ANTUCKET, Mass.—In summer, the senses feed hungrily on Nantucket, and Nantucket gives generously, with the scent of honey-suckle in the air; white-trimmed, gray-shingled houses as demure backdrops against joyous puffs of blue hydrangeas; and the lapping of the waves, a soothing song at sunset.

Many come to Nantucket to live in the present, to shed the cares of work and home. Its summer population swells from the normal 12,000 to 50,000. Don your prettiest Lilly Pulitzer dress or a pair of those famous Nantucket Reds shorts, and pick your picture-perfect spot from among 80 miles of gorgeous beaches.

The entire island is a National Historic Landmark. This “faraway land” (the name given by the local Wampanoag tribe) was dubbed by Ralph Waldo Emerson as “the Nation of Nantucket” in 1847. But far from being insular, as islands can be, Nantucket long had its sights cast wide on the world.

From the 18th to the mid-19th century, it was the whaling capital of the world. The island provided the fuel to light the world’s streets, households, and businesses, amassing enormous wealth in the process. Its sailors (“Quakers with a vengeance,” Her- man Melville called them) chased whales to as far as the South Pacific on voyages that lasted anywhere from three to five years. The whaling industry light would not dim until a cheaper replacement was found, in the fields of Pennsylvania—petroleum.

When it’s cloudy and the island is cloaked in fog, Nantucket is cloaked in hues of gray, rippling from sky to sea to streets. One might imagine that the island’s three lighthouses, a beacon to home-faring sailors, could be the only light to cut through the thick fog.

“It’s a haunted island,” says Andrea Barnes. She is sitting at her loom, on the second floor of Nantucket Looms, a gift shop that doubles as an interior design and weaving studio. She takes a break from her weaving. Ghost tours and books about ghosts in Nantucket abound. “The guy who owns the ouija board company lives on the island.”

She tells of a pilot who is the “most logical person” she knows and yet “he sees ghosts all the time. I was shocked, ‘You ... believe in ghosts? You do?’”

The island’s beauty, sometimes austere, sometimes glorious, is sublime. But it’s the history that casts a spell.
Experience Firsthand the Romance of the KOREAN ROYALTY

South Korean top chef Sunkyu Lee cooks authentic Korean royal court cuisine

Totally different and distinctive cuisines and interior designs on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd floors.

No one’s ever been like, ‘Oh, I was possessed.’ It’s just you see creepy old whalers walking around [‘Sconset Village’].

She recounts a story about one time when the pilot was walking his dog, early on a foggy morning, and spotted a large man.

“He gets closer and closer. He doesn’t seem to be progressing, he’s just sort of one place walking, and so he was closer and closer, and the dog got excited. He was really scruffy, (with) a big beard, he had a sack. He gets closer and closer, the guy isn’t moving. He’s walking, but he’s not going anywhere. He’s a couple of feet away from him. He walks into a tree and he disappears— and then, the tree disappears? The dog stops and sits and is waiting, and he’s like, ‘The dog’s seeing too, it’s not just me!’

“There’s just weird stuff, especially during the winter. Sometimes it’s quiet and no one’s around, and it’s cloudy,” she says.

A Different Nantucket

There’s the Nantucket for those who’ve been year-round, and the Nantucket for those who visit, “It’s completely, totally different worlds,” Barnes says.

“If you want to see the real Nantucket,” she offers, “I suggest going to the Madaket Mall.”

“The aesthetics at the shop match the island: hues of gray, blues, creams, greens. This is the place to buy a handmade hearthroom quality throw, or a boatneck sweater that will last for years. Locally made crafts carry their own stories, including ones steeped in nautical tradition, like the shell collage valentines inspired by the ones sailors used to send to their sweethearts from the Pacific Islands.

Discovering Nantucket

My version of discovering Nantucket involved hopping on a bike, a looser from the White Elephant Village hotel. There are 32 miles of bike trails on Nantucket, and a bike liner will attest to the value of exploring at a bike’s pace. Hopping on and off as you like. (Let me say, though, that biking on the cobblestone streets downtown is not a good idea; although it is a memorable one.)

I headed out to ‘Sconset on the eastern end, along the way. Growing up, that’s how it was.”

What it was, was a focus on quality of life, but with real simplicity, an aspect that’s perhaps encapsulated in her dog philosophy.

“People really connect to things that are meaningful. People crave that because things are so much cooler these days. Our value system, for us, is that more is not necessarily better,” Clarke says. “You could have just one great set of plates, one great set of napkins. You don’t need tons of everything, but if everything you have is special, that’s what you keep. So you’re not just enough.”

The aesthete at the shop mugs the island, hue hauser within the palette of grays, creams, blues, and greens. This is the place to buy a handmade hearthroom quality throw, or a boatneck sweater that will last for years. Locally made crafts carry their own stories, including ones steeped in nautical tradition, like the shell collage valentines inspired by the ones sailors used to send to their sweethearts from the Pacific Islands.

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I headed out to ‘Sconset on the eastern end, along gentle hills, and passed the southern area of the Middle Moors, known as Nantucket’s “Serengeti.”

 Apparently, wooden cutouts of lions, gazelles, or elephants, with wooden cutouts of一边. From her keen marketing experience, though, she will tell you how much of that reality comes from its image: “It’s almost like how Ralph Lauren accomplished his success. He created this world that really wasn’t real. It’s how people thought it was supposed to be, so suddenly it became how two things became.”

“A Tale of Two Nantuckets

There’s no denying the wealth piled on this little island, no matter how unostentatious it is on the surface (you won’t see luxury cars plying its streets, though it’s likely a number of private jets are parked at the airport). A recent look at Sotheby’s listings shows a 1 bedroom property on 1.4 acres on sale for a cool $4.2 million.

Bess Clarke, who runs Nantucket Looms, mentions a couple of “dazzling impressions” of Nantucket.

“The Kardashians were out here last summer. ‘Oh great, if they found us then, it’s all over,’ you know,” she says. “There’s definitely the white Range Rovers, the pink shorts, the champagne on the beach.”

From her keen marketing experience, though, she will tell you how much of that reality comes from its image: “It’s almost like how Ralph Lauren accomplished his success. He created this world that really wasn’t real. It’s how people thought it was supposed to be, so suddenly it became how two things became.”
days, but he had never bothered with installing an air conditioner; he wanted to keep everything easy, and he liked the breeze from the sea. 

There had been many more—he pointed to one side of his cottage and then the other. But he had never bothered with installing air conditioning; he liked the breeze from the sea. 

And so it is. Rounding the corner of a cottage, I came upon a spectacular view of the Atlantic Ocean. Part of his roof was covered with pink rose blooms. 

One man, a refugee from New York City, sat in his yard, looking out toward the ocean. Part of his roof was covered with pink rose blooms. 

The path is so small and so close to the cottage, it’s almost impossible not to feel like you’re walking through their homes; some small talk, as you pass by feels obligatory. 

One man, a refugee from New York City, sat in his yard, looking out toward the ocean. Part of his roof was covered with pink rose blooms. 

One man, a refugee from New York City, sat in his yard, looking out toward the ocean. Part of his roof was covered with pink rose blooms. 

Inside another yard, a small group of men chatted with each other, enjoying their evening get-together. 

You know: quality of life, with a good dose of simplicity. 

I came upon a spectacular view of the Atlantic Ocean. Part of his roof was covered with pink rose blooms. 

Says a kind elderly gentleman, who had come to their yards. 

WE’RE MORE THAN MEATS THE PLATE

MORTON’S

THE STEAKHOUSE

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