

Our Annual Pet Contest

Who Is Top Dog (and Cat and Rabbit)?

Fall Arts Preview

Hot Tickets for Cool Temps

WESTCHESTER

17 Fall Getaways

12 Sensational New England Escapes
(Plus 5 Destinations Closer to Home)

Rock Climbing 101

What You Need
and Where to Go

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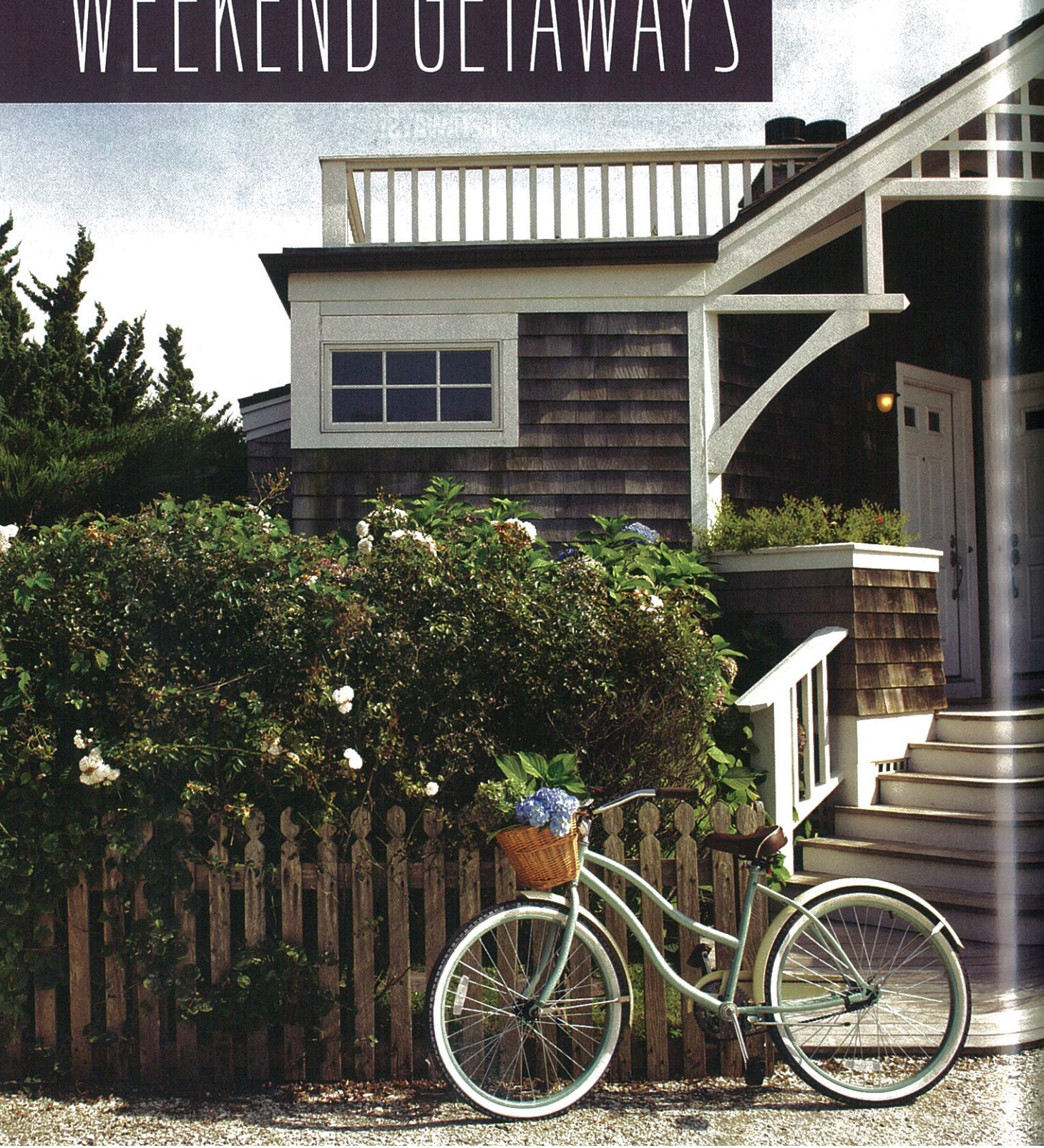
**A Diet-
Destroying
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**The County's
\$200K Parking
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**Andrea
Stewart-
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**On Her Toughest
Fight Yet**

17 SENSATIONAL WEEKEND GETAWAYS





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.

>>> Edited by Nancy L. Claus

>>> Castle Hill Inn

Regal Meets Rustic in Newport, Rhode Island

“I hope you don't mind, but we've seated you facing Narragansett Bay” was the first of many remarks that a journalist of my, well, tax bracket, is not used to hearing, and would never protest. So I murmured 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-lined 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 locally sourced, lights of the Newport Bridge were glimmering a few miles off, and a beam from the Beavertail Lighthouse across the bay was checking in every 15 seconds or so. I had come alone to this Relais & Châteaux property, but I was perfectly content.

Belly full, I retired to a beach house, one of 24 private beachfront residences on the property, a few hundred yards from the main house (which has its own set of nine rooms). 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-painted wood paneling; thick, white molding; and wooden furniture. I made the rounds—lit the gas fireplace, mentally inventoried the fridge's contents, snacked on a plate of complimentary charcuterie, sniffed the milky-looking Farmaestheics toiletries, and stepped out onto the back porch to hear the waves crash on the private beach. But soon I quit the pleasantries—the bathroom tub was downright huge, and I'd been eyeing it since I'd walked in. I climbed in and switched on the jets.

The next morning, it became clear that night had masked the Inn's true splendor. The beach houses are quaint, but the main house is regal, perched atop tall seaside cliffs on a manicured lawn sprinkled with Adirondack chairs. (Couples pay dearly to marry here.)

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 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 \$31.50, 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 cafés 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.

Dine: 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 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-in-house meat and the house-made seasoning and “Mission 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 at Aquidneck 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 mayo-clad claws of most—simply butter-coated, freshly boiled lobster chunks in a bun.

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

—Philip Garrity

A rustic beachfront cottage is a quaint counterpoint to the regal Castle Hill Inn in Newport, Rhode Island.



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.studyatyaale.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.



The Salt House Inn, with its casual chic motif, is part of new breed of upscale accommodations in P-Town; homemade pastries, granola, and savory treats are served each morning in the hotel's great room.

welcome. We've checked out dog-friendly Nantucket (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 offer delightfully clean and airy shingled townhouses with full kitchens and hardwood floors. While simply decorated, the one-, two- and three-bedroom cottages are bright, fresh, and comfortable and come equipped with Keurig coffeemakers, DVD players (with access to a lending library), and complimentary WiFi. Happily, there's also a Stop & Shop as well as a wine store located just steps off the dock for quick provisioning. The hotel provides free transportation to island beaches via private beach bus, and also provides boogie boards, coolers, towels, beach chairs, fishing rods, etc., all free of charge. For pet

owners, the freestanding Cottages at the Boat Basin offer quick access to the outdoors—plus, because, the townhouses are sited on an active boat basin, most normal dog hubbub will be disguised.

Explore: While dogs are welcome at most of Nantucket's lifeguard beaches before 9 am and after 5 pm, there are some Nantucket beaches that welcome your dogs all day long. Near town, there is Jetties Beach, perfect for visits with Fido provided that you clean up after him and keep the leash handy. Located at one of the farthest tips of this boomerang-shaped island, the Coskata-Coatue Wildlife Refuge connects the island with its barrier beach, Coatue. There, you and your pooch can explore miles of scenic trails that feature gorgeous ocean beaches and a staggering amount of wildlife and seabirds. While

Nantucket is one of New England's most popular (and populous) vacation spots, the Coskata-Coatue Wildlife Refuge is one of its wildest and most remote corners.

Dine: Though restaurants are prohibited from allowing pets onto their premises, happily for Cisco Brewers (www.ciscobrewers.com) dog-owning fan base, the proprietors have figured out a dodge. This popular destination has an outdoor beer garden where dogs are perfectly welcome. Look for visits from food trucks as well as craft beer, live music, events, and tours; plus, for kids, there's an outdoor play area. While at Cisco, you can also hit Nantucket's attached Triple Eight Distillery for tours (and drink samples in the beer garden). For a full meal, the cultish Sayle's Seafood does a roaring trade in takeout lobster dinners—all you need to do is look at the menu on Sayle's website (www.saylesseafood.com) and phone in your order. In a few minutes, drop by the store (it's a reasonable walk from The Cottages) and pick up your tightly wrapped foil pan containing lobster, clam chowder, corn on the cob, steamed red potatoes, coleslaw, and drawn butter. Beyond lobster, Sayle's also slings all manner of fried fish and clams, plus steamers, mussels, and even sandwiches. You can either take your dinner home (or to the beach) or enjoy it with your dog on Sayle's cozy front porch. Be warned: Sayle's is BYOB.

Insider's Tip: While many flights onto Nantucket do accept canine passengers, the ferries are a less stressful way for dogs to travel. Once aboard, you and your leashed dog will be free to walk around the boat to greet fellow passengers and, inevitably, their respective dogs.

—Julia Sexton

>>> Salt House Inn Casual Beach Chic on Cape Cod

For many Cape Cod vacationers, fond childhood memories of family trips to the Cape involve the breathtaking National Seashore, scrumptious seafood meals, and staid—if not dated and kitschy—accommodations. Come for the sun, sand, and lobster—stay for the concrete mattress, telephone-booth bathroom, and plastic dolphins and starfish adorning the wall? Not so much. The quintessential Cape Cod trip of yore was enjoyed despite—and not because of—where you laid your head at night.

While the dining and cultural offerings on the Cape have evolved over the years, save for a handful of usual-suspect resorts, there has been a conspicuous lag in the evolution of its accommodations. But thanks to Kevin O'Shea and David Bowd, savvy and sophisticated vacationers hoping for a more contemporary lodging experience on the Cape no longer have to whitewash that aspect of their travelogue.

The life partners decided to become business partners as well in 2011, when they purchased Dexter's Inn in Provincetown and reincarnated it as the Salt House Inn in 2013. Designated as the Best New Beach Hotel on *Condé Nast Traveler's* Hot List 2014, and named Best Inn, Cape Cod for 2013 by *Boston Magazine*, Salt House is located at the literal nexus of P-Town life—two blocks from the harbor and one block from Commercial Street, with the town's