



The Dune Shacks, Provincetown : www.ptownchamber.com

Making the time to take in Cape Cod

Cape Cod is a thin hooked shaped peninsula of land in the southeastern corner of Massachusetts, which in turn is one of the six New England states.

It is surrounded by Cape Cod Bay, the Atlantic Ocean, Nantucket Sound, Vineyard Sound and Buzzards Bay respectively and, since 1914, has been separated from 'mainland' Massachusetts by the Cape Cod Canal that cuts across the base of the peninsula.

From here, it curves some 70 miles around to Provincetown, where the 'Mayflower Pilgrims' first landed in 1620, and remained for five weeks before opting to settle in what is now Plymouth.

In doing so it offers miles of pristine shoreline, picture perfect small towns and traditional fishing harbours, and any number of art galleries, antique shops and excellent dining opportunities.

The best way to appreciate a good part of Cape Cod is to travel the Old King's Highway, which is one of America's true scenic routes.

Once providing ports for commercial whaling fleets, it is now the whale watching boats that take to sea from Cape Cod.

Ashley Gibbins
Commissioning Editor
AllWays Traveller





© Rob Costa

Thanks Jake, I got there - though it took a little while

By Ashley Gibbins

At school, we had a geography teacher called Mr Dakin - who us kids, not surprisingly, nicknamed Jake.

Elderly and slightly eccentric, Jake's lessons would be part travelogue part theatrical performance.

As soon he thought enough of us were seated, Jake would announce his destination and point to it on a large desktop globe with a twisted cane.

Jake would then take himself off there, hoping (I assume) that we would want to follow.

I can still see Jake striding up and down, waving his arms wildly and pointing his cane to relevant maps and magazine covers he pinned to the wall.

While many of my classmates found Juke's approach to teaching a cause for much mirth, I was enthralled.

And so to Cape Cod

One of Jake's trips that I remember vividly was to Cape Cod.

He crooked a left arm aloft and explained: "This is Cape Cod in Massachusetts. It starts at my elbow and curves to this finger here, in the Atlantic".

We then heard of a punishing land with life lived at its harshest and at the mercy of the elements, particularly the winds.

With almost Shakespearian relish he told of the crews of the whaling fleets braving treacherous seas in search of the whale, and of the bloody consequences when they found them.

Then there were the women folk left behind, struggling to keep house and home together and enduring a daily gaze to the horizon for a first sighting of their returning loved one's.

It would be a long, and often forlorn vigil, with ships away for months, even years, often returning with mournful tales of men and boys lost at sea.

This was, indeed, a hard, bleak, weather splintered life, but alluring for all that.

As the curtain came down on Jake's *Drama of Cape Cod*, and my classmates rushed into the playground, I wanted to hear more.

"No time lad. If you want to know, you've got to go", he said.

Leaving his classroom, I recall being hit on the back of the head by a small piece of chalk (as was Jake's want).

What Jake also gave me was a determination to go to Cape Cod.

I am not sure Jake was as academically focused as he could have been (my geography grades did leave a lot to be desired).

But he did instil in me a lifelong passion for travel which, as a journalist, has held me in good stead.

And I eventually I did get to go to Cape Cod.



AllWays
Traveller

A spectacular shard of New England

Having greatly enjoyed an extended trip to Cape Cod I am sure Jake's vision of the place was an historically correct one.

But today, you will find this fascinating and naturally stunning shard of Massachusetts far more welcoming (although it probably still gets a little bleak in mid-winter).

From Sandwich to Provincetown you will find a string of small New England towns offering restaurants, ice cream parlours, antique stores and art galleries.

Around the Cape Cod Bay and Atlantic coastline are small harbour communities punctuating long stretches of shoreline with the dunes, ponds, woods and many miles of pristine beach.

There is also an abundance of quality accommodation from boutique hotels and inns to bed and breakfast guesthouses.

And finally, the really 'must do' is a whale watching trip, one of the truly most memorable, heart warming of experiences.

All within easy reach

Being a narrow, curving peninsular, everything you will want to see and do is within easy reach - and just a 90 minute drive from Boston (if you manage to avoid this city's horrendous rush hour).

While this enables a short break linked with Boston, Cape Cod will reward a longer dedicated stay.

We chose the latter opting for three, three night stays on Cape Cod with trips across to Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket.

It was as memorable as it was eminently enjoyable.

Upper, Middle and Outer Cape

Cape Cod is often referred to as being the upper, mid or outer Cape with Upper Cape that part of the peninsula and where the Cape Cod Canal cuts through.

Go as far as one can go, around Provincetown, and you will be in Outer Cape, while the bit in between is, you've guessed it, Mid Cape.

Having learnt all this before going I found most people talk about it being just the Cape.



The Old King's Highway

Of greater relevance to those visiting is to plan how to get from one end of Cape Cod to the other, and in this I am sure.

Rightly recognised as one of the top scenic drives in the USA, it winds through some of the country's oldest communities including Bourne, Sandwich, Barnstable, Yarmouth, Dennis, Brewster and Orleans.

Many of these come with a general store little changed in generations of owners, offering a veritable time capsule as well as provisions.

With speed limits no higher than 45 mph, the Old King makes for a truly delightful drive through a continuous canopy of trees and the sun formed dappled shadows that these paint on the road.

Grand homes along the way are listed on the *National Register of Historic Places*, with many built by wealthy ship's captains and whale oil merchants who preferred to live inland rather than on the coast.

Take any number of routes to the coast side of the highway and you will find long stretches of unspoilt beach.

During the summer and on public holidays, the 6A inevitably becomes congested but, with so much to admire on route, one should not complain about having to ease the foot off the pedal.

During our stay in Upper and Mid Cape, the 'Old King' became a veritable old friend, taking us to wherever we needed to go.



Our trip to Cape Cod

To ensure we got the best from our trip to Cape Cod with we opted for three-night at Sandwich (Upper Cape); Hyannis (Mid-Cape) and Eastham (Outer Cape).

More information

www.capecodchamber.org

The Cape's oldest town retains an aching beauty

For this leg of the trip we based ourselves in Sandwich, the Cape's oldest town and one of the most aching beautiful of places.

Arriving on a glorious, early fall day, we found a lovingly preserved historic district basking in late afternoon serenity.

Originally a trading post, Sandwich was settled in 1637 by Puritans granted "*liberty to view a place to sitt down & have sufficient lands for three score famylies.*"

The 'purrfect' antique store

Strolling Sandwich we came across our first antique shop, the Cat's Meow on Main Street, run by Paula Deane.

I say the first because, antique and 'vintage' stores and emporiums, along with art galleries and gift shops, abound on Cape Cod and particularly along the Old King's Highway.

In high season they are likely to be bustling with potential customers, which can make browsing a more frenetic experience.

During the 'shoulder' season, the experience is far less frenetic and there is chance to have a chat with the store owners and nab a bargain, through good natured wheeling and dealing.

But back to the Cat's Meow (as we did a couple of time), this is a place we would recommend.

Without giving this lady's age away, it is fair to say Paula has been in the business for quite a few years and knows what's what when it comes to antiques and curios.

Taking her advice we got a couple of wonderful small pieces that now remind us of the trip to the Cape.

www.TheCatsMeowAntiques.com



The Sandwich Boardwalk

Walking the plank

The Sandwich Boardwalk, known as the *Plank Walk*) crosses Mill Creek marsh to the town beach on Cape Cod Bay.

An embracing stretch of Cape Cod coastline along which one can walk for miles.

In 1991, Hurricane Bob destroyed the original boardwalk, and a public appeal helped purchase 1,700 individual planks.

A grand day out : Heritage Museum & Gardens, Sandwich

Heritage Museums & Gardens, in 100 acres of beautifully landscaped grounds, is the largest public garden in southern New England and the premier cultural attraction on Cape Cod.

It is most highly recommended for anyone visiting the Sandwich area.



Each main season (April-Oct.), Heritage offers a special indoor exhibit and outdoor art installation and a wide range of family-friendly programmes.

A private, not-for-profit organisation, the Heritage was founded in 1969 by J.K. Lilly, III, with a mission to celebrate American culture and inspire people of all ages to explore, discover and learn together.

A real highlight of a visit will be the extensive, permanent collection of antique, classic and vintage automobiles, each a veritable work of art.

The American Art & Carousel Gallery houses a working 1908 fairground carousel and Heritage's permanent collection of 12,000 artefacts.



These include American folk art, paintings, weathervanes, Nantucket baskets, scrimshaw and shop signs.

All are located in formal gardens with the rhododendrons and hydrangeas spectacular when in bloom.

www.heritagemuseumsandgardens.org

The Belfry Inn & Bistro, Sandwich

By Ann Mealor

Three charming, but very different, historical buildings make up *The Belfry Inn & Bistro*.

The impressive and grand Abbey, previously a Catholic Church; the elegant Painted Lady, a former Victorian rectory and the Village House, an 1830s Federal style home.

Each has a character of its own, and has been lovingly and beautifully refurbished in keeping with its original style and purpose.

As well as six glorious bedrooms, *The Abbey* houses the restaurant and bar.

It oozes atmosphere with its soaring, vaulted ceilings, oak buttresses, original, colourful stained glass windows, wood panelling and artefacts from the old church including the confessional that sits behind the bar, now home to a selection of fine wines.

Here, admiring the stunning architecture and intricate design work, we sat and enjoyed a delicious complimentary home, cooked breakfast each morning.

There was always a delicious banana bread to start, a choice of porridge or bagel, a selection of fresh juices, teas and coffee and a hot dish such as a ham and cheese scramble or feta cheese, spinach and tomato omelette.

Those with a sweet tooth could also choose the Belgium waffle with fruit. All was cooked to order and set us up for the day.

The Painted Lady

We stayed in *The Painted Lady*, an impressive Victorian home built in 1882 and returned to its former glory by Inn keeper, Christopher Wilson.

Situated right next door to The Abbey, The Painted Lady's classic exterior features multiple gables, brilliant shingles and a windowed turret.

Each of the 11 bedrooms is decorated individually and so has its own distinctive style.

We had the Garden Room, decorated in relaxing yellows and creams with a stained glass window over the bed.



It was light and airy with high ceilings, period furnishings and a sunny, secluded private deck area with cushioned chairs – ideal for reading the morning papers, or unwinding with an afternoon glass of wine.

Guests can help themselves to tea and coffee all day and cool their wine or beers in the fridge in the small communal kitchen area.

The Village House

The Village House, which is situated across the road from *The Abbey*, has six bedrooms decorated in a floral theme with crisp white linens and "Cape Cod Cottage" style beds and furniture.

The rooms are simpler in tone than others at the Belfry, but there is a veranda and quiet garden areas where guests can sit and relax.

The rear Carriage House is the setting for art workshops, Pilates classes and other group events held at the Inn.

The Belfry also has pretty gardens and outside dining areas allowing visitors to make the most of the weather and scenery.

The quaint shops and the attractive village of Sandwich are a short walk away making this stand-out Inn the perfect base for exploring this part of the Cape.



www.belfryinn.com

Fine dining in classic surroundings at the Belfry

By Ann Mealor

Dining at The Belfry Bistro is an experience to savour. It is not often one gets the opportunity to enjoy an evening meal in a beautifully refurbished historic church.

The Bistro is located in The Abbey, the former Catholic Church that was desanctified when it became too small for its growing congregation.

At dusk, the restaurant really comes into its own.

Candles flicker on the tables, around the fireplace and the bar, bathing the room in a warm glow and casting long shadows, creating a romantic atmosphere.

Silver cutlery glimmers on the crisp, white tablecloths.

There is much to catch the eye whilst sitting comfortably in high backed leather chairs perusing the menu including the gloriously high vaulted ceiling, intricate stained glass windows, smooth, aged oak panelling and the grand fireplace.

There are also many pieces from the original church such as the altar, benches and the confessional, which now serves as an unusual wine rack.

A tempting menu

For our first course, Ashley and I decided on the clam chowder.

Every restaurant has its own recipe for this traditional dish and we both enjoyed the creamy broth filled with local clams and guanciale (Italian salami).

For mains I went for the Grilled Dry-aged Sirloin with polenta, mushrooms and arugula. I don't eat a lot of meat at home and am no good at cooking it, so if I get the chance to enjoy a steak at a fine restaurant, I make the most of it.

My sirloin was juicy and tender but still cooked medium-well, just the way I like it.

Halibut with Polenta and Swiss

Ashley decided on the fish of the day, Halibut with Polenta and Swiss Chard, a tasty and interesting mix.



The fish, as you would expect from this part of the world, was fresh and full of flavour.

Delicious desserts

We managed to save some room for dessert and chose the Rice Pudding with Caramelised Pineapple and Pink Peppercorn Ice cream and the Crème Fraiche Panna Cotta with Smoked Nectarines, a combination I particularly liked.

The wine list is extensive and after much deliberation we picked a very pleasant Pinot Gris from the vineyards of Oregon, an up and coming wine producing area.

Always popular - with visitors and locals alike

Many locals visit the Bistro to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries and other special occasions, which comes as no surprise, as this restaurant has a particular charm all of its own.



www.belfryinn.com



An exhilarating encounter with whales

By Ashley Gibbins

Our second stop on the Cape was Hyannis, and with it the chance to see the whales.

Hyannis Whale Watcher Cruises sail daily out of the nearby Barnstable Harbour (weather conditions permitting).

Between May and October its vessel, the aptly named *Whale Watcher*, is one of a dozen or so to sail out to the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary for what truly is an unforgettable encounter with these majestic creatures.

The Sanctuary waters provide a seasonal home to Humpback, Finback and Minke whales, and several species of dolphin.

As such, it is recognised as one of the world's top whale watching spots, although watching does not do the experience justice.

First there is excitement as we near their feeding grounds, and are encouraged to keep our eyes open for sightings (which will occur almost without fail).

Then there is the heart pumping exhilaration when we arrive at the feeding grounds and witness the awe inspiring beauty of these peaceful creatures as they feed in small groups", or *gam's*, which is the whalers parlance for them.

Although floating with the whales for some two hours, the time flies by. And then, sailing back to port there is a humble appreciation of what we were able to witness tinged with a feeling of guilt in knowing our ancestors hunted these creatures to near extinction.

One must accept that those were different times and to be very grateful for it.



If you do one thing on Cape Cod – go out with the whales.

www.whales.net

A brief history of whaling from Cape Cod

The hunting of whale off Cape Cod had been carried out by American Indian tribes for centuries, with no impact on numbers.

So how ironic that, as with the American buffalo, the arrival of western 'civilisation' to the Americas devastated the population.

Commercial hunting began with the whaling fleets in the mid-17th century and continued apace for some one hundred and fifty years.

The 'crop' they were 'harvesting' was oil obtained from any large whale species whose blubber was rendered down.

This oil was in great demand throughout the emerging nation and 'fuelled the lamps that lit America'.

With Cape Cod's sperm whale population hunted to all but extinction, other species were sought and farther afield.

The whaling fleets sailed 1,000 miles to the coast of South America – with the same effect on the whales there.

The accidental saviour of these creatures was one Edwin Drake who, in 1859, struck oil in Pennsylvania.

As a fuel, petroleum was cheaper and more readily abundant than whale oil and the whaling industry plunged into a steep and ultimately terminal decline.

Colourful vibrancy in and around Hyannis waterfront

Hyannis itself has two areas of visitor appeal, the harbour and waterfront and Main Street.

Hyannis harbour and waterfront is a very pleasant area of dock side restaurants and brightly coloured arts and craft shacks.

Also worth a visit here, is the Cape Cod Maritime Museum, which charts the maritime tradition of the Cape and the Islands.

www.capecodmaritimemuseum.org

The ferry terminal has daily sailings to the islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard.

Along Main Street, a couple of blocks inland, are bars and restaurants, gift and antique shops, boutiques, amusement arcades and the JFK Museum in the Old Town Hall.

www.hyannis.com



The John F Kennedy Hyannis Museum



In 1926, Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy and Joseph P. Kennedy, Sr. purchased their Hyannis Port summer coastal home, now known as the Kennedy Main House.

The couple and their children, John, Robert and Edward and their wives and children spent much of their time here over the years here.

The John F. Kennedy Hyannis Museum preserves and promotes the legacy of President Kennedy, his family, and their deep connection to Cape Cod and the days JFK enjoyed here.

An introductory video narrated by Walter Cronkite leads on to a collection of more than 100 images of the President and members of the extended Kennedy family from 1934 to JFK's assassination in 1963.

www.jfkhyannismuseum.org

The Kennedy Legacy Trail

The Kennedy Legacy Trail is a self-guided walking tour of sites in downtown Hyannis, that are significant to the Kennedy family.

At each of the 10 sites, an informational sign, and links to video and audio information, uncovers stories & history about the Kennedys on Cape Cod.

The entire walking trail is 1.6 miles long and may be visited in any order. Brochures with a map of the sites can be downloaded here and are also available at the JFK Hyannis Museum at 397 Main Street, Hyannis, MA.

www.kennedylegacytrail.com

The Cape Cod Melody Tent



Finally, for entertainment with a tradition the Cape Cod Melody Circus, and its sister venue the South Shore Music, have been presenting tent entertainment in the round in the coastal communities of Hyannis and Cohasset respectively for over 60 years.

There is a varied programme of comedians and performing bands.

www.melodytent.org

The Anchor In, Hyannis

By Ann Mealor

The Anchor In is a friendly, family owned hotel run by 'Skip' Simpson.

Overlooking the Hyannis Harbour, this is the only waterfront hotel in town with superb views across the marina.

Hours can be spent relaxing on a sun lounge by the pool, watching the many boats and yachts sail in and out of the bay.

There are plenty of good restaurants within easy walking distance and Main Street with its many quaint shops and bars is also only a 20 minute stroll.

The ferries to Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard is just around the corner.

Our room at the Anchor In had everything we needed for a short stay, including dressing gowns, good quality toiletries (Gilchrist & Soames), which I always appreciate and a large, very comfortable bed.

We had a small balcony overlooking the pool and the harbour where we could sit and work during the day or enjoy a glass of wine in the evening.

A cosy library

The hotel has no restaurant or a bar, but there is a delightfully cosy library and lounge area with large, leather comfortable chairs in front of a fireplace that is lit on cold, rainy evenings, if you are unlucky enough to have any during your stay.

Plenty of games, books and newspapers are on offer and guests are encouraged to sit, unwind and enjoy their own wine or beer here.

A fire pit next to the pool is lit in the evenings, providing the ideal spot to sit and share holiday stories or just enjoy a drink or two.

The sun lounge with its wicker armchairs, bistro tables and beautiful sea views is the place to be at 3pm each day when complimentary homemade lemonade and chocolate chip cookies are brought out for guests.



Breakfast a real treat

A delicious, self-service continental breakfast is included in the room rate: fresh strawberries, yoghurt, a selection of cereals, bagels, muffins, English muffins, cream cheese, peanut butter, jam, bananas, apples, croissants, ham, cheese cubes and hard-boiled eggs are very nicely laid out in the kitchen each morning.

The food is very well presented, and the breakfast bar is always kept neat, tidy and well topped-up by the waitresses.

A fine crew at the Anchor

I am not sure if 'Skip' is short for skipper but he sure captains a fine crew at the Anchor.

The reception team are very knowledgeable, helpful and more than willing to provide recommendations for dining and other local activities – they are a mine of information.

On leaving, everyone receives a goodie bag containing bottles of water and some salt water taffy to enjoy on the journey home or to the next location.

A small touch from a hotel with a big heart.



www.belfryinn.com

Outer Cape



Outer Cape – a fine and fitting finale

By Ashley Gibbins

And so to the third leg of our Cape Cod adventure, the Outer Cape, an area of genuine contrast.

The coastal area is dominated by the Cape Cod National Seashore, a magnificent stretch of natural coastline and sand dunes.

The seaside town of Chatham is a quintessential Cape Cod town choc full of character and historical heritage.

And then there's Provincetown, where the Cape lets its hair down.

The Cape Cod National Seashore – stunning natural beauty

The Atlantic Ocean coastline of Cape Cod was declared a National Park in 1961 and named the Cape Cod National Seashore.

It is an area of outstanding natural beauty with 40 miles of shoreline with long stretches of pristine beach backed by high cliff or rolling sand dunes.

Off the beach are tidal flats, salt marshes, oak forests and heathland.

But it is the Cape Cod coastline that inevitably provides the greatest lure (as beaches always do) and there are wonderful, public access beaches all along the Seashore

Each offers long, wide stretches of flat white sand, backed by dunes and sandy cliffs, which are strewn with shells and slapped by Atlantic breakers.

Sand dippers dart in and out of the wet sand in search of the smallest of grubs while, a little further out, the bobbing heads of seals show just that modicum of interest.



What ever the weather, walking the seashore is one of those natural pleasures to be savoured.

Because the seashore uses every condition to its advantage.

When the skies are clear blue and the sun beats down, one could be in Florida, but with a cooling breeze.

And then, take to a beach on a dull, misty day and there is an almost ghostly feel.



My goodness, it must be a tremendous experience to the intensity of the Cape Cod seashore on a stormy winter's day when the elements were at their most ferocious.

The howling, biting wind and thrashing rain, crashing breakers and thunderous skies. Now that's another feature altogether.

www.nps.gov

www.capecodonline.com/beaches/national-seashore

Didn't we have a lovely time, the day we went to Chatham



While on our trip through Cape Cod, one name kept cropping up - Chatham.

"Chatham is so pretty, you really must get there", paraphrases most comments about this town.

And so we went to Chatham - and had a lovely time.

Chatham was a thriving shipping, fishing and whaling centre during the 18th century and the prosperity this generated enabled its wealthy citizens to build the grandest of residences for themselves.

This, in turn, attracted affluent tourists to this seaside town, a trend that continues to this day.

That many of these original properties still stand proud today is, in no small measure, due to a Chatham community committed to preserving, and indeed celebrating, its historic heritage.

Many display a sign charting the property's age and former occupants of note, which makes walking around the more interesting.

Main Street



Like most visitors, we began our trip on the delightful Main Street, with its cluster of family owned shops and restaurants.



Highlight of the week here takes place on Friday evenings during the summer months when the Chatham Town Band stages its long standing concerts in Kate Gould Park

Some six thousand people will come to relax here and enjoy musical numbers by the band, folk dances for the children, dance numbers for grownups and much community singing.

www.chathamband.com

Chatham Fish Pier

Just beyond Main Street, the Chatham Fish Pier provides a home port for the fishing fleet that still sails daily to catch haddock, cod, flounder, lobster, pollock, dogfish and halibut in the waters off Chatham.

Having sailed before dawn, the boats start returning to the pier shortly after noon, which provides a genuine spectacle in itself.



Chatham beaches

Being on Cape Cod, one is never far from a spectacular beach and Chatham has North Beach, a five mile section of the Nauset barrier beach.

In addition, Chatham Lighthouse Beach lies below the Chatham Light itself, an active lighthouse at the Coast Guard Station.

www.chathaminfo.com

Living life on the edge at Provincetown

Driving into Provincetown one immediately realises this place is unlike anything else you will find on Cape Cod.

This is more Key West than Cape Cod, a bustling party town with an anything goes attitude that is less than 120 miles drive from Boston (or 50 by boat).

Provincetown is what it is because it exists on the extremity and all but hibernates in the winter months.

But during its season in the sun, Provincetown is determined to make the most of it.

The town has long attracted artists, authors, liberal thinkers and bohemian leaning characters and is also very gay friendly.

The town began seeing the value of tourism as a way of bolstering the economy after a major storm in 1898, which severely damaged the fishing community.

Artists, with their bohemian style, were some of the first to appreciate its lure, drawn by the natural beauty and the particular light.

Since then it has become an ever more eclectic population.

Provincetown is now an intoxicating mix that creates a unique cultural melting pot of a community and one that stages any number of annual art, music and food festivals.

The sophisticated charm found elsewhere on the Cape is also replaced by pleasure seeking, seaside sassy.

Commercial Street, its main thoroughfare, throngs with visitors and loud music wafts from bars crammed to the proverbial rafters.

Tattoo parlours ply a prosperous trade and gift shops sell merchandise that are quirky, sometime outrageous, reminders of the visit.

The day we were in town so were several hundred bikers, which cranked up the atmosphere several notches.

All so different

There would be little doubt as to what Provincetown's founders would think.

In November 1620 the Founding Fathers, the Pilgrims, of the Mayflower dropped anchor in what is now Provincetown.

They explored the region for five weeks before moving on to the area around, what is now Plymouth, to establish a colony.



However, it was in Provincetown that the Pilgrims wrote and signed the Mayflower Compact, considered as the first document in the New World, and the precursor to democracy.

The Pilgrim Monument, which was built between 1907 and 1910 to commemorate the Pilgrims first landing here, is the tallest all-granite monument in the United States.

Although seen from miles around it is located in Provincetown Historic District, and altogether more genteel part of town.

While some on Cape Cod may frown on Provincetown, as a family would an unruly cousin, it offers a truly unique and vibrant experience that should be included in any itinerary.

And, sitting on a stretch National Seashore, there is spectacular natural beauty at hand.

This can be best appreciated on an Art's dune tour.

Gay friendly

Provincetown is also very friendly and, for some 50 years, the gay and lesbian community has been coming here during the summer.

Same-sex marriage was legalised in Massachusetts in 2004, and since then Provincetown has become a magnet for same-sex weddings.

www.ptownchamber.com



Ray Forbes

Crossing the dunes non-stop for seventy years

With Provincetown sitting on a stretch National Seashore, there is spectacular natural beauty at hand.

The best way to enjoy this is with the iconic Art's Dune Tours.



Art Costa (seen above) began taking visitors through the dunes, in a 1936 Ford Woody, back in 1946 and today the tradition is carried on by his son Rob and a dedicated team in a fleet of eight-seater Suburbans.

This is a real friendly laid-back tour where guest and guides become friends within minutes of climbing aboard for the trip through the Province Lands.

This is the name for most of Provincetown's coastal area and take in the cascading sand dunes along Cape Cod Bay. on one side, and the Atlantic (Race Point Beach) on the other.

The Dune Shacks

The Dune Shacks of Peaked Hill Bars Historic District, were first home to American artists and writers from the 1920s and are lived in to the present day.

Previous occupants of the shacks, which have no power or water supply, include author Eugene O'Neill.

They sit in dramatic isolation on 1,950 acres dunes and beach as part of the Cape Cod National Seashore

The sunset tour

We were fortunate enough to take a sunset tour with Rob himself, one of the nicest 'fellers' you will meet.

His tour drove us through the cascading dunes before we parked up on the beach for a traditional New England dinner of steamed lobster, clams, corn and chowder.

This is also one of the absolute best places to sit and watch a Cape Cod sunset with a cold beer.

Art's also offers a range of other tours to the dunes and else.



Charles Fields

www.artsdunetours.org

Fort Hill B&B : a serene retreat on the seashore

By Ann Meador

Fort Hill Bed and Breakfast, at Eastham, is a beautifully refurbished historic Greek revival farmhouse. Built in 1864 it is tucked away in the protected woodland of the Cape Cod National Seashore.

While being so peaceful, it is also close to everywhere one could want to visit on the Outer Cape.

Surrounded by over 100 acres of cedar forests, fields and marshland, the B&B is ideally placed for visitors to enjoy the peace and solitude of the area as well as the many walking trails, varied wildlife and beautiful views that this rural shoreline has to offer.

Innkeepers, Jean and Gordon Avery, one of the nicest couples you could hope to meet, provide all their visitors with a genuinely warm and friendly welcome. They like having people to stay.



Three guest suites

Three guest suites, make up the Fort Hill Bed and Breakfast; the Emma and Lucille rooms are located in the historic wing of the B&B, whilst the self-contained Nantucket Cottage is situated close to the main house.

Emma is furnished in a traditional antique style with a four poster bed, a piano and many original features. Lucille is an eclectic mix of cast iron and period furniture with wide, pine floors and a light, airy atmosphere. Both are delightful.

We stayed in the tastefully decorated, self contained and gloriously spacious Nantucket Cottage.

Jean had stocked our fridge with all the essentials needed for a short stay - milk, butter, homemade muesli, bread, yoghurt, fruit, jam, iced lemon cookies, tea and coffee.

We were also treated to some of Jean's delicious scones (she is an excellent cook) which we enjoyed sitting at the sunny farm house kitchen breakfast bar staring out at the lovely grounds.

Our quintessential cottage style Cape Cod bedroom was on the second floor overlooking the grand living room.



It was delightfully cosy with fitted white shutters, maple plank flooring, a Queen size iron sleigh bed and top quality linens.

The living room, on the other hand was large and impressive with its high cathedral ceiling, big comfy chairs and gallery of original oil paintings.

This was the place to curl up with a glass of wine, listen to music, peruse the book of local restaurant menus and admire the views over the farm fields to the marsh and ocean beyond.

Fort Hill Bed & Breakfast is elegant, tasteful, private and secluded.

Much thought, attention, love and care has been put into the refurbishment and decoration of all this historic property.

Jean and Gordon have created a homely yet sophisticated environment that draws guests back to this charming Inn year after year.

www.forthillbedandbreakfast.com

Captain Penniman House



Just across the road from Fort Hill Bed and Breakfast is the Captain Penniman House.

The captain, who was one of the most successful whaling captains in New England and, as such, a very wealthy man, built this Second Empire style home for himself and his family in 1868.

The house contains the Penniman family's written records and artefact collection and provides an insight into the places Penniman visited on his whaling voyages.

The entrance gate to the house is constructed from a whale's jawbone.

Restored and repainted in its original colours, it is open to the public during the season.

www.capecodmuseumtrail.com/museum-directory/captain-edward-penniman-house



All Ways
Traveller

PB Boulangerie & Bistro, South Wellfleet

By Ann Mealor

When I was told I was to dine at a super French bistro in Wellfleet, Cape Cod, I kept an open mind.

Living in London I have an endless choice of many excellent restaurants.

So although PB Boulangerie & Bistro had been recommended to us and Chef Phillippe Rispoli much praised, I thought this place can not live up to its reputation.

I couldn't have been more wrong! I loved everything about PBs. It was so much better than I could ever have imagined.

The Bistro is authentically French and brings flavour, fun and flair to Cape Cod - it is a little piece of La Belle France on USA soil.



La Vie en Rose

The Bistro is quaint and charming with copper pots and pans decorating the walls, wooden planks on the floor and ceiling, quirky metal fish shoal lamp fittings, cushioned café style spindleback chairs and flickering tea lights on the rustic tables.

French music adds to the atmosphere and an old-style barrel organ is played every so often by William, the exuberant Front of House Manager, who enthusiastically turns out tunes such as La Vie en Rose and Happy Birthday. It is a lot of fun.

There is a cosy bar area that looks onto the open kitchen where Phillippe and his team can be seen mixing, chopping, frying, grilling and adding delicate finishing touches to the dishes before the waitresses whisk them to the expectant diners.

We were lucky enough to try almost everything on the menu.

The butternut squash soup was rich and smooth and served with warm, homemade sour dough bread from PB's boulangerie, and creamy butter imported from France.

Some things you just can't get locally!

We then tucked into fresh raw and baked oysters and a side of sautéed jalepeno peppers that had been tossed in a soy and sesame sauce.

These are a must - they weren't too hot at all, and extremely moorish.

The yellow fin tuna that followed was one of Ashley's favourites and I was surprised how much I enjoyed the Foie Gras ravioli with black truffle and port sauce.

I would never have picked it out for myself, but the dish was incredibly light, smooth and flavoursome without being over rich.

I was then served La Quenelle de Lyon, a mix of sea scallop and cod mousse, tomato sauce, white button mushrooms and olives.

Soft, tender and full of flavour

The mousse was soft, delicate, full of flavour and ideally paired with the ripe tomatoes.

Ashley tucked into the steamed cod with a vegetable fricassee, of tomatoes, black olives, oyster king mushrooms, butternut squash, potatoes and sauce vierge.

The cod was sweet and tender, breaking into soft, white flakes at the touch of his fork.

Braised beef and strip steak

Ashley was proudly presented with a large, silver bowl of plump mussels and clams in curry broth with basmati rice.

I had slices of braised beef and strip steak with smooth and creamy mashed potato, swede, asparagus and carrots in a rich but light red wine sauce.



Melt in the mouth delicious

The meat was so tender and the vegetables had so much flavour, it was melt-in-the-mouth delicious.

Although we could both hardly eat another thing, we did manage a couple of spoonfuls of dessert- and more!

The classic French chocolate mousse was the best I have tasted - light and airy with a strong Valrhona chocolate flavour. Like the butter, the chocolate is imported from France.

The crème brulee with caramelised Madagascar vanilla custard was velvet smooth and the *Oeuf a la Neigh*, a floating meringue island with vanilla crème anglaise and homemade caramel drizzle was sumptuous.

The desserts are definitely worth leaving space for.

More on PBs

PBs has been serving Cape Codders for seven years and is renowned for its quality food.

It sources its meat and tuna locally, but imports other fish from France and Portugal, olive oil from Italy and butter and chocolate from France. It can then guarantee the quality of its produce.

The restaurant prides itself in cooking simple things in a good way –that's why even the bread tastes so good.

Our food was paired with a selection of wonderful wines - two of our favourites were a red and a white Beaujolais, which came from a small vineyard in France.

It was a real treat to try them, and I also, for the first time, drank my fair share of red as it was so smooth and light.

The staff here are food-wise and can describe each dish in detail. They do everything they can to make the dining experience at PBs one to remember. .

PB Boulangerie and Bistro is a must on a visit to Cape Cod; it is easily accessible from anywhere on the Cape and shouldn't be missed.

The three course prix-fixe menu at \$29 a head is fantastic value.

Not only are the ingredients of the highest quality, the menu diverse and interesting, and the food prepared and cooked to the highest standards but this little slice of France is full of joie de vivre!

Bon appétit!

www.pbboulangeriebistro.com

Make time to get the best from Cape Cod



The headline to this feature is *Making the time to take in Cape Cod* and nowhere is this advice more relevant.

Many travellers will take a look at the Cape on Google Maps, clock the distance from one end to the other and decide to allocate it a short two or three day break.

And yes, there is that option, and a twin destination break with Boston does appeal, particularly with those for whom time is a premium.

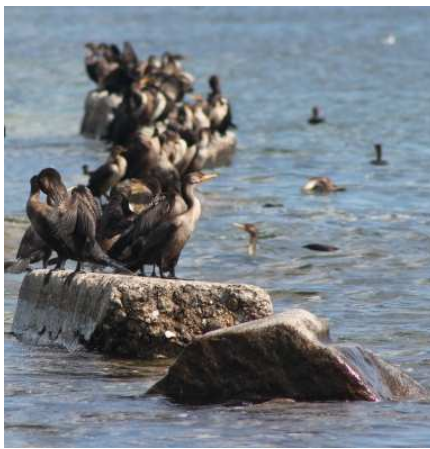
All I will stay is that the longer one stays on Cape Cod, the more one gets to know the place and its people and the more rewarding the trip becomes.

We spent 14 nights on Cape Cod, including three on Martha's Vineyard and two on Nantucket, and still left yearning for just a few more.



www.visitcapecod.com

A snapshot of Cape Cod



Doing the airport in style with the executive lounge



How often have you heard it said that the airport is the worst part of flying?

The time it takes to get through security, the panic at the thought of checking in late and missing the flight and then the wait in crowded departure areas.

So is the best approach to spend as little time there as possible?

Get there early

No. To avoid the stress and pressure of flying, get to the airport three hours earlier than necessary, check in and clear security in a leisurely 'no sweat' fashion and then head to one of the airport lounges to relax or work in style.



This costs a little more but, with all that lounges offer to make guests comfortable, it is money very well spent



All you need

Comfortable chairs and a good view of the aircraft; Wi-Fi access and power points; a complimentary choice of hot and soft drinks and a selection of fine food and a wide range of newspapers and magazines (for reading there and on the plane).



It makes the airport experience a pleasure.



Nº1

LOUNGES

Passengers flying out of London (as I tend to do) should opt for the premium lounges by No.1 Lounges.

No.1 Traveller offers 'pay-as-you-go' airport lounges at Heathrow Terminal 3, Gatwick North and South Terminals, Stansted and also at Birmingham.

Other services

In addition to its premium lounges, No.1 Traveller also offers chauffeur-driven airport transfers for 'driveway to runway', as well as travel spas and bedrooms.

You can then look forward to enjoying the flight in a fit state.



www.no1lounges.com

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www.itwalliance.com



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