

# Get swept away at refined resorts in Westerly, R.I.

Moira McCarthy Thursday, April 28, 2016



Credit: Moira McCarthy

GRANDE DAME: Turrets, balconies and walkways mark Ocean House.

For me, the perfect vacation features moments of juxtaposition — the joy of finding a smoothed-by-the-sea rock, perfect for skimming or crafting into a sea necklace, right around the bend from a posh beachside cabana with meal service and lounge chairs. Or a long, sparkling white sand beach that feels far away from civilization, just around the corner from a bustling beach town (carousel and hand-churned ice cream, anyone?). How about a simple bookmark, placed in the

book I was reading at turndown time, at the same place I was handed the keys to a brand-new Mercedes E-Class Coupe for tooling around town. I found all this and more during a spring stay at the OHM Collection hotels along the beaches of Watch Hill, R.I.

I headed to Westerly, R.I., on a bright spring day. It was an easy ride (just north of Mystic). I cut off the highway and meandered along a road that cut through farm after farm, and a few vineyards. I rounded the corner toward my first stop, the Weekapaug Inn. Before spotting the inn, I spotted the sea. Sparkling on the spring day, it stretched out, with rocky spots, waves crashing, and majestic homes overlooking it. I pulled over and sat for a bit on a bench. I could have stayed there all day.

But the Weekapaug called me, and so I drove on. The Weekapaug sits on a salt-water pond that nestles up against the ocean. (Before the great hurricane of 1936, it was on the ocean.). Operated by the same family from the late 1800s through 2010, the inn embraces classic elegance in a relaxed way. Service is impeccable: No tipping is allowed and every time I looked around someone was making sure I had what I needed. (“Water bottle, ma’am?” and even better, “Sparkling wine while you wait?” Why yes, I will indeed.)

Shingled and rustic from the outside, that aesthetic continues indoors but with elegant, modern accents. Claw-footed tubs, powered with the most modern of faucets, invite you to soak. There’s a real, old-fashioned key for your room (rates start at \$560 per night) just down the hall from the most modern of coffee makers, and Adirondack chairs for lounging, and an on-site naturalist to take you on beach walks and adventures. I wanted to stay forever, and it’s not unusual for a family to book a room for weeks and even a month in the summer season. I can see why. The private beach stretches out for more than a mile with a white sand strip that stays wide even at high tide.

The next day I headed down the road a bit to Watch Hill where the inn’s big sister property, the Ocean House, was to be my spot for a day.

Ocean House is like a grande dame with a spiffy new wardrobe. More formal than its sister, it sits on Watch Hill on a beach as white, sandy and magnificent as Weekapaug.

Celeb alert: Taylor Swift’s house is right next to it and overlooks the property. She’s a smart one, that Taylor, because the location is sublime.

My room was expansive and beautiful, with little touches like a monogrammed pillow with my initial on it (rooms start at \$545 per night). On the balcony, I could breathe in the salt air. Down below, I could take the boardwalk directly onto that amazing beach. And downhill from Ocean House, a two-minute walk at most, is a delightful little beach town.

Taking up the offer of that Mercedes coupe (they have two-seaters, four-seaters and larger Mercedes all for guests' use), I zip around, taking a quick trip to Westerly to poke around some shops. I feel quite spiffy in my coupe, and savor it.

That night after a perfect dinner at their main restaurant, Seasons, which included New England sourced cheese, locally caught seafood and Dave's Coffee, I headed back to the room to find the book I was reading set on my pillow with a beautiful paper bookmark tucked in my page. I don't know quite why, but it delighted me.

The next morning I had only a few hours until I had to leave. I called for my coupe and took a spin, hoping to find a winding road along the sea that made me feel like Grace Kelly in "To Catch a Thief." I did.

Watch Hill, Westerly and the OHM Collection inspired me. I'll be back and back often.

Learn more at [www.oceanhouseri.com](http://www.oceanhouseri.com) and [www.weekapauginn.com](http://www.weekapauginn.com).



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The Weekapaug Inn in Westerly, Rhode Island.