BURLINGTON: A SMALL TOWN WITH A BIG CITY FEEL P.34

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Top, The historic Ocean House in Rhode Island; Bottom, The White Barn Inn in Maine

luxe love

Three romantic five-star getaways are just a drive—or a boat ride—away.

by ALEXANDRA PECCI

OCEAN HOUSE

This page and opposite, The Wauwinet on Nantucket is a perfect year-round getaway.

Courtesy of The Wauwinet

if the idea of a lavish five-star honeymoon or romantic getaway conjures only images of far-flung locales and distant shores, think again. Three fabulous destinations within easy driving distance of the North Shore prove that luxury can be local, too. These ultra-luxe properties—all members of the exclusive Relais & Châteaux association—are perfect for couples, whether they're escaping for a long weekend, kicking off their honeymoon, or celebrating a special day. All you need is a tank of gas and a sweetie to snuggle up with.

THE WAUWINET

With just 32 rooms and four cottages, and a location next to the Coskata-Coatue Wildlife Refuge on Nantucket Island, the Wauwinet offers the ultimate in intimate, exclusive stays. Open from May through October, this luxury property boasts private beaches on the Atlantic Ocean and Nantucket Bay, perfect for sunset strolls along the shore. Plus, an array of amenities, activities, services, and packages designed specifically for adults are sure to make a stay at the Wauwinet romantic and relaxing. It's a place that encourages its guests to unwind and unplug.

"It's kind of a safe haven from cell phones, iPads, computers, technology. People can reconnect with themselves and each other," says general manager Eric Landt. This kind of intimacy and personal connection is so entrenched at the Wauwinet that it's available even before your stay begins, thanks to the complimentary pre-arrival concierge who can arrange things like transportation, spa services, and dining before guests arrive. Small touches, like the port and cheese that's offered to guests each afternoon and the complimentary DVDs and popcorn, add to that welcoming spirit.

Although there are plenty of activities to keep guests occupied, like kayaking, biking, fishing, cooking classes, and even a day out on a lobster boat, guests will find that there are more relaxing things to indulge in, too. Couples can have a cozy champagne picnic packed by the hotel; enjoy a romantic meal at the Wauwinet's renowned restaurant, Topper's; relish a private breakfast for two; or indulge in a couple's massage at the on-site spa. Guests can also go back in time

with a ride in the Wauwinet's own 1947 Woody for a romantic guided tour of the nearby seaside village of Siasconset. And special couples-themed packages make planning a romantic stay even easier.

The Wauwinet 120 Wauwinet Rd., Nantucket, MA, 508-228-0145, wauwinet.com

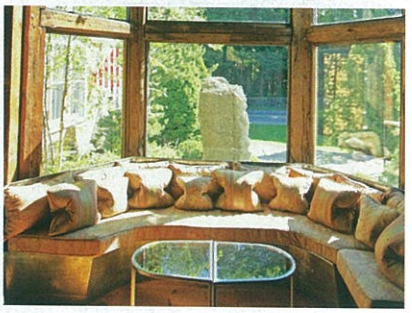
THE WHITE BARN INN

A Kennebunk landmark, The White Barn Inn has been welcoming travelers to the Maine coast for more than 150 years, and today it represents the epitome of seaside luxury. It's also a place where romance reigns for couples, thanks to a staff with a fantastic eye for detail and exceptional touches.

"We can arrange for all sorts of special treats," says executive chef Jonathan Cartwright, whether it's a bottle of chilled champagne and strawberries waiting to greet guests on arrival, or a drawn bath with rose petals and candles ready for them in their room after dinner.

That's not to say that dinner should be an afterthought. The White Barn Inn Restaurant offers five-star dining in a cozy, intimate environment, where nearly every table feels like its own special spot and bartenders have a knack for remembering favorite drinks.

Since The White Barn Inn is known for its food, it's fitting that the culinary team would also be able to pack exquisitely prepared three- or five-course picnics for lovebirds, along with a selection of wine from their wine cellar, tucked into a wicker picnic basket. The staff can recommend the most secluded beaches for couples to enjoy, or even charter a boat for them. Afterward, couples can warm up at The White Barn Inn's top-rated spa for a candlelit couple's massage, complete with chocolate-covered strawberries on request.



Courtesy of The White Barn Inn, and the The Ocean House (opposite)

The White Barn Inn in Maine offers guests a rustic yet elegant retreat. Opposite, The Ocean House offers magnificent views of the water.

Although Kennebunkport is a summer hotspot, Cartwright says it's got its share of off-season charms, too, especially where romance is concerned, thanks to crisp weather, fireplaces, good wine, and lots of cuddling.

"The romance is throughout the seasons," he says. "It's beautiful having a chilly walk on the beach holding hands, warm cider by the fire, a drawn bath."

The White Barn Inn & Spa 37 Beach Ave., Kennebunk Beach, ME, 207-967-2321, whitebarninn.com

THE OCEAN HOUSE

Sweeping views of the Atlantic Ocean, a private beach, and ocean-side cabana service make The Ocean House, a recently renovated grand hotel located in the exclusive Rhode Island hamlet of Watch Hill, the perfect place for those wanting to experience true coastal