

The Tragic Life of Birdie Africa **P. 88** Did Arlen Specter Have a Secret? **P. 80**  
Spring Fashion **P. 29** Save the Piercing Pagoda! The Suburban Mall Crisis **P. 84**

**GREAT COASTAL GETAWAYS** P. 92

# Philadelphia

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[ edited by ASHLEY PRIMIS ]

# On the WATERFRONT

*Get lost in the clamor of waves against a New England beach. Savor a five-star meal in a bustling city that sits on a bay. Watch surfers tackle Pacific rip curls while you sip a local beer. You don't have to cruise to the Caribbean to get the peace of mind that only comes from a waterside vacation. This country's coastlines are as diverse as they are beautiful—so match your mood to a shoreline destination.*



The Spanish Mediterranean buildings that make up the Cloister resort in Georgia



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Classic Americana

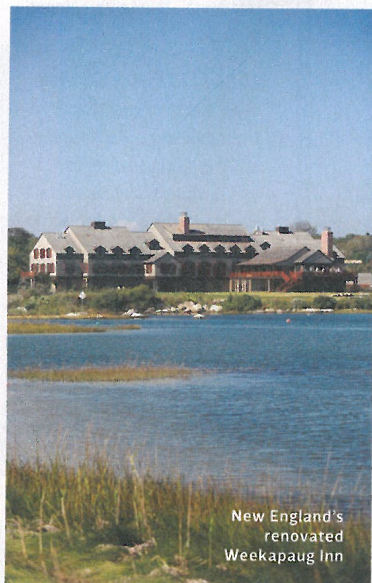
# Westerly, RI

This southern Rhode Island region has the ocean, huge ponds, and lots for food lovers.

**Vibe:** There's the moody Atlantic, of course, which laps up against this rocky Rhode Island shoreline, but there are also saltwater ponds edged by feathery reeds, a river that curves through town, and lakes. Between all that water? Weatherworn beach bungalows and blue-blood mansions fresh from open windows, Main Streets with ice-cream shops and clam shacks, and regulars who wouldn't change a thing about their low-key seasonal hamlet.

**Stay:** Sure, it's an "inn" that sits on a "pond," but don't get swayed by syntax; the **Weekapaug Inn** is a large lodge, recently renovated to evoke its original 1930s elegance with stone patios, fluffy king-size beds, bright rooms, and a welcome absence of TVs and screens. It sits on the Quonochontaug Pond, a sapphire-blue body of water that's miles long and feeds into the Atlantic. Parlor and lawn games, familiar service

CONTINUED ON PAGE 124



New England's  
renovated  
Weekapaug Inn



Shoreline  
fishing along the  
Chesapeake



IN SEARCH OF...

Old-School  
Family Memories

# Northern Neck, VA

Cradled by two majestic rivers, this stretch of the Chesapeake is rich in history, seafood and water.

**Vibe:** There's the part of the Chesapeake experience that's all old money and popped collars, and then there's this part of Virginia, which is filled with pristine, verdant inlets and a vibe that's sweetly nostalgic, slightly Southern, and all about family bonding. (Think *Dirty Dancing* minus the sultry dancers.) Best part? Sailboats everywhere you turn—*instant ahhh*.

**Stay:** The **Tides Inn** has been a redoubt of relaxed hospitality since it opened in the mid-1940s. Snug along Carter's Creek, a tree-shrouded tributary of the Rappahannock River, it's a romantic destination, a pet-friendly family compound and a sportsman's dream, with golf, a spa, bikes, pools. The original resort vibe is still intact at the Tides Inn—there are even s'mores under the stars. Rooms from \$180 to \$500 per night. 804-438-5000.

**Eat:** The resort's gorgeously paneled **Chesapeake Club** offers mesmerizing creek views and a seafood-celebrating menu. The adjoining **East Room** is an elegant evening refuge with low-key but attentive service; the she-crab soup is a standout starter, and for that

first cocktail, order the Lancaster Lemonade. The **Local**, a few minutes' walk from the Tides, is an airy, unpretentious gathering spot with locally roasted coffee and fortifying breakfast sandwiches.

**Be a tourist:** No less an authority than Thomas Jefferson thought Virginia's soil and climate ideal for producing wine. Though his own experiments in viticulture sadly failed, Jefferson would be tiptoed pink at the state's 200-plus wineries. Hop on the **Chesapeake Bay Wine Trail** and go.

**Be a local:** The nearby town of Kilmarnock—practically a city by Northern Neck standards—dates from the 1600s but doesn't look it, having been rebuilt multiple times after huge fires. The main drag offers plenty of restaurant choices, but to cap off your native education, surrender to the unreconstructed '50s dinerhood of **Lee's Restaurant**—seriously, \$3.75 for a sandwich and chips?—where everyone clamors for the coconut pie.

**Water time:** How does 10 minutes from room to gentle rocking on a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 124

# VISIT



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## Spring Travel

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 95

**WESTERLY** and rowboats earn Weekapaug its homey rep. In-season rates start at \$380 per night. 401-322-0301.

**Eat:** For all the inn's nods to yesterday, there's a distinctly modern flair at the **Restaurant**, the simply named eatery open to locals and guests. Young executive chef Jennifer Backman creates contemporary plates from foods she sources locally. The oysters come from only miles away, and the aromatic herbs that crust the Atlantic cod are from a garden on-site. The Weekapaug's sister property, nearby **Ocean House**, has an upscale farm-to-table restaurant called **Seasons** with an equally delicious view of the Atlantic. Or go west toward Watch Hill to the **St. Clair Annex**—you can grab a quick bowl of chowder; everyone else will be in line for the ice cream.

**Be a tourist:** The Ocean House is a de facto culinary center—learn all about **local cheese** and wine pairings in a class taught by the hotel's food forager, or snag a seat at a **cocktail class** hosted by the house mixologist. Back at the inn, the resident naturalist, Mark Bullinger, will take you **bird-watching**, plot out a **kayaking tour**, organize a **clambake**, or, from the back porch, point out constellations in the star-blazed sky.

**Be a local:** It's been around since the 1870s, so the **Flying Horse Carousel** is a rite of passage for locals. This quiet locale has a ton of arts—there's an outdoor Shakespeare festival, the Summer Pops, and the Salt Marsh Opera, which performs alfresco during the summer.

**Water time:** On the pond, you'll find too many activities to count, from **kayaking** to **stand-up paddleboards** to a simple **rowboat** with a fishing rod. A quick stroll along the property leads to Weekapaug's new **oceanside bathhouse**, an open-air facility with changing rooms, food, drink, and an entrance to two miles of private beach, complete with a view of Block Island. At the Ocean House, the 12,000-square-foot **OH! Spa** has a two-lane lap pool (and life-altering treatments).

**Another option:** Try the **Grand Hotel** on Mackinac Island, a sweet dot of car-free land on Lake Huron in Michigan. —Josh Middleton

### VACATION WITHIN A VACATION

Ten miles off the coast of Rhode Island, Block Island is a worthy half-day adventure.

A high-speed catamaran will ferry you to Block Island in 30 minutes.

Once there, rent a bike or moped—the flat paths that run along the shore and through the towns are a great way to explore this tiny, quiet Rockwellian isle. If you like to hike, seek out the **Clay Head Preserve**, 190 private acres with trails that wind you past farms, through swamps, up bluffs and down to the sea. At sunset, the **Oar** restaurant, overlooking the harbor, is the Parc of Block Island, and the perfect gathering place for a pre-ferry cocktail.

**NORTHERN NECK** glistening surface sound? Complimentary kayaks, paddleboats and stand-up paddleboards are available at the **Tides Marina**, where you can also arrange guided cove cruises. The Tides Inn is one of the only resorts in the U.S. to offer accredited sailing courses; beginners as young as six can learn to haul away and tack.

**Another option:** Try **Little Palm Island Resort & Spa** in the Florida Keys, where water activities abound. —Timothy Haas

### GET HISTORICAL

This part of the state has a surprising past.  
Find it.

At one point, 85 percent of the world's oysters came from the Chesapeake Bay, which meant the Northern Neck shoreline was dotted with oyster processors and canneries. This engendered an impressive and unique steamboat transport network and culture. Start exploring this hidden history—after a 1933 hurricane, barely a trace of the old steamboat wharves and vessels remains—at Irvington's excellent **Steamboat Era Museum**. Its most entertaining exhibit: the improbable tale of the 500-seat floating theater that inspired the musical *Show Boat*. Go deeper into the Neck's earliest maritime days at the **Reedville Fishermen's Museum** and the **Kinsale Museum**, housed in a former 18th-century pub. **T**

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