

Explore New England

Boston Sunday Globe July 16, 2006

On a roll

Through summer storms, from inn to inn, round gentle island loops



BLAIR WALKER FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE



PHOTOS BY GEOFF FORESTER/FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE



PHOTOS BY KARI J. BODNARCHUK/FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

WHITE MOUNTAINS

By Diane Daniel
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

TAMWORTH, N.H. — “At least there won’t be any bugs,” said the clerk at the general store. She had flashed a look of empathy (or was it pity?) as she saw me wandering the aisles, bike helmet in hand. It was a gloomy, cool, early May day, with foreboding clouds but only a light mist. So far. “Nice day for a bike ride, isn’t it?” I responded, to make sure she understood that I knew what I was about to do could be viewed as dumb. But I was excited, partly because I love cycling and also because I had paid for this three-day “Bike the Whites” inn-to-inn package and was trying to make the best of it. I had signed up in February for the first trip out, when spring rates made it a bargain and the weather had a chance of being cooperative. Alas, Mother Nature pulled a bait and switch. I biked the Whites without ever seeing their faintest

WHITE MOUNTAINS, Page M13

Heading for Silver Lake along Route 41, above, after visiting the Remick Country Doctor Museum and Farm in Tamworth, N.H., below.



By Tom Haines
GLOBE STAFF

HARDWICK, Vt. — Sitting at a wooden booth in a roadside restaurant, Blair Walker, rider of bikes and fixer of things, spies a roll of duct tape on the floor. “Speaking of duct tape,” he says to me, “you could use it to cover the air holes in your riding shoes.” Not a bad idea. If only it and the duct tape had arrived three hours earlier, before Walker and I pedaled into the dark deluge of a summer storm on the first of three rides in Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom. We wait for an iceberg lettuce salad and pizza, staples of the Northern New England diet. The dining room looks as though it has not been remodeled in decades, but on this night two burly carpet-layers begin carting away booths. Our pizza arrives. “Would you guys mind moving?” one worker asks. Timing is everything. 7:15 p.m. Cold rain splats and soaks: hair, skin, and cycling shorts layered with grit spun up from the road. No summer evening this. Get home and stay there. Pickup trucks barrel up Route 14, blowing water in their wake. In Albany, the stone monument to residents who fought in the Revolution, the War of 1812, and on down to Desert Storm squats, silent. Little purple flowers shudder.

NORTHEAST KINGDOM, Page M13

Passing abandoned rail cars on a track next to Route 5 in Vermont, top, north of Barnet and south of St. Johnsbury, on a 35-mile ride.

THE ISLANDS

By Kari J. Bodnarchuk
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

OAK BLUFFS — A sea breeze catches our backs and gently nudges us forward as we pedal down South Road on Martha’s Vineyard. The only sounds are the calls of a cardinal and several gulls, wind churning the leaves overhead, and the faint crunching of our bike tires as they spin along the pavement. As we round a bend in the road, a delightful scene reveals itself. To our left is a pastoral landscape that looks plucked from the Vermont countryside: a gray-shingled farmhouse surrounded by rolling fields marked by stone walls and grazing sheep. To our right, we spot a lone osprey nest high above the sea roses and scrub brush, with miles of ocean as a backdrop.



On Nantucket, the Star of the Sea Hostel, above right, and Howard Wright of Portland, Maine, stopping to stretch.

exploring Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket, and one of the most enjoyable, least expensive ways to take in these sights is on a bicycle.

Biking allows you to see the islands’ highlights at ISLANDS, Page M12

Paths for body and soul, for novice or not

► ISLANDS
Continued from Page M8

a pace suited for exploration. Stop for a photo, a picnic, a museum visit, or a chat with a local as you pedal through small towns and fishing villages, past old saltbox-style houses with split-rail fences, past lighthouses, cranberry bogs, and conservation land, and to many of the area's best beaches.

Whether you're climbing onto a bike for the first time in years, a recreational cyclist looking for an easy route to stretch the legs and explore, or an avid biker looking to log some hard-earned miles on more challenging terrain, you can find a route that suits you.

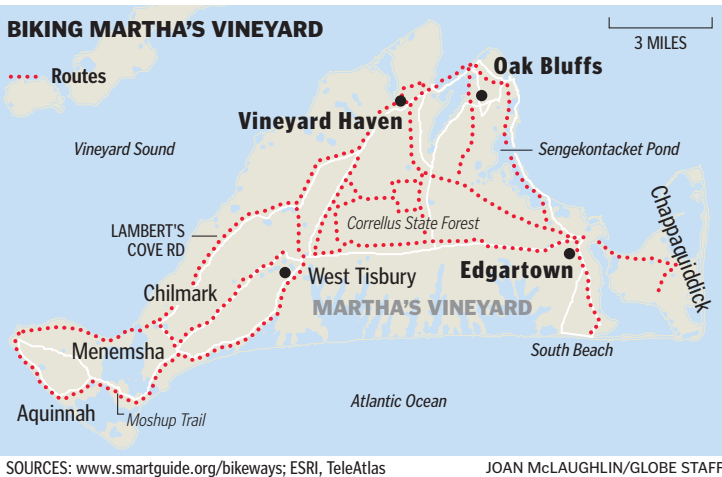
WONDERFUL WHEELING
Where's your favorite place to bike on the islands? Share your spots at explorenewengland.com.

The islands have more than 60 miles of well-developed, paved bike paths, separated from the roadways by grass or woodland areas, as well as miles of bike-friendly roads. The terrain ranges from perfectly flat paths along the ocean to heart-pounding hills that seem to roll for miles like giant ocean swells and, in the process, test your lung capacity, your quadriceps, and your vocabulary.

Looking for a healthy, relatively low-cost way to explore the islands, my biking companion and I decided to leave our car on the mainland and use pedal power, our feet, and the ferries to explore the islands' back roads and bike paths for a weekend.

There are many ferry options and routes for a trip to the islands. We decided to park on Cape Cod and do a loop from Hyannis to Nantucket to Martha's Vineyard, spending a day on each island before returning to Hyannis.

We packed lightly and brought our bikes. You can also take your pick of bikes from rental shops, which offer anything from good, all-around cruisers to high-performance mountain bikes for those who want to go off-road or tackle more rugged terrain. A good shop will match you with a bike that fits your body, riding style, experience, and destination. Children's bikes are also available.



SOURCES: www.smartguide.org/bikeways; ESRI, TeleAtlas
JOAN McLAUGHLIN/GLOBE STAFF

Rental typically includes a map, helmet, lock, handlebar basket, and, if requested, rear rack, plus delivery and pickup at your guesthouse, and roadside service. Standard bike rental runs \$20 to \$25 per day or per 24 hours (make sure to ask), with the exception of Edgartown Bicycles on Martha's Vineyard, which rents high-end road bikes for \$40-\$90 per day. It's worth bringing your own bell, especially during the busy summer season, and lights, if you plan to cycle at night.

We wanted to experience as much of the islands' varied terrain as possible, while stopping off at notable sites like Chilmark Chocolates on the Vineyard and Sankaty Head Light on Nantucket.

Nantucket has about 25 miles of paved bike paths that reach across the island from the outskirts of town, two of which connect on the east side of the island to form Nantucket's only significant loop. One of the joys of biking here is that it is relatively flat. The highest point is Folger Hill, only 109 feet above sea level, and Nantucket is just 3½ miles wide by 14 miles long. That means you can cover a lot in a day. And if your legs give out, you and your bike can catch a lift on the shuttle bus (\$1 or \$2) that runs along the main bike routes.

Nantucket's bed-and-breakfasts offer reasonable rates, some as low as \$65 per night, even in summer — especially if you visit midweek or don't mind a room with a shared bath. Another inexpensive option is the Star of the Sea, which we chose for its price

(\$28 per person, per night) and location. The historic hotel, originally a lifesaving station, is at the end of the Surfside Bike Path, just 3 miles from the ferry dock and overlooking Surfside Beach.

We began our adventure with a stop at Provisions on Straight Wharf to pick up sandwiches and snacks for the ride. (If you're heading to the west side of the island first, stop at Something Natural on Cliff Road.) After a visit to the Whaling Museum and a walk past the historic homes in Nantucket Town, we headed east for a 15-mile loop along the Milestone Road and Polpis Road bike paths.

On the mostly level Milestone Road path, we pedaled past cranberry bogs and open moorland, and through conservation land and arrived at Siasconset village. Siasconset ('Sconset for short) is a historic fishing village that features some of the island's oldest homes and a biker's favorite re-

ward, a market selling ice cream.

After lunch on 'Sconset Beach, we took a short detour to Sankaty Head Light at the end of Baxter Road before continuing on the loop along the Polpis Bike Path. This gently rolling route winds past marshland, bogs, ponds, and woodland, as well as the Nantucket Life-Saving Museum.

If you have energy to spare, as we did, or if you're looking for a shorter alternative, head west out of Nantucket Town along the Madaket Bike Path, which dead-ends at Madaket Beach, an ideal place to catch the sunset. There are water fountains along the path, but you won't find any shops, so stock up on snacks before you go.

Too tired to pack up after our Saturday ride, we spent the night on Nantucket and took an interisland ferry to the Vineyard early the next morning. Budget-minded bikers can stay at the Martha's Vineyard hostel, located along the bike path in West Tisbury, or in many of that town's reasonably priced B&Bs.

From Oak Bluffs, we completed an ambitious, 65-mile bike tour, looping around the island to take in sites and scenic views. Highlights included the gentle, 8-mile bike path along Beach Road, which links Edgartown and Oak Bluffs and overlooks the turquoise-colored State Beach on one side and the shallow, sprawling Sengokontacket Pond on the other. A bike bell is essential along this popular route in the summer.

After pedaling around Edgartown, with its stately sea captains'

homes and bustling wharf, you can take a short (6 miles round trip) detour to South Beach, one of the island's most spectacular sandy beaches. Or, continue another 8 miles along the well-marked bike path to West Tisbury, cutting through Correllus State Forest with its pine and scrub-oak forest, and passing the hostel.

We stopped for lunch, as many people do, at Back Alleys, an authentic sandwich shop with reasonably priced take-out that is popular with locals and visitors. Load up on calories here if you're heading up-island to Aquinnah (a 12-mile ride) through the bucolic and hilly countryside. The views of the 150-foot, multicolored cliffs at Aquinnah (formerly Gay Head) are worth the effort.

Beginning in mid-July, you'll be able to visit the Wampanoag tribe's new Aquinnah Cultural Center, which will provide tribal history, exhibits, Wampanoag art, jewelry, crafts, and special events.

During the summer, a bike ferry links West Basin Road in Aquinnah with the village of Menemsha, a worthwhile stop, especially later in the day when you can see a spectacular sunset from the west-facing beach. Grab a lobster roll or clams from one of the local fish shops and sit on the sea wall to watch the sun set. Then catch one of the Vineyard Transit Authority's bike-transporting buses back to your lodging (fare is \$1 per town). Or, from the cliffs of Aquinnah, follow the paved Moshup Trail alongside the dunes and retrace your pedal strokes back to West Tisbury, stopping at Chilmark Chocolates at 19 South Road. That's what we did.

We then took a slight detour on Lambert's Cove Road in Vineyard Haven for a wonderful 4-mile ride through a distinct landscape marked by kettle-hole ponds, and sassafras, beech, and black gum (also known as "beetlebung") trees. We finished our ride with a much-deserved triple cone from Mad Martha's in Vineyard Haven, and a final oceanside ride past East Chop Light in Oak Bluffs.

Contact Kari J. Bodnarchuk, a writer in Portland, Maine, at travelwriter@karib.us.

If you go . . .

Ferries
New England Fast Ferry
866-683-3779
www.mvexpressferry.com
Island Queen
508-548-4800
www.islandqueen.com
Hy-Line
800-492-8082
www.hy-linecruises.com
Falmouth Ferry Service
508-548-9400
www.falmouthferry.com
Steamship Authority
508-477-8600
www.steamshipauthority.com

Where to stay
Hostelling International-Nantucket, Star of the Sea Hostel
31 Western Ave., Nantucket
508-228-0433
www.capecodhostels.org
Open until Oct. 8. Members \$25 per person, per night (\$32 for a Saturday-only stay); nonmembers add \$3 per day; \$12.50 for children 12 and under.
The Nesbitt Inn
21 Broad St., Nantucket
508-228-0156

A Victorian-style bed-and-breakfast and Nantucket's oldest inn a five-minute walk from Steamboat Wharf. Rooms \$95-\$160 in season; \$65-\$120 off season.

Hostelling International-Martha's Vineyard
Edgartown-West Tisbury Road 525 West Tisbury
888-901-2087
www.capecodhostels.org

Open until Oct. 8. Members \$22 per person, per night (\$32 for Saturday-only stay); nonmembers add \$3 per day; \$11 for children 12 and under.

The Red Hat Bed and Breakfast
629 Edgartown/West Tisbury Road, West Tisbury
508-696-7186
www.theredhat.com
Rooms \$100-\$110.

Bike rentals
Young's Bicycle Shop
6 Broad St., Nantucket
508-228-1151
www.youngsbicycleshop.com
Edgartown Bicycles
212 Upper Main St., Edgartown
508-627-9008
www.edgartownbicycles.com

Cape Cod. A Short Trip To Far Away



Holiday Inn®
Hyannis, Ma
Grand Opening Special

- Cape Cod's Newest Hotel
- 100% Renovated
- Kids Eat Free 12 and Under
- Free Wireless High Speed Internet
- Oversized Indoor Heated Pool

Ask for Grand Opening Rate

*\$139 for a standard room. Based on availability of rate. Limited rooms available. Tax not included. Does not apply to groups. Offer good through 7/31/06.

1127 Route 132 • Hyannis, MA 02601
508-775-1153 • 1-800-HOLIDAY
www.holidayinn.com/hyannisma



CAPE COD PACKAGE
starting at \$499

INCLUDES:

- 2 nights accommodations
- Breakfast for 2 (two days) and Dinner for 2
- Admission to JFK Museum and HyLine Ferry trip to Martha's Vineyard or Nantucket
- Voucher for the Seabreeze Gift Shop
- A Cape Cod Welcome Gift

* Based on availability. Rates subject to change without notice and may vary on holidays & select weekends. Rates are per package, double occupancy. Taxes not included, upgrades available for a surcharge.

CAPE CODDER RESORT & Spa
(888) 297-2200
Rte. 132 & Bearse's Way, Hyannis

Reserve online... www.CapeCoddorResort.com

Make a splash at our Exclusive Indoor Wave Pool complete with water slides, whirlpool, sauna & more! Other amenities include Full-service spa and 2 delightful restaurants

On the Ocean & in your Budget!

Directly on the ocean. Relax in our indoor pool and hot tub. We offer dramatic loft suites with cathedral ceilings and deluxe rooms with wet bars or efficiencies.

Ocean Mist

97 So. Shore Drive, So. Yarmouth, MA 02664
Call for details. Subject to availability
Managed by TFG Hotels & Resorts, Inc.

Deluxe Rooms from:
\$189.00

Loft Suites from \$239.00

Valid until 9/3/06
Weekends, Holidays and School Vacations Higher

The perfect waterfront spot on Cape Cod for couples and families.

FOR RESERVATIONS
800-248-MIST
or 508-398-2633
www.capecodtravel.com/oceanmist

A BIT OF IRELAND ON CAPE COD

OUR GREAT SUMMER GETAWAY PACKAGE

• Three full breakfasts
• Two 5-course choice-of-the-menu dinner per person featuring lobster, steak and prime rib.
ANY 4 DAYS/3 NIGHTS...
\$205.00

Excl. Holiday Periods • Effect to 9/1 Per person, double occupancy

INDOOR POOL • WHIRLPOOL • GIFT CERTIFICATES • LIVE IRISH ENTERTAINMENT

IRISH VILLAGE

Rte. 28, West Yarmouth, MA 02673
Toll Free 1-800-244-9692 or (508) 771-0100
www.capecod-irishvillage.com

Suite Vacation at the Gull Wing!
Newly Renovated!

Spread out with your family and relax! All with wet bars, microwaves & refrigerators. Indoor Pool, Outdoor Pool, Whirlpool, Sauna, Coffee Shop and Game Room.

SUMMER RATE
From **\$99** Sun.-Thurs. Per Night for two Plus Tax • 2 Kids FREE Weekends Higher

Gull Wing Suites

822 Main St. S. Yarmouth, MA 02664
1-508-394-9300
1-877-984-9300
WWW.GULLWINGHOTEL.COM
Rent a Suite for the price of a room!

Summer. Family. Memories.

1-bedroom villas from \$245*/night

Private beach & sparkling pools.
Complimentary family activities.
Kids' programs.
Endless recreation.
Everything else under the sun.

Call 800.343.6074 or visit www.oceanedge.com today to book our special Summer rate.

OCEAN EDGE RESORT & CLUB ON CAPE COD
"A ClubResorts Destination"

*Subject to availability, some restrictions apply, valid through 9/5/06

WATERFRONT



Cape & Islands Sampler
from \$179.50* per night

- 2 Nights on Falmouth Harbor/Waterfront
- 2 Ferry tickets to Martha's Vineyard
- \$50 Certificate to Mashpee Commons with over 90 unique shops.

Spacious Hotel rooms with refrigerators and microwaves. Suites with whirlpool & fireplaces. Indoor/Outdoor Pool.

InnSeason Resorts
The Northeast Experience™
(866) 873-2766
www.InnSeason.com

*Midweek, 2 night minimum. Subject to availability. Effective thru 9/03/06.

CUDDLE & BUBBLE
IN A JACUZZI • BUILT FOR 2

From \$99. Per Night
Mid Week Arrivals Includes Discount Fun Book & Souvenir Mugs

2 NIGHT WEEKEND PKG. INCLUDES SUNDAY BRUNCH and a GAS REBATE of \$20

Buy a \$200 Gift Card and Receive a FREE Gift Certificate

Cape Cod & The Islands Summer Super Saver Pkg.
Meals, Island Trip or Whale Watch
3 Nights From \$498 for two, Gas Rebate of \$50. with your 3 Night minimum pkg.

INTERNATIONAL INN
1-877-5-CUDDLES
www.cuddles.com

Hunter's Green Motel

- Indoor Heated Pool • Giant Indoor Whirlpool Bath
- Room Phones • REFRIGERATORS
- Remote CCTV • HBO/ESPN

SUMMER PACKAGES

3 Nights **\$240** | 4 Nights **\$315**

Rates Effective July 7 to August 19 • Includes Tax
Weekend/Holiday Periods Higher

553 Main St. (Route 28) W. Yarmouth, MA 02673
1-800-775-5400 • 508-775-5400
www.capecodmotel.com

The Boston Globe
The Pulse of Boston