Is there any place more beautiful than New England? Our editors and writers worked their way up the coast from Connecticut to Maine in search of the most luxurious, unique, or downright quirky inns, hotels, and resorts. But, being New Yorkers, we didn’t stop there, adding a few selections from our home state and tossing in a New Jersey B&B for good measure.

—Philip Garrity

For the next day and a half, I saw Newport—there’s a beach town to explore, seaside mansions to see, seahorse to try, and that’s all detailed below—but Castle Hill, with its Gilded Age charm and its majestic, cliff-side grandeur, is a destination in its own right.

Explore: Newport’s main attraction is, of course, its mansions. You can purchase a multi-mansion ticket for $30 (with a separate ticket for the Cliff Walk), a path that spans the southeastern side of the island. Newport is fairly bike-friendly, if only because it’s so small, and a great road to hit is Ochre Court, which runs the length of Newport’s southern coast. And, at some point, you’ll want to walk Thames Street, Newport’s main drag packed with shops and cafes and restaurants. But really, the “vis” are endless, from water sports and sailing to golf and tennis. This fall, keep a lookout for local events and festivals, which include the Newport International Boat Show and Newport Mansions Wine & Food Festival.

Dine: Under the direction of Executive Chef Kenneth Hart, everything I ordered at Castle Hill’s dining room blew me away with its thoughtful dishes and use of local and seasonal ingredients. Locals say you also “have to go” to Mission, a trendy burger and hot dog spot a few streets removed from Thames Street. It’s now my turn to tell you that you absolutely have to go here—the ground-floor meat and the house-made sauerkraut and “Mission Sauce” made for one of the tastiest burgers I’ve had. Second, if you’re craving lobster and waterfront dining, all you have to do at Applebeck Lobster Bar is point to your pick from a tank of fresh catches and they’ll cook it for you right there. I ordered the hot lobster roll, which was a refreshing departure from the over-salted clams of most—simply buttered, freshly boiled lobster chunks in a bun.

—Phillip Garrity

> >> 3 Castle Hill Inn

Regal Meets Rustic in Newport, Rhode Island

I hope you don’t mind, but we’ve steered you facing “Arrangement Bay” was the first of many remarks that a journalist of my, well, box, too rectitude, is not used to hearing, and would never pretend. So I assumed that “Arrangement Bay” was the first of many remarks that a journalist of my, well, box, too rectitude, is not used to hearing, and would never pretend. So I assumed that would be just fine, and, after arriving late on Friday just in time for the dining room’s last hour, sat down in the window-lit space that juts out from the main building, a turret-studded mansion built in 1875. The room was hushed and dim, the butter on my bread was cold and oddly scarred, lights of the Newport Bridge were glistening a few miles off, and a beam from the Breakwater Lighthouse across the bay was checkmating every 15 seconds or so. I had come close to this Rhode Island property, but it was perfectly content.

Tully Hall, I retired to a beach house, one of the many private beachfront mansions on the property, a few hundred yards from the main house (which has its own set of beach houses). Inside: a kitchen, bedroom, and living room were fused into one open, airy space, and the feel was, appropriately, New England by the sea: neutral-colored wood paneling, thick, white molding, and wooden furniture. I made the rounds—light the gas fireplace, mentally inventoried the fridge’s contents, snacked on a plate of complimentary charcuterie, miffed the milky-looking Formescheis burlumers, and stepped out onto the back porch to hear the waves crash on the private beach. But soon I quit the pleasures—there’s no bathroom in the house, and I found myself eyeing it since I’d walked in. Climbed in and switched on the jets.

The next morning, it became clear that night had ruined the Inn’s true splendor. The beach houses are Quietist, but the main house is regal, porched atop tall seaside cliffs on a manicured lawn sprinkled with Adirondack chairs. ( Couples pay dearly to marry here.)
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> > > > Edited by Nancy L. Claus

For the next day and a half, I saw Newport—there’s a beach town to explore, seaside mansions to see, seafood to try, and that’s all detailed below—but Castle Hill, with its Gilded Age charm and its majestic, cliff-side gran- den, is a destination in its own right.

*Expat*: Newport’s main attraction is, of course, its mansions. You can purchase a multi-million dollar ticket for $10-$40, pay per mansion, or see them for free from the Cliff Walk, a path that spans the southeastern side of the island. Newport is fairly bike-friendly, if only because it’s so small, and a great road to bike is Ocean Avenue, which runs the length of Newport’s southern coast. And, at some point, you’ll need to walk. Thames Street, Newport’s main drag, packed with shops and cafes and restaurants. But really, the ‘do’s’ are endless, from water sports and sailing to golf and tennis. This fall, keep a lookout for local events and festivals, which include the Newport International Boat Show and Newport Mansions Wine & Food Festival.

*Time*: Under the direction of Executive Chef Karsten Hart, everything I ordered at Castle Hill’s dining room blew me away with its artful mix of flavors and use of local and seasonal ingredients. Locals say you also “have to go” to Missions, a trendy burger and hot dog spot a few streets removed from Thames Street. It was my turn to tell you that you absolutely have to go here—the ground-floor bistro and the house-made seasoning and “Missions sauce” made for one of the tastiest burgers I’ve had. Second, if you’re craving lobster and waterside dining, all you have to do is Appalachee. Lobster Bar is point to point—to your pick from a tank of fresh catches and they’ll cook it for you right there. I ordered the hot lobster roll, which was a refreshing departure from the mayo-laden clam of most—simply but- ter-coated, freshly boiled lobster chunks in a bun.

*Insider’s Tips*: Take the Servant Life Tour at The Elms to see the other side of Gilded Age life. In some cas- es, staffs of more than 40 servants ran these mansions—see where they cooked, slept, bathed, etc.

—Philip Carrigy

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and the caliber of the performances made us forget that we were indeed on a weekend trip and not on Broadway. We were the youngest in the audience by a good 20 years, but I guess we are old at heart, because we truly enjoyed the funny script, music, and tap-dancing straight out of the Fred Astaire/Ginger Rogers era.

We took advantage of the “Raise the Curtain” package (available through November 16) provided by the gorgeous Copper Beech Inn, just up the road: overnight accommodations in a Super Deluxe room; two tickets to the Playhouse; a $100 credit towards dinner at the Inn’s award-winning restaurant, The Oak Room; and breakfast. The Inn, which also seems to cater to an older, affluent crowd (we spied a Bentley in the parking lot), offers the coziness of a B&B, without the awkward breakfast-with-the-hosts situation. There are 22 rooms and suites in three different houses: the Main House (historic vibe with antique furnishings), the Carriage House (Victorian country-home feel), and the Comstock House, where we stayed (classic and pretty; more modern).

Explore: You’ll feel like you’ve landed in a Norman Rockwell painting when strolling through the nearby picturesque villages of Essex, Old Lyme, and Chester—all standouts in the pretty Connecticut River Valley area. Great antiquing, the Connecticut River Museum, and the Essex Steam Train & Riverboat are top attractions.

Dine: We skipped the formal main dining room at The Oak Room and took advantage of the beautiful evening to dine on the porch overlooking the garden (same food, totally different atmosphere). Back inside, the cozy copper bar made a perfect spot for after-dinner drinks. We returned to the porch for breakfast the next morning—amazing lemon-ricotta pancakes and poached eggs fueled us up for the (pleasantly short) return trip home.

Insider’s Tip: The Lower Connecticut River Valley has been designated by The Nature Conservancy as one of only 40 “Last Great Places” in the Western Hemisphere, because of the area’s salt marshes and tidal flats that serve as a habitat to several rare species of plant life.

—ARP

>>> The Cottages & Lofts at the Boat Basin

A Dog- and Kid-Friendly Guide to Nantucket

Here’s a dilemma for a devoted dog owner: What do you do with Fido when you need some time away? Typically, when we’re talking dog-friendly hotels, we’re talking about hotels humans don’t want to visit. The good news for pet owners is that Nantucket is full of them: All around the beautiful, historic town and on the island’s gorgeous beaches, you’ll find happy dogs romping with their owners. To fill the days, there are waves to chase, nature to explore, and plenty of eateries and hotels where your dog will be.

THE DETAILS [CONNECTICUT]

THE STUDY AT YALE
1157 Chapel St, New Haven, CT (203) 503-3900; www.studyatyale.com
Distance from White Plains: 1 hour Details: Standard rooms begin at $169/night, $189 in fall. There are other accommodations, like Premier King Rooms (which begin at $259), King Study Suites ($289), and a Presidential Suite.

WATER’S EDGE RESORT & SPA
1525 Boston Post Rd, Westbrook, CT (860) 399-5901; www.watersedgeresortandspa.com
Distance from White Plains: 1 hour, 30 minutes Details: Room rates range from $129 to $750/night in low season, and from $229 to $1,000/night in high season.

THE COPPER BEECH INN
46 Main St, Ivoryton, CT (860) 767-0330; www.copperbeechinn.com
Distance from White Plains: 2 hours Details: Rates for the Raise the Curtain package start at $374/night on weekdays and $478/night on weekends, plus tax and gratuities. Standard rates range from $159 to $249/night in low season and, in high season, $179 to $279/night.
Welcome. We've checked out dog-friend
d Nautilus (with our own dog in tow) and
here's what we found.
Located near the center of town
on the boat basin docks, The Cottages &
Lofts at the Boat Basin offers delightful
d clothing and casual dining
at the dockside.

For many Cape Cod-vacationers, family
trip to the Cape involves the beach-riding
National Seashore, antiquing on the cape,
and... If you don’t plan to drench yourself
in the fun of swimming, duck, and fishing
...and then you can enjoy the
tour with P-Town’s historical favorites
and innkeepers.

You can’t miss the
to P-Town’s famous gardens and
exhibits such as your own dog in tow
dog-watching

The Salt House Inn
Casual Beach Chic on Cape Cod

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You can’t miss the
handicapped beaches before 9 am and after 5 pm.
The tides are high near some of the
active boat basins, most normal
heroes will be displaced.

For more details, contact
Nautilus at 508-862-2223.

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