The Guide

Romantic Inns by the Sea
Escape to one of these ultra-dreamy retreats where love is always in the air

THE 1770 HOUSE
RESTAURANT & INN

TRAVEL TIP
Ask about specials catering to couples.

The enchanting entry to The 1770 House in East Hampton, New York

BY BREE SPOSATO
INN AT STONINGTON
Stonington, Connecticut

The stately Inn at Stonington overlooks an idyllic scene of yachts and lobstermen plying the harbor of this historic New England seafaring village. It’s the kind of place where couples can meet the fishermen who caught their dinner, and amble past friendly shops and lapping sea. Inside the clapboard inn, 17 of the 18 guest rooms have flickering gas fireplaces, and French doors open to balconies with views of Fishers Island Sound.

Each evening, a complimentary wine-and-cheese reception in the red-painted parlor amps up the already romantic vibe; sip Chardonnay and plot your next day’s adventure: a five-minute walk south leads you past the Old Lighthouse Museum to tiny DuBois Beach, where you can take kayaks out on the gentle water. Rates start at $225; 860/535-2000 or theinnatstonington.com.

TIP: The inn does not have a restaurant, but fresh Stonington oysters are a short walk away at Water St. Café.

THE WAWWINET
Nantucket, Massachusetts

Past white, wicker lawn chairs and rolling greenscape, a sea grass–lined path to the shore reveals the Wauwinet’s trump card: its location, with private beaches on both the Atlantic Ocean and Nantucket Bay.

At this shingled, Nantucket-style mansion, you can experience the kind of blissful seclusion only found on the northeast tip of the island, nine miles from town. The inn is a destination in its own right, with a 1,700-square-foot spa with a couples suite; in the rooms, the plaid and floral prints are grand but cozy.

The inn also houses one of the island’s very best foodie havens: Topper’s. A table for two on the deck is the place to savor butter-basted lobster with truffles, along with a bottle from sommelier Craig Hanna’s collection of 1,450 wines. Rates start at $595; 800/426-8718 or wauwinet.com.

TIP: Book a lunch or dinner reservation at Topper’s and get a complimentary one-hour ride on the Wauwinet Lady. On board, try the Rob Roy cocktail spiked with Woody 25 whiskey—the Wauwinet’s single malt Scotch—style whiskey released in honor of the inn’s 25th anniversary.

THE INN ABOVE TIDE
Sausalito, California

Cantilevered over San Francisco Bay, The Inn Above Tide has glass doors and glass-railed balconies that provide what is likely to be the bay’s best front-row seat: a panorama of Angel Island, the city skyline, and beautiful blue herons coasting above the sea.

Inside the 31 rooms and suites, serene earth tones rule. Spending the day lounging in bed in front of the wood-burning fireplace is tempting, but the weathered, brown cedar-shingled inn is also a minute’s stroll to the galleries, boutiques, and candlelit eateries downtown (check out Sausalito’s new seafood restaurant on page 50), as well as the Golden Gate Ferry. Back on your balcony, the sunset is epic—you may spot a gray whale breaching in the deep channel near Tiburon. Rates start at $350; 415/332-9535 or innabove tide.com.

TIP: Craving the beach? There’s an oasis of fine sand a few miles west at Tennessee Valley. Take the inn’s mountain bikes there.