

SundayTravel

WITH: NEW ENGLAND DESTINATIONS

BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE SEPTEMBER 13, 2020 | BOSTONGLOBE.COM/TRAVEL

Six hours south of Boston, the year 1963 is a thriving vacation destination

WILDWOOD, N.J., IS A BEACH TOWN WHERE TIME HAS ALMOST STOOD STILL



PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER MUTHER/GLOBE STAFF



Wildwood, N.J., has the largest concentration of post-WWII resort architecture in the United States. Visitors still flock to see, and stay in, its fanciful 1950s-era motels with neon signs. Top: Beach boxes can be rented seasonally.



By Christopher Muther
GLOBE STAFF

WILDWOOD, N.J. — The motel room looked like a place where Rob and Laura Petrie would have come for a weekend escape, assuming Millie would be able to watch little Ritchie. The table lamps were straight out of the Atomic Age, and the bathroom was tiled in green and outfitted with salmon pink fixtures.

But the best part of this time capsule room at the Caribbean Motel — aside from the lime green ceiling — was the nondescript knob on the wood-paneled wall. I had no idea what the knob did, so naturally I turned it. Like magic, Dionne Warwick's voice descended from a speaker in the green ceiling, inquiring if I knew the way to San Jose. Sweet Barbara Eden in a bottle! I had found midcentury paradise.

The Wildwoods, a collection of five boroughs and cities at the southern tip of the Jersey shore, draws families with its wide beaches, 2-mile boardwalk, and amusement park. It came to life as a post-war, family friendly destination courtesy of a new highway called the New Jersey Turnpike. Bobby Rydell even had a hit with a song called "Wildwood Days" in 1963. But now it also draws another crowd: those who drool over the fanciful architecture of 1950s-era motels with neon signs that were once used to attract road-weary families. Miami has its art deco hotels, Martha's Vineyard has the gingerbread cottages, Cape May has its grand Victorian homes, and

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Black travelers want the travel industry to stop taking them for granted

By Jon Marcus
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Chaloea Williams doesn't see anywhere near enough people who look like her in the front offices or advertising of an industry she patronizes heavily.

Williams, an attorney in Boston, is Black and, at 31, has jetted all over the world. African-Americans collectively spend \$63 billion a year on travel.

Yet they're vastly underrepresented in the management ranks of travel companies and the marketing campaigns those companies use to promote themselves. They've been discriminated against when booking trips, experienced racism while on them, and avoided altogether destinations they considered unwelcoming.

"I feel taken for granted," said Williams, who said she spends as much time researching other Black travelers' experiences



Travelers on a trip to Bali through Dipaways, which runs group and private tours primarily for Black travelers.

of places she visits as she does the best rates and attractions.

Now a formal campaign is pushing travel brands and destination management organizations to stand behind their public expressions of support for

racial justice with greater diversity and representation.

"The travel industry should reflect the world it represents," said Davida Wulff-Vanderpuije, a Black travel writer and founder of the blog Wonders of Wonders.

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LENA TASHJIAN

On coffee, culture, and being a vegan

Toronto-based nutritionist and cookbook author Lena Tashjian is looking forward to resuming her book tour and coming to Boston once the pandemic is over. In the meantime, she has teamed up with Boston-based Oldways, in a heritage cooking webinar, to highlight some of the recipes from the recently released “The Vegan Armenian Kitchen Cookbook.” Tashjian, 34, said she has been getting “really positive” feedback on her cookbook — especially from younger Armenians who are veganizing traditional Armenian recipes for their parents. “One of the things that I wanted to show in this cookbook is that you can be an Armenian who loves your culture, who loves your traditions, who loves eating delicious food with family . . . and can do so without animal products,” she said. “Most of the recipes have stories and traditions associated with them, which I write about, and people seem to really like that.” We caught up with Tashjian (whose cooking demonstration can be found at m.youtube.com/channel/UCBKd9EayJTku-nQ-ixI_8sSg) to talk about all things travel.

Favorite vacation destination?

Armenia. Even though I lived there for quite some time and continue to visit, there is still so much more I want to see and do. The nature and ease of getting around makes it ideal for hiking, camping, and just being outdoors in general — even during the colder months. The kindness and warmth of the people also adds so much to the experience, and that along with all the hidden gems, beautiful architecture, and rich history make it truly an unforgettable destination every time.

Favorite food or drink while vacationing?

I love to learn about and try the local staples of any country I visit, but I do find myself particularly excited about the traditional breads and seasonal fruits. The latter tends to be hydrating and refreshing, which is usually very much needed after a long plane or train ride.

Where would you like to travel to but



Nutritionist and cookbook author Lena Tashjian admiring a pomegranate in Greece.

haven't?

I would love to visit and travel throughout Romania. It's a country I've been naturally drawn to and curious about for so long, and when looking at pictures or seeing aspects of it in documentaries or movies, it looks so beautiful in terms of nature and architecture, and is full of so much culture and history. I am also particularly interested in visiting Gherla, formerly known as Armenopolis, due to the Armenian influence on the city.

One item you can't leave home without when traveling?

Among the essentials are my notebook and pen. I always have a small notebook handy when I travel — including on day trips within a country, as I tend to write about my travel experiences and don't want to rely on memory alone to document. Some of the best insights I've ever heard, as well as sayings or quotes, are . . . from my travels, and I love jotting them down in the moment and reflecting and/or writing about them later. Some of the articles I have written were based on notes such as these; when I visited an area with no intention to document it, but ended up with pages upon pages of notes that I felt compelled to turn into a story. I learned to simply keep a notebook with me at all times, and it has become an essential item in general.

Aisle or window?

I always prefer the window seat. It's nice to have the option of seeing the view on daytime flights, and based

purely on comfort, I enjoy being able to lean toward or rest in a corner, and, if possible, try and sleep.

Favorite childhood travel memory?

When my entire family — including aunts, uncles, and cousins — would do day trips in local parks and spend the entire day there. They were day trips that were so memorable since we were all together, surrounded by the beauty of nature (usually around a lake), enjoying music, and having an epic barbecue.

Guilty pleasure when traveling?

Giving myself caffeine-induced energy, especially for the first bit of the trip to make up for the jet lag. I enjoy coffee occasionally, but do limit it, since it can make me feel jittery and very thirsty. However, on trips — especially in countries where I enjoy the preparation method — I tend to give in to the coffee temptation and enjoy it quite a bit.

Best travel tip?

Try and learn some of the language, get to know locals instead of just fellow travelers, and make sure to try the staples (both food and drink) of the country you are visiting. It can be tempting — especially when traveling with friends or family, to remain somewhat in a bubble, but getting to know a location or country's “feel” is so essential and can make the trip all the more genuine, memorable, and impactful.

JULIET PENNINGTON

TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTER

After a Singapore Airlines flight cancellation, where's my refund?

By Christopher Elliott
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Q. I booked a flight on Singapore Airlines for my husband to join me on a business trip from Singapore to Penang, Malaysia, last year. Unfortunately, due to low visibility from the thick haze, Singapore Airlines canceled our flight.

A Singapore Airlines agent promised us a refund if we submitted a refund request on the airline's website. We filled out the form, but no one contacted us. We tried again and again to contact the airline but didn't hear back.

Interestingly, the flight ticket that I booked via my company for my business trip was refunded promptly. But the ticket I bought through the Singapore Airlines website wasn't. I've tried to reach out to Singapore Airlines on Facebook, but to no avail. Can you help us with our Singapore Airlines refund?

KIT SAN SIN, *Singapore*

A. Both of you should have received a refund from Singapore Airlines — promptly. Also, you shouldn't have had to “apply” for a refund through the airline's website. It should have been handled automatically, like the refund you received for your other canceled flight.

Why wasn't it? Who knows? I've had this longstanding theory that airlines try to make it as difficult as possible to get a refund. I think having to apply through the site qualifies as “making it as difficult as possible.” But you know what? I've seen worse.

Most upsetting, you sent four separate e-mails to Singapore Airlines and it responded by saying it had received your refund request. Then it did nothing. How can that even happen? The only reasonable conclusion is that the airline wants to keep your money. Whether it flew you to Penang or not is irrelevant. The money only flows one way.

By the way, Singapore Airlines isn't alone. (Incidentally, Singapore has an excellent customer service reputation.) Other carriers do the same thing. It takes them a fraction of a second to charge you

for the tickets, but weeks or months to return your money. I just don't get it.

If an airline — or any other company — drags its feet for too long on a refund, you have another option. You can dispute the charge on your credit card. Although some banks have time limits on a dispute, they are routinely waived for cases like this. In other words, if a company strings you along, you still may have the option of filing a dispute if the company doesn't respond to you in a timely manner. Your bank can, and will, hold it accountable.

You shouldn't have had to ‘apply’ for a refund through the airline's website. It should have been handled automatically. Why wasn't it? Who knows? I've had this longstanding theory that airlines try to make it as difficult as possible to get a refund.

You could have also reached out to one of the customer service executives for Singapore Airlines. I list their names, numbers, and e-mail addresses on my consumer advocacy site, elliott.org.

I contacted Singapore Airlines on your behalf about your flight cancellation and promised refund. It promptly sent your money.

Christopher Elliott is the chief advocacy officer of Elliott Advocacy, a nonprofit organization that helps consumers resolve their problems. Contact him at elliott.org/help or chris@elliott.org.

HERE

Maine's new ski pass

Buy your season pass now for Sunday River and Sugarloaf and get ready to hit the slopes. The new Maine Pass, which replaces the New England Pass, will be available for purchase through Oct. 12. Choose from five different options, from the College Silver Maine Pass (\$299), which offers college students season-long lift tickets (with 12 blackout dates) and access to discounted Friend Tickets, to the Gold Maine Pass (\$1,399), which offers unlimited daily access, 10 discounted Friend Tickets, retail and lodging discounts, and access to Big Sky Resort in Montana, Brighton in Utah, and other Boyne Resorts sister areas. All passes qualify for the Worry-Free Winter Assurance program, which guarantees 150 days of skiing at Sunday River and Sugarloaf, collectively, and the option to roll the pass over to 2021-22 if requested before Dec. 10. Or choose one of the four-day passes (with or without blackout dates) for \$279 to \$349, good for any four days over the next two ski seasons. www.themainepass.com

THERE

Support women riders worldwide

Attend a women's mountain bike film festival — virtually — and support an organization that works to get more women on bikes around the world. Moab, Utah-based World Ride, a nonprofit, uses donations and proceeds from its movie nights to provide bike libraries for women in communities



worldwide, offer skills clinics and retreats to female (and female-identifying) riders, and train women to become mountain bike instructors (this year, it has supplied four women's bikes to a community in Guatemala and provided instructor training scholarships to women in Nepal and Iran). World Ride movie nights take place Oct. 15, Nov. 19, and Dec. 17, featuring films from around the world. Have a story to share? Send in your short film — ranging from three to 30 minutes long — by Sept. 30 and it may get screened during the Oct. 15 event and be entered into a film contest. Movie night ticket: suggested \$10 donation. www.worldride.com

A cozy hotel for adventurers

Stay in Big Sky, Mont.'s newest hotel and use it as a base for exploring Yellowstone National Park (one hour's drive away), skiing or mountain biking at Big Sky Resort, hiking wilderness trails, and fly fishing or rafting on local rivers. The Wilson Hotel, a modern property just steps from downtown, offers 129 guestrooms



(each with a fully equipped kitchen), an outdoor swimming pool and hot tub (with grills and fire pits nearby), cruiser bikes for guests' use, and access to a local grocery delivery service. The current Travel on the Fly package gets you a studio or one-bedroom suite, a \$25 gift card for stocking up on fishing supplies, and a \$40 discount on a half-day trip with Gallatin River Guides (regularly \$310). The Disconnect to Reconnect package includes accommodations in a one- or two-bedroom suite, a \$50 gift voucher to Pinky G's Pizzeria or Toast cafe (the best breakfast place in town), a blanket and picnic basket filled with goodies, and Yellowstone tour discounts.

All deals at this Residence Inn by Marriott hotel are good through October and require a two-night minimum stay. Room rates start at \$169 per night; packages from \$259 per night. thewilsonhotel.com

EVERYWHERE

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KARI BODNARCHUK

Boosting diversity, representation in travel industry

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“We all get the same joy from travel. It’s not limited to just one group.”

Black travelers, however, describe very different experiences from white travelers.

When she was the only Black guest on a cruise, Wulff-Vanderpuije recounted, other passengers assumed she was an employee. “I’m not dressed in a uniform, I’m here holding a glass of champagne like you are,” she said. “Why do you assume I’m staff?”

Martina Jones-Johnson, who, with her husband, runs the Instagram account and website That Couple Who Travels, was abroad when a woman approached and, uninvited, started feeling a braid from her hair.

“Sometimes it’s like being treated like a zoo animal,” Jones-Johnson said. “What really got me was when she started patting my face like I was a pet. I think oftentimes people feel like they can do or say whatever they want to Black people, and that just needs to stop.”

Wulff-Vanderpuije, Jones-Johnson, and other Black travel influencers and business owners have formed a new group, the Black Travel Alliance, launched soon after the killing of George Floyd reignited calls for equity. They want travel companies to prove their commitment to it by hiring more Black managers and employees and increasing the numbers of Black speakers at their conferences, journalists on their press trips, and travelers in their advertising.

Less than 3 percent of travel advertising focuses on African-Americans, according to the travel website Travel Noire, even though they make up more than 12 percent of the population and account for 6 percent of travel spending.

“You scroll through their social media and you don’t see Black people in these amazing shots or featured in these articles,” said Chadricks Everette, CEO of Dipaways, which runs group and private tours primarily for Black travelers.

There’s also been outright discrimination. A Harvard study found that travelers with names that sounded Black were 16 percent less likely to get an Airbnb booking in selected cities than travelers with white-sounding names.



Dipaways CEO Chadricks Everette (left), in Ghana.

“The majority of my travel experiences are positive, and that’s why I continue to travel, and I think that’s the case for most other Black travelers, but yes, we do face biases and discrimination that other travelers don’t face,” Jones-Johnson said.

The Black Travel Alliance has started with a scorecard listing participating travel companies and how they fare in measures of racial equity. More than 60 have responded so far, including Marriott, Airbnb, Intrepid Travel, G Adventures, and a dozen destination management organizations.

Like the Corporate Equality Index, which rates companies based on how they treat gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender employees, the scorecard is meant to help Black travelers determine where and with whom to spend their money.

Demands for change come at the confluence of two dramatic global trends: renewed attention to the race divide and the desperate need to attract every possible traveler as the sec-

tor struggles to recover from pandemic shutdowns.

“The travel industry is on its knees, worldwide,” Wulff-Vanderpuije said. “If it’s looking to rebound, it has to include everyone.”

Black travelers make up a significant and fast-growing market. The \$63 billion African-American travelers spent in 2018, according to the firm Mandala Research, was up from \$48 billion in 2010, an increase far ahead of the inflation rate.

“That just reveals even more the huge opportunity that the travel industry is missing because they don’t market to Black people,” Jones-Johnson said.

Seventy-two percent of Black millennial travelers in a survey conducted for the marketing company Digitas said they were more likely to book with a brand that acknowledges their racial and ethnic identity, and 80 percent that they are more likely to visit a destination that does.

Twenty-four percent said they’ve

experienced discrimination when booking within the last two years, and 29 percent have encountered it while traveling.

“Being a Black person going to some of these places that aren’t Black, it can be scary,” Everette said. “We have enough of those problems at home. We don’t need them on vacation.”

Black travelers avoid some places outright, other research shows. Fear of racial discrimination still discourages African-American tourists from coming to South Carolina, for example, a study conducted at the University of South Carolina found.

All of this has fueled a network of sources such as Facebook groups for Black travelers to share their experiences — and warnings — about particular travel providers and destinations, and a robust industry of group tour companies such as Dipaways catering almost entirely to Black guests.

“They can let down their guard and not feel like they have to cater to anyone other than people who already get

them,” Everette said. “They don’t have to feel like they’re always having to do what they’re doing at work all the time, which is being careful that everybody’s happy.”

Among other reasons Black travelers said they rely on social media to plan their trips is that mainstream travel journalism also underrepresents them. “When I open up the glossy [travel] magazines, they’re still white, and a particular kind of white — privileged white,” said Williams.

There are signs of change. A new travel publication aimed at Black readers, The Black Explorer Magazine, just produced its first issue. Airbnb has created a non-discrimination policy and an optional instant booking feature in which hosts can’t see personal information about prospective guests.

Visit Philadelphia has commissioned a marketing campaign aimed at African-Americans. Louisville Tourism has announced a Black Tourism Advisory Board and is reviewing its promotional materials.

If history is a guide, they’re casting their nets wider for the most practical of reasons, just as they did in the last economic downturn, said Laura Mandala, CEO of Mandala Research. “Companies became interested in diversity during the Great Recession when they could no longer count on the business from their core markets,” she said.

But some destinations still have history — and, increasingly, current events — to overcome, said Heather Hodges, executive director of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor in South Carolina.

As part of her job, Hodges visits other landmarks and historic sites. On a tour of a southern plantation, on which she was the only Black guest, every time the guide began to talk about the lives of Blacks enslaved there, three white men in the group made a point of walking away.

“Imagine if you were visiting as an African-American family for the first time, you have children with you and you have to deal with something like that,” she said. “There is always going to be concern among African-American tourists relating to issues that for white visitors or international visitors are not a consideration.”

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New Haven-based photographer and New Jersey native Tyler Haughey also turned his camera to Wildwood after falling in love with the architecture. He produced a book of photography, called “Everything Is Regional,” that focuses heavily on Wildwood.

“It harkens back to a previous time in the country when there was great optimism, creativity, and care put into buildings,” Haughey said. “Within a 10- or 12-year span, 300 or so of these motels sprang up out of nowhere within a 5-mile radius. And so in order to separate themselves from one another, they needed to really use different themes and different color schemes, and distinctive signage. All of those aspects of roadside Americana were fascinating to me.”

I realize I’ve just spent 1,000 words or so excitedly skipping down a nostalgia-filled, neon-lit path. But there is more to Wildwood than the hotels. The beach is impressively wide, like nothing I had previously seen. A deep shelf of sand leads to the waves. The massive boardwalk may not be everybody’s cone of ice cream. It’s as if Old Orchard Beach and Hampton Beach had a baby, bottle fed it steroids, and then dropped it in Jersey to toughen it up. But you could fill your time here in a more low-key manner.

The beauty of Wildwood (warning, more nostalgia ahead) is the escape it provides, something I found was needed more than ever this year. People were wearing masks, restaurants were following safety protocols, and hotels, yes, even these 60-plus-year-old jewels, had upped their cleaning and sanitation game. But all of those thoughts seemed to slip away while walking on lovely estival evenings alongside Polynesian-themed hotels and other playful escapes built at a time when the future was something to be embraced, rather than something to be feared.

Christopher Muther can be reached at christopher.muther@globe.com. Follow him on Twitter @Chris_Muther.

Down a nostalgia-filled, neon-lit path in Wildwood

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Wildwood has a style that the locals call Doo Wop.

Technically, these motels fall under an architectural category called Googie. But here that falutin term doesn’t stick. According to Dan MacElrevey, one of the founders of the Doo Wop Preservation League, the term Doo Wop came from the prominent role that Wildwood played during the infancy of the rock era.

“I came off the boardwalk one night when I was working at the bowling alley setting pins,” MacElrevey said. “It was 1955, so I was 14 years old. I walked over to Atlantic Avenue and the clubs were full. So were the streets. You couldn’t drive. People were doing this new dance in the streets. This rock ‘n’ roll dance.”

Legend has it that Bill Haley & His Comets debuted “Rock Around the Clock,” in Wildwood. There’s a mural loosely depicting the event near the town square. Another legend has Chubby Checker debuting “The Twist” in Wildwood, and — this one can be verified — the first national broadcast of “American Bandstand” took place at the Starlight Ballroom here in 1957.

There is something delightful about seeing the high concentration of old hotels. There’s optimism and creativity in the bold, playful architecture. The

motel names suggest that they will whisk vacationers to far off lands (the Royal Hawaiian, the Singapore, the Caribbean), provide adventure (the Astronaut, the Jolly Roger, the Crusader), and, perhaps, a sip of romance (the Pink Champagne).

Wildwood is not a ghost town, and these vintage hotels are still very much in use. During my late August visit there were plenty of “no vacancy” signs blazing in red neon. You can still find these midcentury hotels around the country in various states of repair, but Wildwood has the largest concentration of post-WWII resort architecture in the United States. Many remain virtually unchanged since their original construction. It is a throwback to a time when families drove to motels, shared a room with two queen beds, and hung their beach towels on the railing to dry overnight.

As I stood in the tub/shower at Caribbean Motel, I wondered how many children had bathed in the pink bathtub over the past 63 years, their hair stiff from sand, sun, and saltwater. Or how many teenagers showered here in preparation for a night of epic summer flirting on the boardwalk. The Caribbean Motel is one of the most important in Wildwood. Built in 1957 and saved from demolition in 2004, it’s now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER MUTHER/GLOBE STAFF

Cabana Lounge at the Caribbean Motel. Top: Ocean Towers Shops on the boardwalk.

While the Caribbean was saved, many other midcentury motels in the Wildwood area have not been so lucky. Since the late 1990s, hundreds of these jewels have been demolished to make way for mostly generic condominiums. From a historical standpoint, it’s hard to fathom flattening something that is not only a representation of how we used to live, but also part of a collection of buildings in a recognized historic district that have been studied multiple times by academics. Wildwood is more than kitsch and plastic

palm trees. However, it’s tempting for owners to abandon ship when a developer comes along and offers a hefty sum for a 60-year-old hotel that doesn’t yield high profits.

“What happens in a lot of cases is that the next generation isn’t interested in taking over the family business,” said John Donio, owner of the Daytona Inn & Suites. “The kids went to college, they’re professionals. Or they’re working at the motel and they’re just burnt out. It’s a tough business. If you don’t love it, it’s not fun.”

The Doo Wop Preservation League works with the old hotels (there are still more than 100 in operation), but it also works with developers to try

and convince them that incorporating Doo Wop flourishes into their designs is good for business. Sadly, the league can only do so much to save the old properties from the wrecking ball.

That’s one of the reasons why Mark Havens produced the gorgeous coffee table book “Out of Season, the Vanishing Architecture of the Wildwoods” in 2006. He wanted to preserve memories of the disappearing pink and aqua buildings, their zigzagging rooflines, and those plentiful neon signs. Wildwood (or the Wildwoods, take your pick) has been drawing historians and photographers who see the beauty and value of the place.

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Iconic White Barn Inn gets reimagined

By Diane Bair and Pamela Wright
GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS

“It’s not Grandma’s little cottage anymore,” one guest remarked when she saw the recent renovations at the White Barn Inn.

Gone are the deep, jewel colors, the dark furniture, the heavy fabrics, and the carpeting. The iconic White Barn Inn & Spa, Auberge Resorts Collection in Kennebunk, Maine, has received a major facelift, bringing it into the 21st century. What we like: New York-based designer Jenny Wolf didn’t go over-the-top contemporary. Instead she respected the historic aspect of the property and its near-the-sea setting, lightening spaces with just enough modern touches and tones. It’s like a fresh sea breeze blew through the rooms, airing out the space.

The change is immediate as you walk in the front door. Light green, sea foam hues brighten the room, and a lovely, whimsical wallpaper of flying ducks harkens to the surrounding natural setting. Carpeting has been replaced with light, vinyl plank flooring. There’s a collection of antique duck decoys hanging on one wall; a rustic, wooden bench lines another, adding texture and bringing in the old with the new.

“We had a lot of stuff — paintings, furniture — stored in the attic in the barn,” says Daniel Braun, general manager of the resort. “The designers climbed up and went shopping.”

Similar serene hues and new flooring continue into the living room, where traditional furniture, like wing chairs and a Victorian settee, with modern, bright fabric coverings, surround a fireplace. A zebra skin rug adds a bit of whimsy, and a fun painting of a dressed-up royal rabbit sits on a table filled with take-away snacks and drinks.

All 27 rooms have been updated, featuring spindle beds, antiques, and traditional English and Gustavian-style pieces mixed with patterned pillows, wall and window coverings for



PHOTOS BY PAMELA WRIGHT FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Take a bike ride and enjoy whimsical decor, including a fun painting of a dressed-up royal rabbit, at White Barn Inn.



thew Padilla gets to play,” says Braun. “It’s a completely different style than our main restaurant.”

Padilla, who’s also the executive chef for the White Barn Inn Restaurant, says that the food he prepares for Little Barn, is “more of the type of food I enjoy. It’s what I like to cook for myself.” The menu displayed on a chalkboard changes every few days. We tried a sampling of creamy burrata with pesto and blistered cherry tomatoes, Mexican street corn sprinkled with cotija, a crisp, light pea salad, and deviled eggs with pickled beets. The seasonally inspired food was simple, fresh, and flavorful. It’s the kind of place we’d return to again and again, making it a nice complement to the fancy, special occasion main dining room.

Also new for the resort, is a lineup of guest programs, like chocolate-making and ice cream churning classes, and excursions to local orchards.

We’ve always loved this gracious, luxury property, but as the saying goes: There’s no standing still because time is moving forward.

“Other luxury properties were improving, while we were standing still,” says Braun. “The update was really needed.”

Nice job moving forward.
833-242-8847, www.aubgeresorts.com/whitebarninn; room rates start at \$599

Diane Bair and Pamela Wright can be reached at bairwright@gmail.com.

added color and warmth. Rooms also feature elements from local Maine suppliers, like throw blankets from Evangeline in Portland and Adirondack chairs from Chairman of the Board. Private bathrooms have been brightened, with white and neutral colors, marble touches, and spa-like showers and/or soaking tubs.

Thankfully, the elegant White Barn Inn Restaurant remains the same. The rare AAA Five Diamond and Forbes Five Star dining experience was revolutionary when it opened in 1973, offering fine dining in a 19th-century barn, pioneering the “rustic chic” style. It remains one of New England’s finest restaurants. Now, they’ve opened a second restaurant, Little Barn, with more casual fare. The space was once an annex to the barn and served as an overflow area for diners. Now, it has its own bistro-style ambiance, with indoor and outdoor dining.

“This is where Chef Mat-