



FROM Newport TO Nantucket

We had to go north for a wedding, but didn't want to just fly up and back a day or two later. I've always wanted to go to Newport and Erin has always wanted to go to Nantucket. So we did both.

NEWPORT ALWAYS INTRIGUED ME.

I knew it was famous for big sailboat races—but I couldn't reconcile how the smallest state in the union could have such a draw. I wanted to find out for myself.

We landed the day before in Hartford and spent a night with friends in New Haven before driving a couple hours east. The Pell Bridge brought us over Narraganset Bay and into Newport. Within minutes, it was clear we were someplace special.

The main road wrapped along the water's edge as we gawked from our rental car. Lots of people, probably many tourists, were roaming the sidewalk shops.

First stop, the recently renovated **International Tennis Hall of Fame**. It's in the middle of a busy block. However, once we walked back down the sidewalk and in the main entrance, it was like arriving in Oz. There were amateur players all around, wearing white on the club's 13 grass courts, some more manicured than others.

We then walked upstairs into the newly remodeled museum, roaming around the pictures, trophies and displays. There is also a Federer hologram that makes it appear Roger is in the room with you speaking about his love of tennis.

From there we stopped in to the **Discover Newport** headquarters on America's Cup Avenue (!), and that turned out to be a great idea. The Visitors Center and its staff is exactly what you want to find in a new area.

We booked an "historic mansion" tour with **Newport Travel Tours** that covered about 15 miles and 90 points

of interest. We were able to disembark at the Vanderbilt's 1895 summer home, "The Breakers." It's considered the "Grande Dame" of the dozens of mansions in Newport. The tour included an audio guide which always adds color. An hour later we came back out to resume our trolley tour.

We checked in for our night in Newport at a lovely bed & breakfast near the water called "**Pearls of Newport.**" It was a trio of Victorian and colonial-style buildings with a central courtyard and gardens. Our room was more like an apartment, with a large living room, bathroom and hallway to the bedroom. Very informal.

The location couldn't have been better. We were able to walk to dinner that evening and to breakfast in the morning. Pearls of Newport also offers a free breakfast, but we wanted to see a little more of the area before we departed.

We left Newport less than 24 hours after we arrived with a new appreciation for all it has to offer. From there, it was an hour and a half farther east to Hyannis to board the high-speed ferry to Nantucket. We were able to drop off our bags at the **Hy-Line** dock and park our car across the street without difficulty. We arrived in Nantucket in about an hour.

I've been to Nantucket several times since my sister has lived there since 1970—but not in the past 20 years. I was about to have a whole new appreciation for it.

We were able to walk from the dock to our bed & breakfast just off Main Street in "downtown" Nantucket. **The Roberts Collection** includes the



Roberts House, Manor House, Meeting House and the Gate House. It's all in walking distance of restaurants, shopping. We had a 2nd story room with a nice view of the busy cobblestone streets below. So glad we stayed here: great location, beautiful place and a nice complimentary continental breakfast in the morning.

One of the best decisions of the trip was to rent bikes from **Nantucket Bike Shops**. Manager Joe Conway was warm and helpful. It's the oldest and most experienced shop on the island and offers some great bikes and scooters. We cycled out east in the morning to the beautiful area of Siasconset (pronounced "skon-sit") and peddled east in the afternoon to Madaket Beach. Great exercise and beautiful scenery.

In between our 36-mile "Tour de Nantucket" (!) we stumbled upon a cute restaurant. "**Lola Burger**" is a casual place that features burger,



beer and a perfect atmosphere. Nice people. Great find.

All the locals said the nicest dinner restaurant on the island is called the **Languedoc Bistro**. It was the highlight of our trip! A 5-star meal in the heart of Nantucket. The restaurant—and attached inn—have had the same owners since 1976 and it's absolutely top-notch.

After two nights and three days, it was back to the boat and back to reality. Erin and I were each able to visit someplace new—Newport for me, and Nantucket for her, and we'll count this little vacation as one of our best ever! – Ray Collins