

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

Travel + Leisure names Vermont resort one of the best in the world

By Christopher Muther
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Vacations and getaways have been shelved by many apprehensive travelers because of COVID-19, but for those still looking for local trips, there's a spot of good news. According to the readers of Travel + Leisure magazine, five of the top 15 resort hotels in the continental United States are located in New England. Rabbit Hill Inn, located in Lower Waterford, Vt., was a big winner in the travel glossy's annual reader poll.

Rabbit Hill Inn, which labels itself as a “Deliciously romantic Vermont experience,” was named the top resort hotel in the Northeast, the number three resort in the country, and the number 27 resort hotel in the world. In its write-up of the inn, Travel + Leisure editors said “The 19-room lodge has everything readers want from a luxe, quintessentially New England stay.” It's the second year in a row that Rabbit Hill has earned the top spot on the list.

Also scoring high was perpetual favorite **Twin Farms in Barnard, Vt.** It was named the second best resort in the Northeast, number eight in the United States, and number 93 in the world. “Verdant farmland and woods surround Twin Farms, in central Vermont, where modern life can feel like a distant memory,” the magazine wrote.

While New England resort hotels fared well, Boston's city hotels were primarily snubbed in the survey, which was completed before the coronavirus pandemic nearly shutdown the travel industry. **The Row at Assembly Square in Somerville** landed in the number five spot on the list of the top 15 US city hotels. Unlike previous years, there was no list ranking Boston hotels. Boston also missed the list of the top cities in the United States. (Charleston, S.C., was ranked top by Travel + Leisure readers.)

In addition to Rabbit Hill Inn and Twin Farms, the **Chanler at Cliff Walk in Newport, Wequasset Resort & Golf Club in Harwich**, and the **Vanderbilt, Auberge Resorts Collection in Newport** also placed in the top 15 resort hotels in the continental United States.

The entire list of winners can be found at www.travelandleisure.com/worlds-best.

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The Rabbit Hill Inn at night in Lower Waterford, Vt.



The pond at Twin Farms in Barnard, Vt.



The lobby at the Row Hotel at Assembly Row in Somerville.



Wequasset Resort & Golf Club in Harwich.

HERE

TIME TO REVISIT THIS MUSEUM

The Discovery Museum in Acton reopens July 28 and will be free for all visitors, meaning you can wander through at your own pace and not feel obligated to linger longer than necessary. The museum's Free To Play program extends through Aug. 23. Check out the Discovery Treehouse, a 550-square-foot treehouse reachable by a walkway; Discovery Woods, where you'll find a rain garden, beaver lodges, a nest swing, and a climbing net; and Adventure Hill, which has boulders for climbing and scrambling, a slide, and a fort. Don't miss the new da Vinci moveable bridge, the first in a series of Leonardo da Vinci-designed outdoor exhibits that will be installed onsite this summer. Leave time for lawn games and exploring trails on neighboring Great Hill Conservation Land. Take note: You must wear a mask inside the museum, get tickets in advance, and follow one-way traffic flow inside the building. 978-264-4200, www.discoveryacton.org

READ ALL ABOUT NEW ENGLAND

Longtime Boston Globe contributor Steve Jermanok took advantage of his unintended Covid sabbatical to publish a book with more than 700 stories he has written for the Globe, Yankee Magazine, Men's Journal, and more. Discover 12 country inns where you can get pampered, 10 classic New England hikes, eight summer drives, six hidden art gems, and some of the region's top lobster and clam shacks in “New England in a Nutshell,” now available through Amazon and local



bookstores, such as Brookline Booksmith. Jermanok plans to use half the book's proceeds to benefit the one-of-a-kind businesses he has highlighted in his stories — and to benefit you. Purchase a book and e-mail steve@activetravels.com to be entered into a raffle. If you win, you may get a gift card for dinner at the restaurant that invented the fried clam, a bike ride around Portland with Summer Feet Cycling, a membership to the Peabody Essex Museum, or a getaway to Bar Harbor's Saltair Inn. www.amazon.com/-/e/B089VTTJBX

THERE

TRAVEL THE EAST COAST BY TRAIN

Need to travel down the East Coast? Skip the rental car (or driving your own vehicle) and jump on a train. Amtrak, which runs affordable and relatively quick service between Boston and Washington, D.C., has incorporated safety measures and extended no-change-fee offers through Aug. 31. Travel from Boston to New York

(\$29/\$59), Philadelphia (\$29/\$69), and Washington, D.C. (\$49/\$69) on the company's regular Northwest Regional service or its Acela high-speed service. Book now through July 31 for travel through Sept. 12. Amtrak has reportedly limited bookings to allow for physical distancing and boosted its cleaning protocols. All cars have WiFi and electrical outlets at seats, while the Acela first class service includes complimentary food and beverages. 800-872-7245, www.amtrak.com/routes



WEBSITE HELPS YOU FIND SAFE HOTELS

Looking to stay in a hotel soon, but worried about your health safety? Tripadvisor has launched a new Travel Safe tool that lets you find out what steps hotels and restaurants are taking to help keep visitors safe. For instance, the tool includes health and safety checklists (such as sanitation procedures, mask-wearing guidelines, and social-distancing policies) that are provided by hotels and restaurants; a new search filter that helps you find properties that follow these strict procedures; and invaluable traveler reviews in which previous visitors weigh in on their experiences. When you search for hotels in Boston, for instance, you will see a “Covid 19” filter. Check the box underneath that says, “Properties taking safety measures” and you will get a list of hotels that have outlined their Covid-related safety protocols. That way, you can see which hotel is sanitizing all linens in a

high-temperature wash, for instance, and regularly cleaning the common areas. www.tripadvisor.com/travel-safe

EVERYWHERE

FEND OFF THE SHARKS WITH THIS

Hot summer days may draw you to the beach, but strap on a Sharkbanz for peace of mind when you take a dip. Sharks have a unique and powerful electrical sense called “electroreception.” This device



uses magnetic technology to cause a highly unpleasant sensation that causes sharks to turn away — it doesn't hurt, but it's like someone shining a bright light in your face in the dark. The Sharkbanz has been tested on predatory shark species by marine biologists. To use it, just strap the watch-like device to your wrist or ankle (or both) and head into the water to paddle, surf, or swim. It works for anyone 5 and older and all stages of cool: Even Barack Obama was spotted wearing a Sharkbanz while paddleboarding in Hawaii. www.sharkbanz.com

KARI BODNARCHUK