

# Nantucket

By Sherrie Wilkolaski



Summer in Nantucket is what dreams are made of. This small island off the coast of Massachusetts is magical. From the moment I arrived, I knew I had found a piece of Heaven on Earth.

Nantucket was the getaway I was longing for. This trip had been booked back in early spring and given my hectic schedule, I couldn't wait to get there. I started my journey, leaving from Westchester County airport and upon arrival at the secured hanger, my cell phone lost its signal. I considered it to be a nice break and picked up a copy of a People Magazine to get caught up on the latest celebrity gossip. It was only an hour and fifteen minute flight on Cape Air and I figured I

could make some calls once I landed. Our flight left on time and once in the air, the view was breathtaking. It's not often you get such an incredible view on a flight and I did my best to enjoy it. I was filled with anticipation as we descended on to the runway at Tom Nevers Field. Relaxation, here I come!

Before leaving the airport, I decided to grab some extra cash and went to the ATM machine only to find it was temporarily out of order. No big deal, I'm on vacation. I asked the cab driver to take me to another ATM location on the way to the hotel, and off we went. As we made our way to The Summer House Cottages in Siasconset, the stress of everyday life started to drip off me like rain on a windshield. I opened the window

and felt the ocean air brush against my cheek and with every stroke, my smile grew larger until I realized I could feel the muscles stretching in my face-- brilliant. The cabbie made idle chitchat and after mentioning I was in the publishing business, she told me about one of her favorite memories growing up on the island. She said when the movie Jaws came out, you couldn't go anywhere without seeing someone with a copy of Peter Benchley's book, the inspiration for the film, in their hands. The publicist in me appreciated that.

It is about a 15-20 minute drive from the airport to Siasconset. Upon arrival, I immediately soaked in the ocean view. The Summer House Cottages sit on a bluff overlooking

the Atlantic and in the courtyard area, guests were sitting in their Adirondack chairs, enjoying cocktails and soaking in the sun. I walked from the street along the pebbled path, lined with lavender and hydrangeas, and peppered with butterflies. I checked in at the front desk and was welcomed to the property by a nice young man named Carl. He grabbed my luggage and escorted me to the Francesca cottage, my short-term Nantucket residence.

After unpacking and getting settled in, I decided to make a few phone calls and check emails. My cell was not getting any service and the wireless was working sporadically and at island speed. Again, I thought it wasn't the end of the world. I had posted my office was closed and

# Unplugged



Closing down The Summer House Restaurant

everyone of importance was aware of my travel plans. I had about two hours to kill before dinner and decided to take a walk. I ventured out of my cottage and walked along the side of the road overlooking the ocean. I headed toward the post office and little shops we had passed in my cab ride. It was only about a five minute walk and I found my way to the local market. Everything a vacationing traveler could want was available, groceries, cold drinks, prepared sandwiches, and a nice selection of Nantucket souvenirs. After a short stroll, I made my way back to my cottage and got ready for dinner.

My dinner plans included dining with property owner Danielle deBenedictis, Chuck Taylor, the

publisher of Famtripper, fellow travel writer Elizabeth Kochor and several other of Danielle's friends and guests. We had arranged to meet for cocktails at The Summer House Restaurant at 7pm. My cottage was only a few hundred yards from the restaurant and I promptly made my way across the courtyard. The entrance to the establishment is just off the front deck and the music's volume increased with each step I made. As I pushed the screen door open to the restaurant, something magical transpired. I felt as if I had stepped back in time. Live jazz music billowing throughout the bar and restaurant, and the chatter of vacationers, mixed with the clinking of utensils and glasses, made for an atmosphere that sounded like a symphony. Dim lights created just

enough of a haze to see everything clearly, but with enough shadow to make the room feel warm and cozy, and on the verge of sexy. There was a feeling of The Great Gatsby in the air.

I was greeted with a friendly hello as I met up with my Nantucket friends and I ordered a glass of wine. There was an older gentleman named Jay talking with our group and we were introduced. He was in his upscale beach dinner attire and his silver-white hair glistened in the candlelight. As he talked about his love of The Summer House, I imagined him in Nantucket reds, standing on the sidelines, cheering on the team with a big "SH" monogrammed on his cream summer sweater. So much passion-- he was filled with one story after another about time he has spent over decades at The Summer House. Not so much about Nantucket but of this place, from courting his late wife with vacations to win her over, to his daughter getting married on the beach and partying all night at the Beachside Bistro-- so many memories. He is such a huge fan of The Summer House he commissioned a painting of The Summer House Cottages to hang in his home in Florida. Then, his table was ready and he was gone.

Just as I turned back to join my group, a woman pointed to me and said with assertive enthusiasm, "You're Sherrie!" and I of course I couldn't deny it. It was Mary Rogan, a frequent guest and friend of Danielle's who was mistaken for me at the bar before my arrival. She extended her hand and properly introduced herself. She was on holiday with her son Billy Rogan, a guitarist and composer. As the maître d' was leading them off to their table, she invited me to attend Billy's live performance the following evening in the bar area. He was going to be playing with the pianist and she told me I would not be disappointed. I told her I would be there, and off they went.

After my lovely chat with Jay, and meeting the Rogans, our group was



Fluke Meunière, cauliflower two ways, lemon caper sauce, arugula

BELOW-RIGHT  
The Summer House Restaurant Caesar Salad



Danielle deBenedictis and Jay



Brian playing jazz for The Summer House Restaurant guests

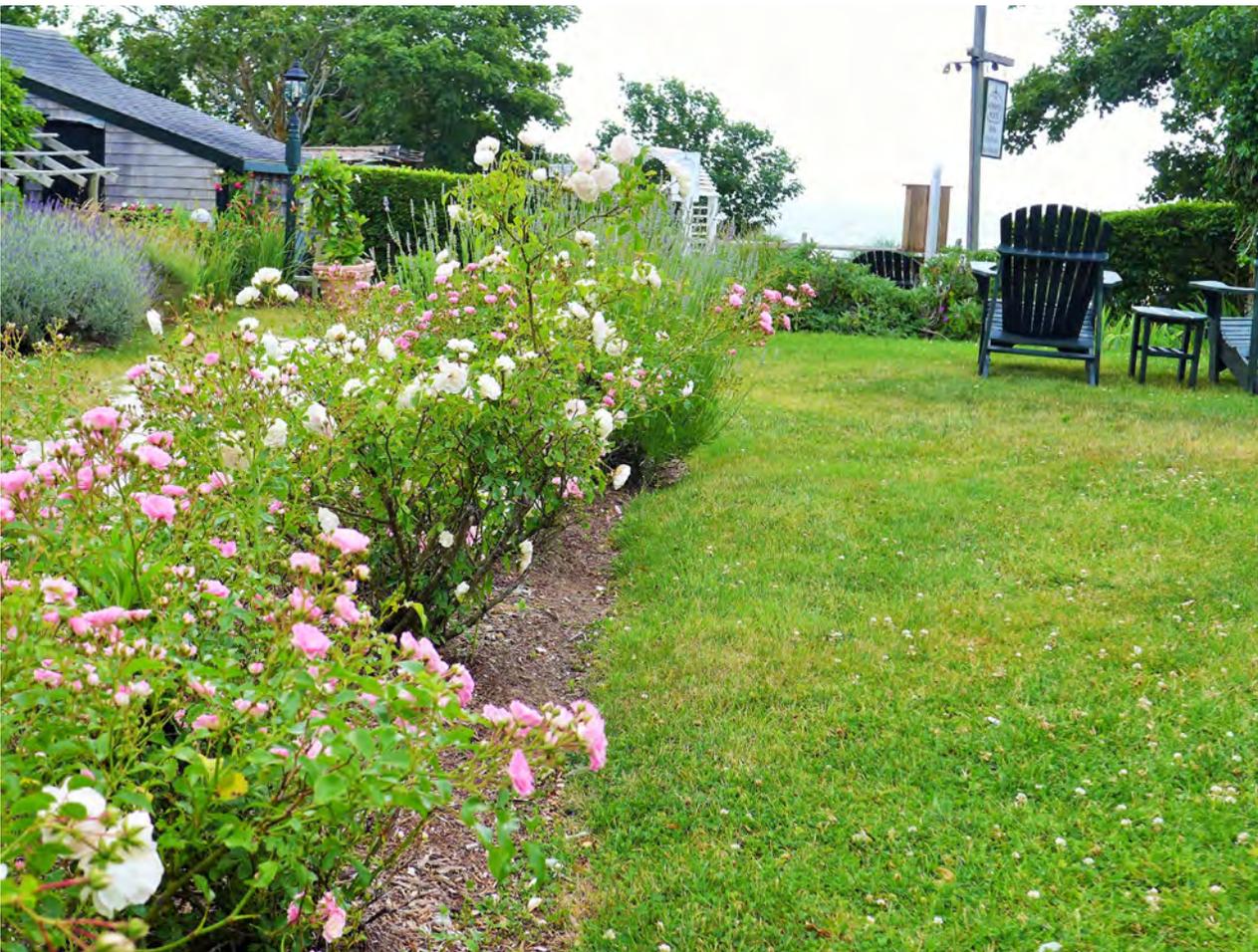
escorted to Danielle's favorite table and seated for dinner. The atmosphere continued to blossom as the evening went on. Each menu selection was delightful. Rumor had it that the fluke was a must-try, so I went for it. It was delicious! This summer flounder dish is a popular favorite amongst locals and guests. Throughout the meal, the conversation remained lively. Sitting to my right was Candice McDonough, Vice President, Publicity and Corporate Communications at New Line Cinema. Across from me sat Mary Beth McDade, reporter for KTLA Channel 5 News in Los Angeles, and she was charming. Both women make their way back to Nantucket's The Summer House several times a year. These Boston College grads cannot get enough of it. They were staying at the sister property, India Street Inn. They reminisced about previous visits and were already planning their return trips.

The evening went by so quickly that, after coffee and dessert, we realized we were the just about the last people in the restaurant. Other guests had moved on to the bar, still

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The Summer House  
Restaurant



enjoying the live piano music. We said our goodnights and Elizabeth and I made plans for the next day. As I nestled into my cozy bed and started to drift off to sleep, I realized that I had been unplugged all day and I wasn't stressed or missing it. With no emails, voicemails, text or Skype messages, it was no wonder why this paradise seemed to draw people back to it, time and again. After a few more days on the island, it was clear to me that this spot was truly enchanted and I started creating memories of my own.

The Summer House is a boutique collection of inns and restaurants and hotels in Nantucket. It operates the famous Summer House Cottages on a bluff overlooking the Atlantic in Siasconset, and four wonderful inns in Nantucket town. In addition, the Summer House operates three of Nantucket's finest restaurants, The Summer House Restaurant and Beachside Bistro in Siasconset, and 29 Fair Street in Nantucket Town. To learn more go to [thesummerhouse.com](http://thesummerhouse.com).

Thank you to The Summer House and Famtripper for hosting my trip.