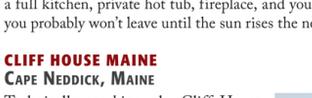


Blue on Plum Island, Massachusetts
© RARE BRICK

Best New Hotels in New England

BY STEVE JERMANOK

Over the last two years a crop of new hotels have opened their doors in New England. At many of them, history plays an integral role. Boutique lodgings have been created out of the former barracks of a 19th-century fort, a venerable captain's estate, and within the confines of a Federal-style home dating from 1776. The Lark Hotel collection continues to expand in the region, adding establishments on Plum Island and Newport, while atop a high cliff on the Maine coast a longtime inn has been transformed into a world-class resort. Each place is not just distinct, but distinctly New England. Read on to discover 11 of our favorite new hotels.



The ocean views come easy at Plum Island's Blue.
© RARE BRICK

BLUE PLUM ISLAND, MASSACHUSETTS

If you yearn for pounding surf and a long stretch of sand to walk barefoot for hours, then it's hard to think of a better beachfront locale in New England than Blue on Plum Island. This 13-room inn is smack dab on the beach, next door to the coastline and marsh of Parker River Wildlife Refuge. Accommodations include 5 stand-alone cottages with full kitchen, hot tub, and fire pit, ideal for a family escape. Or grab another couple and all the fixings for a classic New Eng-

land lobster bake, and reserve the 2-bedroom Blue Suite. The 2,200-square-foot space offers a full kitchen, private hot tub, fireplace, and your own private entrance to the beach, which you probably won't leave until the sun rises the next morning. bluetnn.com

CLIFF HOUSE MAINE CAPE NEDDICK, MAINE

Technically speaking, the Cliff House is not a new build. But after closing for a year and spending upwards of \$40 million, the newly revamped hotel has little in common with its predecessor. In fact, when Phase II is done this summer, adding additional rooms and an adults-only infinity swimming pool, it will gain its rightful place as one of New England's finest resorts. To truly appreciate the property's name, stroll on the hotel grounds down by the tidal pools and peer back at the wall of rock that houses the lodging atop a precarious cliff. Located in Cape Neddick, on the outskirts of Ogunquit, it's one of the most dramatic vistas of the Maine coastline. The 2-story lobby and all rooms have blue carpeting, a nautical theme, and a premium oceanfront locale with mesmerizing views of the flat sea leading to the horizon. On premises, there's a 9,000 square foot luxury spa, infinity pool and hot tub, indoor lap pool, casual lobster-in-the-rough restaurant called Nubb's, and the more upscale Tiller restaurant, where you can dine on freshly caught lobster overlooking the jagged shoreline. There's also the opportunity to play 18 holes of golf at the adjacent golf course or venture out on guided kayaking, horseback riding, mountain bike riding, and lobstering excursions. Needless to say, kids don't get bored here.

destinationhotels.com/cliff-house

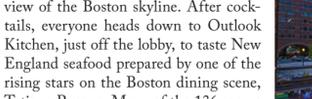


A multimillion-dollar renovation has transformed this favorite Maine hotel into something truly special.
COURTESY OF CLIFF HOUSE MAINE

EBEN HOUSE PROVINCETOWN, MASSACHUSETTS

Take a good close look at those colonial portraits in the main house hallway, the ones of a captain wearing false eyelashes and earrings or the older woman with a Polynesian tattoo on her arm, and you can't help but laugh and relax, realizing you have arrived in P'town. It also doesn't hurt that the inn is one of the few in town with its own parking lot. The Eben House is the second property in Provincetown owned by David Bowd and Kevin O'Shea and their emerging

brand, Salt Hotels. Behind the 1776 Federal-style red-brick exterior, expect the same level of comfort and style as their first property, Salt House Inn. Fourteen rooms are split between three adjacent homes creating an urban oasis, a stone's throw from the hustle and bustle of Commercial Street. With the addition of a pool this coming summer, you might never make it to the beach. ebenhouse.com



Eben House puts guests in the heart of Provincetown.
COURTESY OF EBEN HOUSE

THE ENVOY HOTEL BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

It's hard to top the locale of the Envoy, near Fort Point Channel in the expanding Seaport District. As soon as its sixth-floor rooftop bar opened, locals were lining up after work to savor the alluring view of the Boston skyline. After cocktails, everyone heads down to Outlook Kitchen, just off the lobby, to taste New England seafood prepared by one of the rising stars on the Boston dining scene, Tatiana Rosana. Many of the 136 rooms in the hotel offer the same exquisite view as the rooftop, especially the corner suite a floor below, Room 604. The spacious rooms have historic maps of the city painted on the glass doors that lead to the shower, flat screen televisions hidden into the wall, and large windows that bathe the room in sunlight.

theenvoyhotel.com



Boston views are one of the starring attractions at the Envoy.
COURTESY OF THE ENVOY HOTEL



Gilded offers Newport newbies the perfect retreat.
© RARE BRICK

GILDED NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

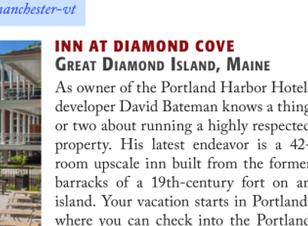
Set in a residential neighborhood, a minute walk to Bellevue Avenue and ten-minute stroll to the restaurants and shops on Thames Street and Bowen's Wharf, Gilded is perfectly situated for an overnight or two in Newport. Enter this 17-room Victorian home to find a stylized interior, heavy on the Beaux Arts charm and slanted spaces. A circular purple sofa sits in the front lounge across from the fireplace, while the full-size billiard table in the library and all the gold-plated

mirrors in the hallways evokes the gilded age era of Newport. Another nice touch is that each guest is given their own personal tablet during the stay to peruse recommended restaurants and sights. gildedhotel.com

HOTEL TACONIC MANCHESTER, VERMONT

One glance at Hotel Taconic's welcoming wraparound porch and large lawn area overlooking the expanse of Taconic Mountain and you already seem to breathe easier. However, to truly appreciate Kimpton Hotel's first foray into Vermont, you have to mingle with others at the nightly general manager's happy hour, preferably with your dog. Located on the road that leads to the celebrated Equinox Resort in Manchester Village, the Taconic has embraced Vermont with aplomb, from the oak furniture and walking sticks found in the room to Switchback Ale on tap and plates of Grafton Cheddar served at the property's restaurant, Copper Grouse. With a state-of-the-art fitness center, lap pool, complimentary use of the hotel's bikes, and yoga on the lawn, wellness is a priority. Be sure to also ask the front desk for a customized map of local hiking and running trails. The 87 accommodations include three stand-alone cottages that are ideal for families or couples traveling together.

www.kimptonhotels.com/stay/taconic-hotel-manchester-vt



Local food and those Vermont mountains give the Taconic a feel all its own.
COURTESY OF HOTEL TACONIC



Island living marks the scene at Diamond Cove.
COURTESY OF INN AT DIAMOND COVE

INN AT DIAMOND COVE GREAT DIAMOND ISLAND, MAINE

As owner of the Portland Harbor Hotel, developer David Bateman knows a thing or two about running a highly respected property. His latest endeavor is a 42-room upscale inn built from the former barracks of a 19th-century fort on an island. Your vacation starts in Portland, where you can check into the Portland Harbor Hotel, deposit your luggage, walk around town, and then get whisked away via ferry or water taxi to Great Diamond Island. Twenty minutes later, you arrive on the car-free island, the woes of the mainland far behind you. All rooms retain the original brick from Fort McKinley, now combined with hardwood floors, high ceilings, cozy bedding, an airy living room, and decks that overlook the heated outdoor pool. Miles of hiking and mountain bike trails weave through the adjacent woods to abandoned beaches and ruins of the fort, ideal for exploring. You'll want to stroll over to Diamond's Edge restaurant in nearby Diamond Cove to sample their lobster garlic mashed potatoes on the waterfront.

ON THE RIVER INN WOODSTOCK, VERMONT

Family-friendly inn might seem like an oxymoron. That is until you step foot into Woodstock's rambling 3-story On the River Inn and see kids in the downstairs game room playing air hockey and foosball while their parents grab a Vermont craft brew at the antique wooden bar or dine at the casual 506 Bistro. Everyone congregates outside at the fire pit for the requisite s'mores while peering down the Ottawaquchee River at the cows nibbling the grass at a nearby farm. All of the spacious 45 rooms face the river and a new annex features 5 two- and three-bedroom suites with full kitchen. With an indoor swimming pool and hot tub, ice skating rink, groomed cross-country ski trails, and close proximity to downhill skiing at Killington and Plymouth Notch, On the River Inn is quickly becoming a favorite winter getaway. ontheriverwoodstock.com

THE PRESS HOTEL PORTLAND, MAINE

Once the offices of Maine's largest newspaper, the Portland Press Herald, the 7-story Garrett Building in downtown Portland is now home to a Marriott Autograph Collection property that any journalist or lover of print can call home. Vintage typewriters dangle from one wall of the lobby, while behind the registration desk you'll find blocks of letterpress type. Be sure to step on to the scale that was once used to weigh bundles of newsprint in the fitness center downstairs. Newsprint touches continue along the hallway to your room, where walls are covered with actual headlines, like "Elderly Lobster Set Free." Across from City Hall, the 110-room hotel is close to all the restaurants, bars, and shops in town. thepresshotel.com



News junkies will love The Press Hotel.
IVIN SERBRAND PHOTOGRAPHY



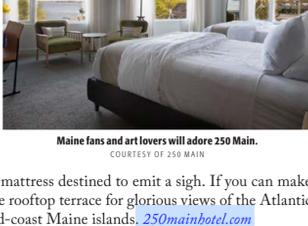
This former grand estate is now a Relais & Chateaux hotel.
©2016 CHIP RICCEL

SPICER MANSION MYSTIC, CONNECTICUT

Perched on a hill overlooking the Mystic town spires and waters of Long Island Sound, the former summer home of Captain Elihu Spicer fell into disrepair and was scheduled for demolition. Thanks to the Gates family of nearby Stonington, the estate was purchased, restored to its 1853 grandeur, and is now an 8-room Relais & Châteaux property. Enter this gem of a building and saunter into the Rose or Blue Salon and you'll immediately be wowed by the ceiling frescoes, inlaid wooden floors, original moldings, and towering doors. Then make your way up to the Widow's Walk on the fourth floor for vistas all the way to the Ocean House in Watch Hill, Spicer's sister property where guests are welcome to spend their days enjoying the beachfront locale. Service at this inn is impeccable from the innkeeper to the bellhop, but the highlight is the six-course prix fixe meal that starts in the salon with canapés and cocktails and ends in the intimate dining room. Talented chef Jennifer Backman takes the best locally sourced seafood and meats and places them artistically on Bernardaud china, guaranteed to seduce all senses. Paired with wines served in Baccarat crystal, be thankful that you can plopp down in that king-sized bed just up the stairs. spicermansion.com

250 MAIN ROCKLAND, MAINE

Don't let the nondescript, almost minimalist exterior of 250 Main fool you. Inside the welcoming and spacious lobby, you'll find local art on the walls, the latest copy of *Art New England* on coffee tables, and comfortable contemporary furniture where you can savor that complimentary glass of wine at happy hour. Opened last May, the 26-room boutique hotel will appeal to art lovers who can walk over to the nearby Farnsworth Art Museum and the new Center for Maine Contemporary Art. Rooms also come with the latest modern accouterments like heated towel rack, heated floors, rainforest shower heads, and a sumptuous mattress destined to emit a sigh. If you can make it out of bed in the morning, head up to the rooftop terrace for glorious views of the Atlantic and all those ferries heading out to the mid-coast Maine islands. 250mainhotel.com



Maine fans and art lovers will adore 250 Main.
COURTESY OF 250 MAIN



A regular contributor to *Yankee Magazine*, Steve Jermanok authored the "25 Best Beach Towns in New England" and "10 Best Winter Towns in New England" stories.

