

RIDE ALONG ON A LUXURY RHODE ISLAND ROAD TRIP

From hip hotels to elegant restaurants, and sporting clays to classic car tours.

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Courtesy Hammetts Hotel

From *The Gilded Age*, the new TV series from *Downton Abbey* creator Julian Fellowes, to [A Newport Summer](#), a suitably lavish new book from photographer Nick Mele and author / interior designer Ruthie Sommers from Vendome Press, Newport, and Rhode Island was on our mind a lot this summer. New England's most elegant state, it seems, is finally coming into its own.

We'd already heard about some of the new hotels, restaurants and other items of interest brewing in the Ocean State, so this seemed like a perfect time to check them out. With all the attractions within easy driving distance of each other, as well as New York City and Boston, a road trip seemed indicated; hence we plotted course for Providence, the capital, which has been generating a fair amount of buzz recently.



Courtesy The Beatrice

A lot of that is coming from [The Beatrice](#), a cool new boutique hotel located in the attractive Exchange Building, built in 1887. Located in the Providence's downtown historic district, the original architectural details have been stylishly incorporated into a contemporary design with industrial elements like exposed brick and structural supports.



Courtesy The Beatrice

Decorative elements and interiors also pays tribute to the 19th-century building's storied past, with a modern flair that enhances rather than detracts from the whole, care of ZDS Architecture & Interiors. The hotel's spacious 47 guestrooms provide a "bespoke home-away-from-home for travelers," set off by soaring ceilings and expansive windows showcasing views of the historic district.



Courtesy Bellini

The main draw for many is also the Bellini restaurant—the very first in New England—by Ignazio Cipriani, fourth-generation scion of the famed Cipriani family of Harry’s Bar fame, and an exclusive private rooftop club for members and Beatrice hotel guests.



Courtesy Bellini

The restaurant's ever-changing menu takes a "modern spin on Italy's many specialties and classic dishes" plus Cipriani signatures, with menu items including Pappardelle "alla Bellini," Beef Milanese alla Parmigiana, and Sautéed Clams alla Veneziana. And of course there is Cipriani's famous Venetian Bellini, cocktail, a mix of prosecco and fresh peach purée, that was invented in 1948 by Giuseppe Cipriani at Harry's Bar in Venice.



Courtesy The Ocean House

The next morning we motored down to Watch Hill and the five-star [Ocean House](#), New England's most impressive and attractive historic seaside resort. Located right next door to Taylor Swift's mansion, the Ocean House is a member of the prestigious Relais & Chateaux association of world-renowned hotels and resorts.



Courtesy The Ocean House

As it was prime beach weather, the smart thing to do was obviously to reserve a private cabana and order one of everything off the extremely tempting menu. The Ocean Club is justly famous for its F&B offerings and they have something to suit every mood. And with the recent debut of the property's Théa at Dune Cottage, there's even more to indulge in.



Courtesy The Preserve Sporting Club & Residences

Our next stop took us to a place we've been meaning to visit for a long time: [The Preserve Sporting Club and Residences](#) in Richmond. The ultimate sportsman's paradise, the brainchild of serial entrepreneur and outdoorsman Paul Mihailides, it occupies a sizable chunk of Rhode Island real estate and encompasses everything from luxury real estate to clay shooting, fly-fishing and equestrian pursuits.



Courtesy The Preserve Sporting Club & Residences

On its 3,500 acres you'll also find rock-climbing, winter snowmobiling, shooting range, an 18-hole executive golf course, Hobbit houses, cigar-smokers' safari tents, tree houses, and an off-road driving course. It's also home to world-class dining, headed by the acclaimed Double Barrel Kitchen in the Main Lodge, serving everything from lobster to pheasant bagged on the property.



Courtesy The Preserve Sporting Club & Residences

You can book an overnight stay in a cabin, cottage, or lodge house, and try out as many activities as you like. During bird hunting season you can even arrange to put dinner on the table after a day of five-star shooting. And thanks to a new partnership with Bentley, you can even get a luxury car fix in on the off-road course. All without leaving the property.



Courtesy Discover Newport

Next day we headed off early to tour The Breakers, one of the most iconic [Newport mansions](#). As *A Newport Summer* puts it, “Newport has an understated elegance that sets it apart from other resort towns.” It’s “one of the last bastions of American high society,” and the “grand, Gilded Age houses that top its oceanside cliffs and line storied Bellevue Avenue,” like The Breakers, built by the Vanderbilts in the 1890s, “are largely untouched by contemporary renovation and taste.”



Courtesy Discover Newport

That was just the beginning to an epic day of sightseeing which also took us out on the water in an America's Cup yacht. [America's Cup Charters](#) is the outfit that will take you out for a day on the water in a classic yacht with an impressive racing pedigree, past the oceanfront mansions and landmarks like the famed New York Yacht Club. They operate the largest fleet of America's Cup-winning boats in the world.



Courtesy Bar 'Cino

For lunch we disembarked at [Bar' Cino](#), a hip Italian eatery in the heart of historic Washington Square that brings some much-needed *sprezaturra* to the city's dining scene. Aperitivos and Italian wines complement upscale takes on Italian street food, including their grilled, squared-off thin-crust pizzas which are cut with shears. Opt for the one loaded with roasted rhode island mushrooms, charred radicchio, fontina, parmesan, and fresh herbs.



Visit Newport Jaguar Tours

Following lunch we were picked up by a dapper gent in a classic British racing green Jaguar XJ6—Bruce of [Newport Jaguar Tours](#). No one, it seems, knows more about all points of interest in Newport than Bruce, who can tailor-make tours to suit every client's interests, from the storied mansions and private clubs, to a look at the Kennedy's and their connection to the famed seaside resort town. You can opt for anything from a three-hour jaunt to a full day, and Bruce will even provide a picnic lunch if you so desire.



Courtesy The Chanler

Dinner that night was at [The Chanler at Cliff Walk](#), one of the only Newport mansions you can actually stay in overnight. One of the top hotels in New England, the historic five-star property, built as a private house in 1865, is a bastion of old-world elegance, with an incredible staff that makes you feel as if you own the place. For architecture buffs as well as foodies it's a true paradise.



Courtesy The Chanler

The Chanler is home to Cara, a Forbes Five Star restaurant, also one of New England’s finest. Helmed by Executive Chef Jacob Jasinski, Cara is designed as a “hyper intimate” dining destination, showcasing blind tasting menus. Jasinski and his team walk guests through every dish, highlighting the best of local and seasonal ingredients and “paying homage to New England’s coastal cuisine”—you can see the ocean from the window.



Courtesy Vanderbilt Auberge

After dinner we repaired to [The Vanderbilt](#), an Auberge Resorts Collection property, another historic gem recently renovated and given a new lease on life. With its sexy, dark new color palette it has gone from prim to prepossessing, another feather in the cap of the Auberge portfolio and the SWOON design collective. The hotel's main bar and Dining Room are currently the place to see and be seen in Newport.



Courtesy Hammetts Hotel

Our overnight stay was booked at [Hammetts](#) Hotel, a wharfside property that, while the building itself isn't historic, seamlessly blends in with Newport's shipbuilding tradition. It has a nautical meets industrial vibe that gives it a clubby, welcoming atmosphere, and its surrounded by the bustling activity of the wharves yet something of an oasis in and of itself.



Courtesy Hammetts Hotel

The property is home to the popular Giusto restaurant and bar—upscale Italian being on-trend—with a large terrace and ocean views, some high-end retail, and its own marina. The location is ideal and the bright airy spaces make the most of it. While it was perfect in summer, we can see how autumn might hold even more appeal, if you prefer things slightly less crowded.



Courtesy Vendome Press

And while the book that brought this all together, with its echoes of the work of famed chroniclers of the leisure classes Slim Aarons and Tina Barney, is called *A Newport Summer*, it also highlights the joys of September, so you'll want to book your own Rhode Island road trip right away.

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