FROM FUNNY GIRL TO LEADING LAD

The town crier, who rings in Christmas Stroll and leads revelers to the wharves to meet Mr. and Mrs. Claus

RED-LETTER WEEKEND Early Friday evening, the ferry docks at Nantucket and a cheerful, noisy, Santa-hatted crowd presses into the cobblestone streets. Summer-home people, tourists booked into the island's luxury resorts and annual visitors who wouldn't miss this event for the world all make their way forward—tidy luggage rolling along behind them, cellphones pressed to chilly ears. Everyone. Looks. Fabulous. This is Christmas Stroll weekend (christmasstroll.com), Nantucket's final hurrah before many storefronts shutter for the winter. After 45 years, the seaside village has perfected the event. On Thursday, you may see shop owners, nonprofit organizations, community members, school children and artists out decorating for the Festival of Trees. But, by Friday, the swarms arriving to this little island off Cape Cod have doubled the population to more than 20,000, and it is one big block party. Amid the buzz, wander the shops; snag saltwater taffy; and tour some of the finest old homes—take in the weathered shakes, the crisp-white trim and the doors painted one of 12 heritage colors. In December, darkness falls early, but the streetlights twinkle to life as visitors rush to meet friends at favorite restaurants—Brant Point Grill, with its waterfront views and divine lobster bloody mary; or The Proprietors Bar & Table, a warm hubbub with heaping plates of seared scallops. It is a good night to be inside at the warm glow of the loaded table, and it's a good weekend to be on Nantucket. —Pamela Fieber