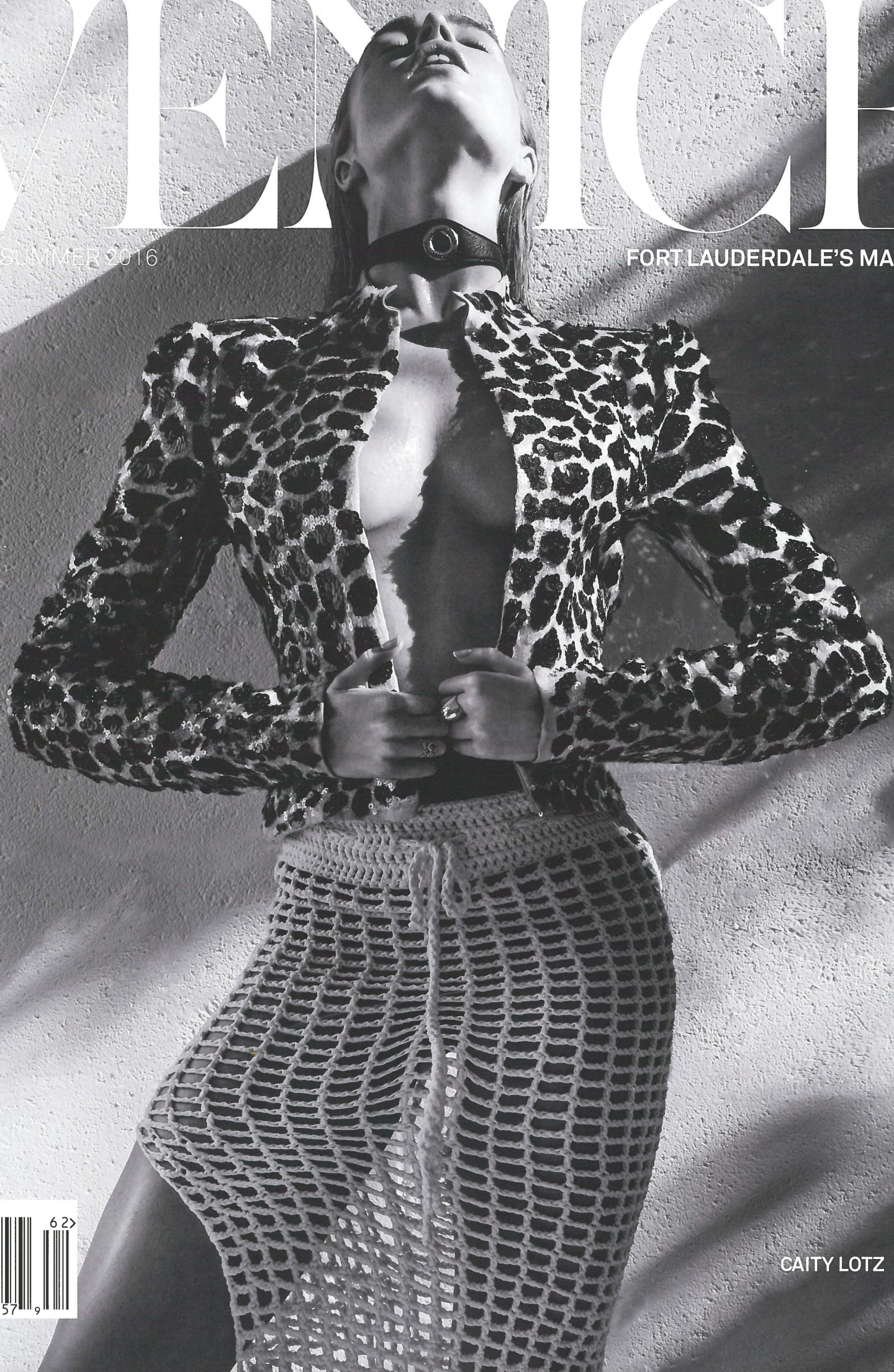


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SUMMER 2016

FORT LAUDERDALE'S MAGAZINE



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FALLING FOR NANTUCKET

Discover the elegance of classic inns and the wild romantic beauty of wind-swept dunes and moors on this island.

BY EMILY BENSON-SCOTT



A SERENE RESPITE Nantucket is home to inns that blend sophistication and old-world elements, including The Wauwinet (above), which sits on two private beaches.

During the summer months, crowds descend onto Nantucket, a picturesque island just 30 miles off the coast of Massachusetts. When the multitudes disperse after Labor Day, you'll find yourself immersed in old-world charm and a newfound tranquillity, surrounded by wind-swept bluffs, lighthouses and crimson moors. The cooler days provide perfect weather for pedaling the nearly 30 miles of designated bike paths, shopping for antiques along cobblestone streets, sipping a Whale's Tale Pale Ale at Cisco Brewers or watching berries being harvested at the annual Cranberry Festival. E.B. White wrote that there are three New Yorks, but here we'll show you there are three distinct sides of Nantucket.

Nantucket's Wildly Romantic Side

For a romantic vacation for two, book your stay at the Wauwinet, a 32-room luxury resort with four cottages and two private beaches nestled between the Atlantic Ocean and Nantucket Bay. Located nearly 9 miles from town, this uniquely isolated gray-shingled inn is popular with honeymooners (children under 12 are not permitted), and as a Relais & Châteaux property (the only on the island), it has all the impeccable services that go along with that prestigious designation. You won't find frenetic fitness centers, modern minibars or lobbies full of elevators, but you will discover late-afternoon port and cheese served in the library, cozy fires in the living room and white wicker recliners on the great lawn affording gorgeous views of the bay.

You'll have plenty of quiet time if you choose, but activities abound at this coastal refuge as well. During the day, explore the island on complimentary bicycles, play a game of tennis, or go for a sail onboard the "Lady Wauwinet," followed by a land tour in the resort's 1948 Chevy Fleetmaster. Afterward, unwind at the lovely Spa by the Sea with a treatment utilizing wildflowers grown on-site. In the evening, take the courtesy shuttle into town or sample the exceptional cuisine and wine pairings at Topper's restaurant, whose 20,000-bottle wine cellar has won the prestigious *Wine Spectator* Grand Award time and time again.

An elegant respite

For an upscale experience in Nantucket Town, book your stay at the ritzy White Elephant hotel, situated on Nantucket Harbor. Many of the 67 guest rooms in

this grand inn boast fireplaces and decks overlooking the harbor, as well as uber-comfortable king-sized beds accented with the hotel's signature throw pillows adorned with white elephants. An added bonus is the White Elephant Spa, where you can enjoy treatments made from organic ingredients amid soothing views of the harbor and gardens. And don't miss your chance to dine at Brant Point Grill, the hotel's superb steak and seafood restaurant.

For a longer stay, consider the nearby White Elephant Village, which features 25 one-, two- and three-bedroom cottages decorated by Alexandra Champalimaud, known for her work with high-end hospitality companies. The residences come with fully equipped kitchens, complete with Sub-Zero refrigerators and panini presses. You can also stay at the Inn at White Elephant Village, which debuted in 2012 and offers beach-inspired guest rooms designed by Kathleen Hay. The inn offers espresso, coffee, tea and pastries every morning, which can be enjoyed by both inn and cottage guests outside on the shaded wraparound veranda.

Historic Nantucket Charm

Step back in time with a stay at the Jared Coffin House, a cozy three-story mansion built in 1845 by the wealthy whaling ship owner, Jared Coffin. The property is just a stone's throw from the cobblestone streets, galleries, shops and restaurants of downtown Nantucket. Though brimming with authentic antiques—including a portrait of the original proprietor in the front hall—the inn has been updated with modern amenities, such as Wi-Fi and flat-screen HD TVs. Stay in one of the 30 guest rooms in the main house, where President Ulysses S. Grant once spent the night, or book one of the 13 guest rooms next door at the Daniel Webster House, which is open year-round.

Anyone who's enjoyed Herman Melville's classic novel, "Moby-Dick," or the popular book and major motion picture, "In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex," won't want to miss the Nantucket Whaling Museum just down the street from the Jared Coffin House. Originally built as a candle factory, the museum showcases an impressive collection of scrimshaw and whaling memorabilia and a 46-foot-long whale skeleton.

Whether you're visiting Nantucket for a romantic, classic or historical experience, there's no shortage of seasons to discover the multifaceted charm of this quaintly captivating island. ▮

BEYOND THE LIGHT Great Point Light, also known as Nantucket Light, is one of three lighthouses on the island.

