

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

ASK AWAY

Q We're planning a fall week-end getaway and would like to tie it in with a fun New England festival. What are your favorites?

Dan Rawling
Kittery Point, Maine

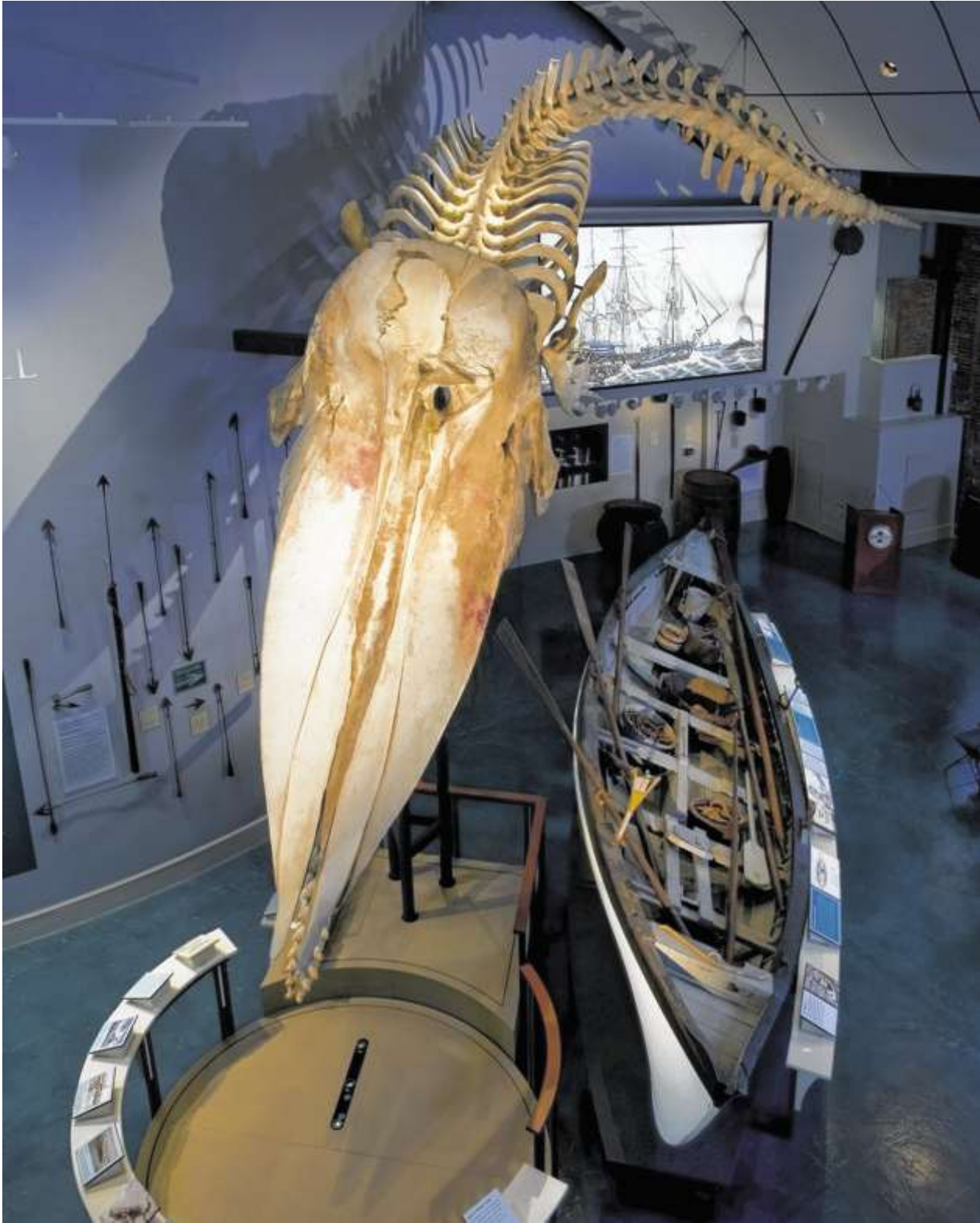
A There are so many cool festivals and so few weekends. But, if we have to choose, here are four we love. The Big E (www.thebige.com, Sept. 13-29), the largest fair in the Northeast, is a 17-day extravaganza featuring rides, a circus, big-name entertainment, animals and food, held at the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield. The Wellfleet Oyster



Festival (www.wellfleetoysterfest.org, Oct. 19-20) is a family-friendly, two-day event with live music, walking tours, cooking demonstrations, kids' activities, and the lively Shuck Off competition, plus the Cape Cod setting is gorgeous in the fall. The 39th Annual Apple Harvest Festival, in Glastonbury, Conn., (www.glastonburychamber.net, Oct. 18-20) will feature an arts and crafts show with more than 125 artist booths, along with a pie-eating contest, beer garden, petting zoo, amusement rides, and live entertainment. We like the quaint and old-fashioned Northeast Kingdom Annual Fall Foliage Festival (www.nekchamber.com, Sept. 30-Oct. 5), when six small communities each host their own unique, daylong event, including concerts, arts and crafts, historical tours, live entertainment, pancake breakfasts, and community suppers.

DIANE BAIR AND
PAMELA WRIGHT

Send your questions on New England travel to askglobetravel@gmail.com.



A 46-foot sperm whale skeleton at the Whaling Museum on Nantucket.

JEFF ALLEN

SECOND LOOK

Pass lays Nantucket history at your feet

NANTUCKET — An all-access pass makes visiting the island's historical attractions convenient and economical. Offered by the Nantucket Historical Association, the pass is good for one visit to each of its sites in 2013, including the Whaling Museum, with its 46-foot sperm whale skeleton; Old Mill; the 1686 Jethro Coffin "Oldest House" and Garden; Old Gaol; Greater Light; Fire Hose-Cart House; and Quaker Meeting House. The pass allows for multiple reentries to the Whaling Museum during the course of one day. For example, visitors can start with a morning viewing of the Ric Burns film "Nantucket," which chronicles the island's history from its original Wampanoag Native American population to its international significance as the whaling capital of the world and eventual rebirth as an art and resort colony, then head out for a bite to eat at a downtown restaurant, and return in the afternoon to view this year's exhibition, "Nantucket Legends: Foggy Facts and Fictions." Adults \$20, age 65 and over and students \$18, ages 6-17 \$5. 508-228-1894, www.nha.org

ELLEN ALBANESE



FOOD FIND

The beautiful setting reaches to the plate too

YORK HARBOR, Maine — It would be easy for the Dockside restaurant to rely solely on its waterside setting. It is, after all, gorgeous, nestled on the shores of Harris Island with views of a boat-filled harbor, rocky coastline, and island-studded ocean. But chef Dennis LaPlante's dishes are equally stunning.

Take the creamy mozzarella, made by LaPlante early each morning, and served with a drizzle of aged balsamic vinegar, or the piping hot crock of house-made white bean hummus, or the peekytoe native crab and wild mushroom cakes served with toasted corn arugula salad. "I think the best way to approach food is with heart and honesty," says LaPlante. "Start with the best product and keep it genuine."

LaPlante's simple yet creative approach shines in such house favorites as the thickly-herbed, deceptively simple, pan-roasted native cod served alongside a cauliflower hash brown, and the chef's personal favorite, slow-braised chicken with homemade gnocchi (pictured above). There is one dish we hope never leaves the menu: drunken lobster sauté — butter-poached, just-trapped lobster paired with crisp pan-seared scallops, served with a light Irish whiskey and shallot cream sauce.

DOCKSIDE 22 Harris Island, 207-363-2722, www.docksidegq.com, entrees \$19.50-\$32.50

DIANE BAIR AND
PAMELA WRIGHT

HERE

EXPLORE, SLEEP, AND SAVE AT AMC HUTS

Stay at any Appalachian Mountain Club lodge in Maine and New Hampshire this fall and save 30 percent. All lodges offer doorstep access to miles of easy to challenging hiking trails. In Maine, fly fish for wild brook trout, visit waterfalls, and paddle local lakes near your private cabin. New Hampshire's Highland Center Lodge offers free map and compass clinics, and nature walks to look for animal tracks. Rates start at \$58 per person per night for nonmembers; minimum three-night stay. All lodges include breakfast and dinner; the Maine lodges also provide a trail lunch and free use of canoes and kayaks. Offer good Sunday through Thursday, Sept. 3-19 and Oct. 13-31; book by Aug. 30 using FOLIAGE1 code. 603-466-2727, www.outdoors.org/falldeals

CELTIC ARTISTS PERFORM AT MAINE FESTIVAL

Musicians, singers, storytellers, and dancers from across the Celtic world perform in western Maine during the first-ever Crossroads International Celtic Festival, Sept. 11-15. Catch per-



formances by Irish musicians David Munnely and Mick Conneely, New Brunswick's indie-folk trio Les Hay Babies (below left), and Boston-based folk singer Liz Simmons. The festival features 18 performances in the scenic towns and villages of Rangeley, Stratton, Carrabassett Valley, Farmington, Fryeburg, and Bethel, among others. Tickets \$15-\$20 per person, per performance, except for the Gawler Family show in the Carrabassett Valley, which runs \$30 (for performance) to \$110 (for performance, dinner, and lodging at the Stratton Brook Hut, a three-mile hike from the trailhead). www.crossroadscelticfestival.com

THERE

SEATTLE'S NEW PAY SYSTEM FOR PARKING

Pay for parking in downtown Seattle using your phone. Create a PayBy-Phone account by downloading an app or calling a toll-free number and providing your license plate number, cellphone number, and credit card info. As soon as you find an on-street parking spot, use your phone to pay for your spot by calling the PayBy-Phone number or using the app and providing the spot's unique location number. You will pay a 35-cent transaction fee, but won't need to fuss with pay stations or displaying your receipt. The best part: Receive text message updates on parking time expiration. Also extend your parking if you haven't reached the time limit. 888-515-7275, www.paybyphone.com

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR'S NEWEST INN SITS AT WORLD'S END

Look through the wall-to-wall, floor-to-ceiling windows of the new Fogo Island Inn and you are likely to see icebergs floating by and whales feeding

alongshore. The 29-suite inn stands on the dramatic and rocky coastline of Fogo Island off Newfoundland and Labrador's northeast coast. The furniture, fixtures, and textiles throughout the inn were crafted by local carpenters or artisans, and most rooms and public areas have wood-burning stoves. Enjoy the fine-dining restaurant, lounge, gym, and cinema, or head for the wood-fired saunas and hot tubs on the rooftop for star-gazing. Rates start at \$535, based on double occupancy, including meals, gratuities, and nonalcoholic drinks. 709-658-3444, www.fogoislandinn.ca

FAR-FLUNG MOUNTAIN BIKE TOURS ATTRACT BEGINNERS

Sacred Rides, a Toronto-based mountain biking adventure company, has launched 13 singletrack tours to Peru, Patagonia, Slovenia-Croatia, British Columbia, and Utah this year. The bonus: Tours are geared to beginners. A majority of the multidiscipline trips combine mountain biking with yoga or rafting, while the Mexico program caters to active families. Trips are rated 1-10 in skill level and 1-5 on a fit-

ness scale. The 3- to 10-day tours start at \$579 per person, based on double occupancy, with lodging, activities, most meals, guides, and luggage and airport transfers included. 888-423-7849, www.sacredrides.com

EVERYWHERE

BOOKLET OFFERS HANDY TIPS ON WOMEN'S TRAVEL

When Harriet Lewis, co-owner of Boston-based Overseas Adventure Travel, realized that seven out of 10 of her tour company's participants are women, and that many are solo female travelers, she pulled together 101 Tips, a free booklet geared to this market. Lewis collected ideas from her female employees, guides, and travelers, and from her own experiences, and then included her top picks in this helpful, pocket-size resource. Learn about trip preparation, packing, money, transportation, health, safety and security, and etiquette. A reference section includes time zones, a conversion chart, a foreign phrase guide, and packing essentials, among other info. Anec-

dotes about some of history's most remarkable female travelers are sprinkled throughout. 800-873-5628, www.adventures.oattravel.com/101tips

TURN YOUR IPAD BAG INTO A MOBILE DESK

Strotter's new urban-chic Platforma messenger bag turns into a table-like platform for an iPad in a flip, twist, and a snap. Boston-based entrepreneur Serge Pytkovas created the bags after watching a man, who was standing on the T, drop his iPad when the train suddenly braked. With the leather and nvlon Platforma bag converted



into a mobile desk, you can type on your tablet using both hands without worrying that your iPad will tumble. Quickly reconfigure the bag by lengthening the shoulder strap and reclipping one end of it to another ring on the bag, and then placing your iPad onto the newly created shelf. Your iPad snaps into a plastic protective case that has magnets on the backside; these magnets then attach to others on the bag's "desktop." \$170. 617-657-4509, www.strotter.com

KARI BODNARCHUK

