COTTAGE INDUSTRY

Real estate developer Douglas Karp is helping transform Nantucket into a posh summer playground.

BY SAMUEL ANDERSON

While staking out land around Cape Cod has long been a pastime for moneyed New Englanders, Stephen and Douglass Karp have made it their business. New England Development’s father-son duo have owned property on Nantucket for 30 years, but it wasn’t until Stephen hired Douglass to spearhead a new venture, Nantucket Island Resorts, that the two began to elevate the island into a bona fide hospitality hotspot.

Stephen Karp founded New England Development in 1978 and built the business through a constellation of indoor malls across the northeast. Douglass inherited his father’s entrepreneurial spirit, starting the mall mecca Lids with a buddy while still in high school. Years later, Stephen sold his properties and Douglass left Lids for the family business. “It was a shift we decided to make from being just a retail developer to more hospitality,” says Douglass. “That was when we made a big purchase on Nantucket and bought a bunch of hotels.”

The White Elephant, a collection of 8 to 12 sleepy cottages, became Douglass’s pet project. “That winter I essentially lived in Nantucket during the week and helped oversee the construction of what White Elephant is today,” says Douglass, who owns a home on the island and got married at the White Elephant last year. “We took it from almost a motel format to a real first-class hotel.”

Today, the White Elephant is a quintessential beachside waterfront destination and the flagship of Nantucket Island Resort’s portfolio, which also includes The Wauwinet, Jared Coffin House, and The Cottages at Nantucket Boat Basin. As the Karpas expanded, so did Nantucket. The island is growing so fast that Elon Musk is furnishing it with a Tesla-made 48MWh Powerpack battery to help with electrical demands. But, says Douglass, the upswing hasn’t overpowered the town’s quaint charms. “A board oversees all the aesthetics of the island so it generally looks very similar to how it did 100 years ago,” he says. “There’s still that historic charm but you can go to restaurants that rival any major city in the country.”
PICTURE PERFECT
Photographer Nathan Coe and painter Illya Kagan have collaborated to open Kagan + Coe Studio, their two-story working studio and gallery at 38 Centre Street. The space will showcase Kagan's signature beach- and townscapes (he can often be found set up in front of an easel downtown), alongside Coe's landscape photography and mixed media work.

IT'S IN THE BAG
Villa America, in Cap Antibes, France was home to Gerald Murphy, the owner of Mark Cross, and his wife, Sara. The couple entertained non-stop, amusing their friends with picnics on the beach and outings on their boat, The Weatherbird. Mark Cross's Rattan Collection is inspired by their glamorous life in a glorious setting. Our favorite from the collection is the Dorothy ($2,995), made with rattan and white Saffiano leather trim, available exclusively at Serenella. markcross.com

SIT & SIP
The popular health-conscious café Lemon Press is relocating from its first home on Centre Street to a bigger space at the top of Main Street (formerly occupied by Arno's Restaurant). The new spot will provide more seating than in its former location, and the café will also offer full wait service, as well as to-go foods and a bar for smoothies, juices, and lattes. lemonpress-nantucket.com

On Orange Street, the mid-island specialty coffee shop Roastd General Store will be open for its first full-season this summer, featuring Stumptown coffee and Rishi Teas along with unique add-ins like Moon Juice's Dusts (Sex Dust is the most popular latte choice), treats like vegan fudge and raw cacao balls, and house-made organic Brazil nut milk, which can also be used as a base in their smoothies. roastdgeneralstore.com

LET'S GO!
Popular carriers JetBlue and American Airlines have both added more flights to the island's Nantucket Memorial Airport. Due to popular demand, JetBlue is extending service to New York City into late October, and American Airlines is adding seasonal direct flights from Charlotte (running Saturdays, from June 23 to September 4).

SHOPPING SPREE
Grey Salt: Opening under the same roof as sister store Perch on Straight Wharf, this new menswear boutique will carry upscale brands like Rag & Bone, Filson, Vince, Culturata, AG, and more. greysaltvt.com