avenue, set in half an acre of lushly manicured grounds and with great harbor views, is priced at \$16,950,000.

But why not go big? An almost 70-acre waterfront estate on Polpis Road includes a five-bedroom, 5.5-bath traditional Nantucket home as well as a separate office and two two-bedroom cottages. The price? \$47.5 million – but for that, Parsons observes, you get not just a stunning island property, but also "world-class beaches, incredible restaurants, an amazing sense of community, a fabulous lifestyle. I'm forever grateful to call Nantucket home." ●

Douglas Rogers writes for the New York Post, Los Angeles Times, and The Telegraph.

ON THE MARKET

A slice of island life



Monomoy Road

On the market for the first time in 50 years, this waterfront property – comprising two homes, with seven bedrooms and six baths – has breathtaking views of the harbor and town. A private beach offers boating access and swimming, making this the ideal vacation property.

\$17,950,000. For more details, see page 158



Baxter Road

This charming family property was built in 1920 and fully remodeled in 1997. The five-bedroom oceanfront Sconset Bluff House has private stairs to the beach and wraparound porches. A second dwelling includes two bedrooms alongside generous living space.

\$6,900,000

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ISLAND GUIDE

Where to stay

WHITE ELEPHANT

The best hotel in town: a languid harbor-front property with a deckchair-lined lawn rolling down to the waterfront. The hotel comprises a main cedar-shingle building with 54 rooms, and 11 charming garden cottages.

www.whiteelephanthotel.com

THE WAUWINET

Guests at this harbor-front hotel have access to Atlantic or harbor-side beaches, and can get ferried from hotel to village in a vintage 1948 Chevy, or via the Wauwinet Lady motor launch. Pure class.

www.wauwinet.com

THE SUMMER HOUSE COTTAGES

Located in the idyllic village of Siasconset on the eastern side of the island, this iconic property, with 18 one- and two-room English-styled garden cottages, harks back to the Roaring Twenties. The hotel's Beachside Bistro is also well worth a visit.

www.summerhousecottages.com

Where to eat and drink

STRAIGHT WHARF RESTAURANT

This perennial favorite close to the wharf has been going strong for 36 years. Wood floors, hurricane lamps, and great service animate fresh, seasonal seafood dishes such as local swordfish with summer squash, and buttered lobster with chorizo.

www.straightwharfrerestaurant.com

GALLEY BEACH

What started as a humble clam shack on Cliffside Beach in 1958 is now the coolest hangout on an island crammed with beautiful people. The main dining area and deck spill out to wicker chairs and tables set on the sand, water lapping at your feet.

www.galleybeach.net

CRU NANTUCKET

At this maritime-themed restaurant and raw bar on the wharf you can literally shout out an order of oysters and champagne as you step off your speedboat.

www.crunantucket.com

What to see and do

THE NANTUCKET WHALING MUSEUM

Run by the Historical Association and located in an old candle factory, the museum's exhibits include a spectacular 46-foot sperm whale skeleton and gripping tales of Nantucket whaling adventures that inspired literary masterpiece *Moby Dick*.

www.nha.org/sites

BEACHES

Despite frequent mist and fog, summer is a glorious time to visit. Beaches rim the island, including Great Point, which is only accessible by 4x4, and Cisco, popular with the surfing set.

www.nantucket.net/beaches

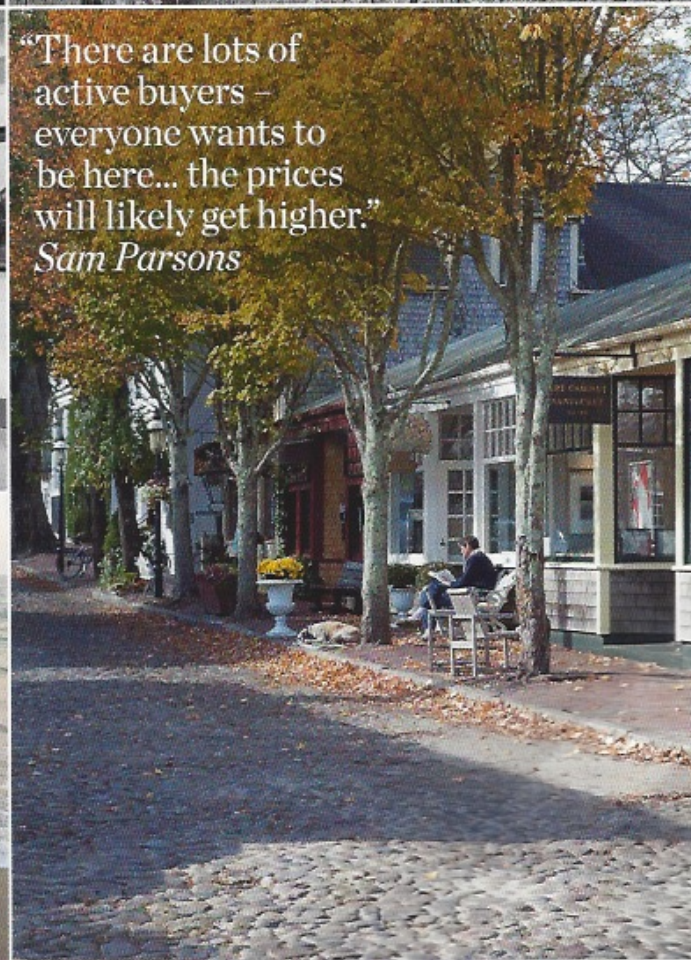
HIKE TO SANKATY HEAD LIGHTHOUSE

Of Nantucket's three working lighthouses, this one on its easternmost point near Siasconset is the most scenic. Open days take place twice a year (June and October), allowing visitors to climb 70 feet to the top.

www.sconsettrust.org



Clockwise from top right: Straight Wharf restaurant; a traditional home on Main Street; the quaint, cobbled streets of the Historic District; Madequecham Beach on the south coast; White Elephant is among the best hotels in town; yachts in South Wharf boat basin.



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Sam Parsons

