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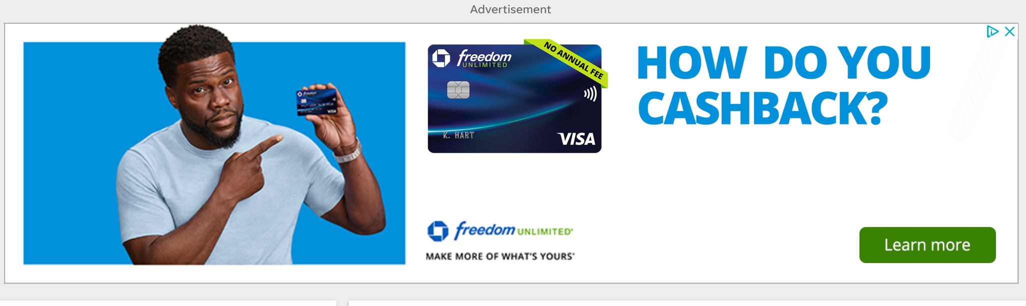


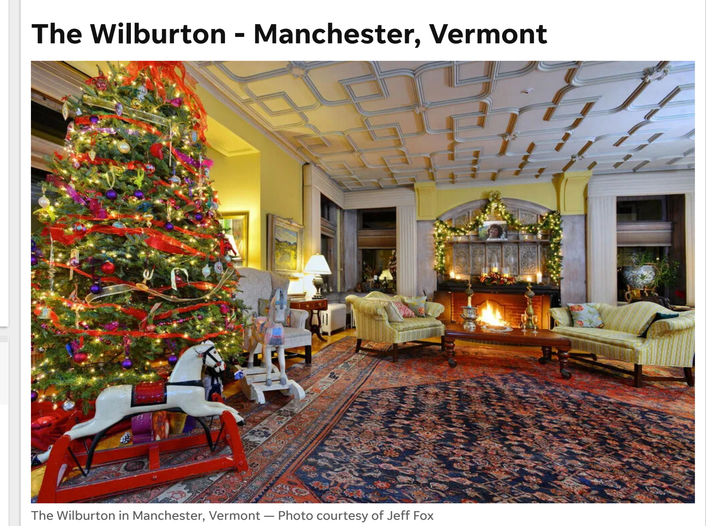
10 of the best New England hotels for the holidays

These inns come alive with festive spirit during the holiday season

By Linda Laban
NOVEMBER 4, 2021

Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, the Winter Solstice, Christmas Day and New Year's Eve – whatever is to be celebrated at the Northern Hemisphere's darkest time of the year, it is done with plenty of lights and good cheer at these 10 hotels.

The Wilburton - Manchester, Vermont



The Wilburton in Manchester, Vermont — Photo courtesy of Jeff Fox

The halls of this gracious 1902 mansion-turned-country inn, situated between the Green and Taconic Mountain ranges in southwestern Vermont, are truly decked out for the holiday season. What's more, dogs are very welcome here, and a signature seasonal Wilburton event is the canine Christmas slumber party weekend in early December.

For humans, Manchester is a holiday shopper's paradise with the 40-plus stores of the Manchester Designer Outlets, as well as numerous locally-owned stores and art galleries, all less than a 10-minute-drive away.

Wilburton Inn

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Woodstock Inn & Resort - Woodstock, Vermont

Woodstock Inn & Resort in Woodstock, Vermont — Photo courtesy of Woodstock Inn & Resort

This truly picturesque village holds an annual Wassail Weekend in early December, reviving an ancient English celebration that marks the end of the busy harvest time and honors nature's bounty.

Throughout the holiday season, there's no warmer winter welcome than the Woodstock Inn's roaring fireplace in the lobby, which invites guests to sit, read or just gaze at the wreaths, garlands, fairy lights and tree marking this magical season. The giant gingerbread house in the lobby stands six feet tall and becomes a tasty playhouse for children to explore.

Woodstock Inn & Resort

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Omni Mount Washington Resort - Bretton Woods, New Hampshire

Omni Mount Washington Resort in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire — Photo courtesy of Omni Mount Washington Resort

Surrounded by the White Mountains, and with the resort's own Bretton Woods ski area nearby, this classic grand hotel is the glittering centerpiece of a true winter wonderland. The historic Omni hotel is filled with holiday songs played on the Conservatory's rare Steinway piano; the smell of Mrs. Claus hot cocoa parties; and the sight of beautifully lit trees and decorations adding even more shimmer to this Gilded Age beauty.

Omni Mount Washington Resort

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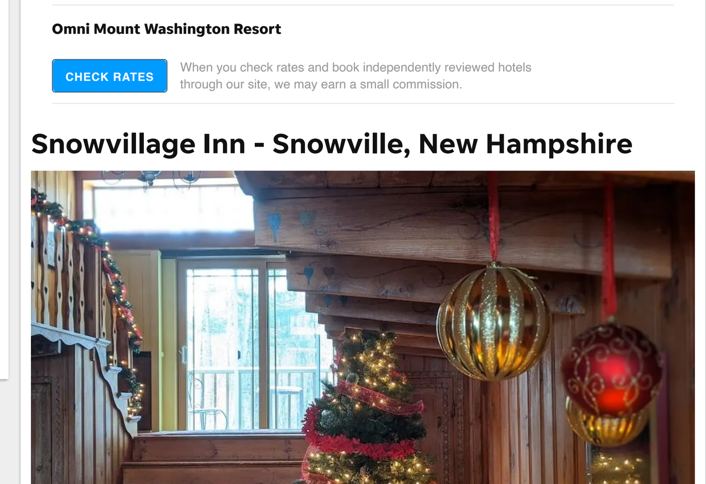
Snowvillage Inn - Snowville, New Hampshire



Snowvillage Inn in Snowville, New Hampshire — Photo courtesy of Carrie Steeves/Snowvillage Inn

The village of Snowville is named for the Snow family who started a sawmill there in 1825, but you'd be forgiven for thinking the name is due to the annual deep blanketing of fluffy snow that greets visitors.

The inn's snowshoeing program includes guided tours through the surrounding woodland. Inside the inn, the lobby's fireplace and the dining room's antique wood stove give a cozy cabin feel. Holiday activities include wreath making and the annual Mount Washington Valley Inn to Inn Cookie Tour.

Snowvillage Inn

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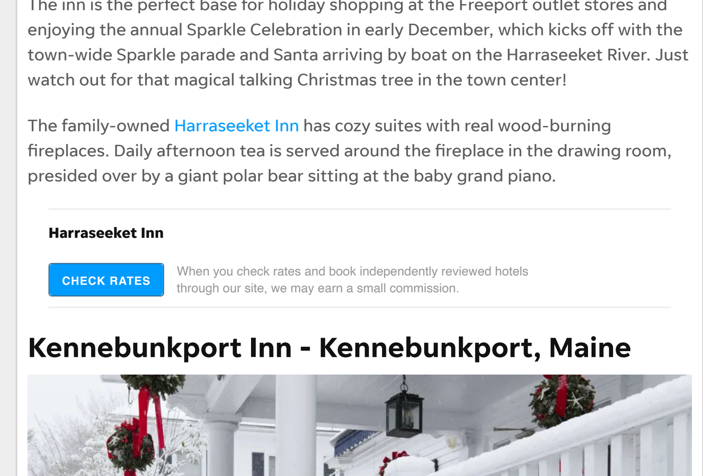
Harraseeket Inn - Freeport, Maine



Harraseeket Inn in Freeport, Maine — Photo courtesy of Harraseeket Inn

The inn is the perfect base for holiday shopping at the Freeport outlet stores and enjoying the annual Sparkle Celebration in early December, which kicks off with the town-wide Sparkle parade and Santa arriving by boat on the Harraseeket River. Just watch out for that magical talking Christmas tree in the town center!

The family-owned Harraseeket Inn has cozy suites with real wood-burning fireplaces. Daily afternoon tea is served around the fireplace in the drawing room, presided over by a giant polar bear sitting at the baby grand piano.

Harraseeket Inn

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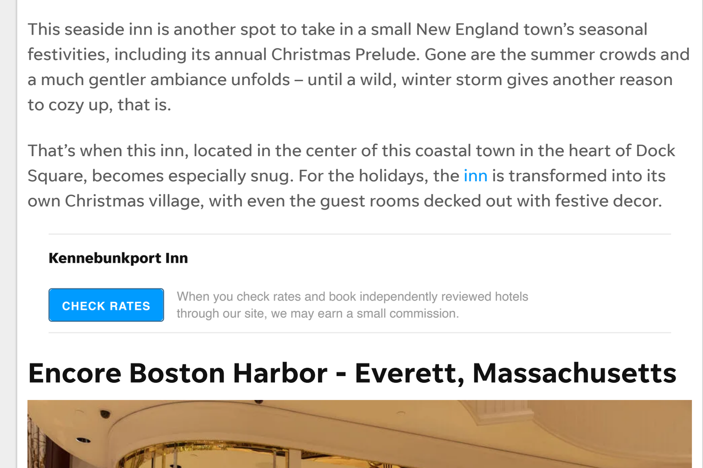
Kennebunkport Inn - Kennebunkport, Maine



Kennebunkport Inn in Kennebunkport, Maine — Photo courtesy of Nicole Wolf

This seaside inn is another spot to take in a small New England town's seasonal festivities, including its annual Christmas Prelude. Gone are the summer crowds and a much gentler ambiance unfolds – until a wild, winter storm gives another reason to cozy up, that is.

That's when this inn, located in the center of this coastal town in the heart of Dock Square, becomes especially snug. For the holidays, the inn is transformed into its own Christmas village, with even the guest rooms decked out with festive decor.

Kennebunkport Inn

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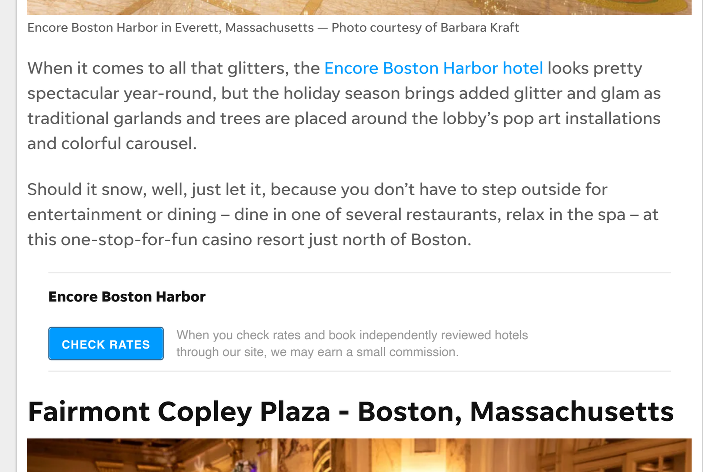
Encore Boston Harbor - Everett, Massachusetts



Encore Boston Harbor in Everett, Massachusetts — Photo courtesy of Barbara Kraft

When it comes to all that glitters, the Encore Boston Harbor hotel looks pretty spectacular year-round, but the holiday season brings added glitter and glam as traditional garlands and trees are placed around the lobby's pop art installations and colorful carousel.

Should it snow, well, just let it, because you don't have to step outside for entertainment or dining – dine in one of several restaurants, relax in the spa – at this one-stop-for-fun casino resort just north of Boston.

Encore Boston Harbor

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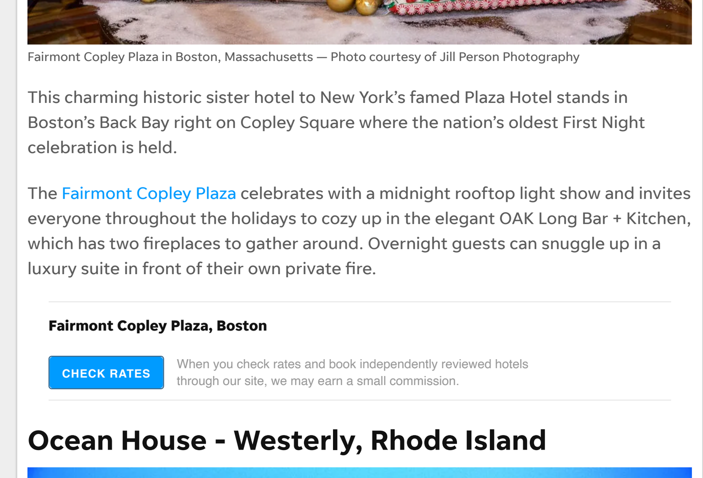
Fairmont Copley Plaza - Boston, Massachusetts



Fairmont Copley Plaza in Boston, Massachusetts — Photo courtesy of Jill Person Photography

This charming historic sister hotel to New York's famed Plaza Hotel stands in Boston's Back Bay right on Copley Square where the nation's oldest First Night celebration is held.

The Fairmont Copley Plaza celebrates with a midnight rooftop light show and invites everyone throughout the holidays to cozy up in the elegant OAK Long Bar + Kitchen, which has two fireplaces to gather around. Overnight guests can snuggle up in a luxury suite in front of their own private fire.

Fairmont Copley Plaza, Boston

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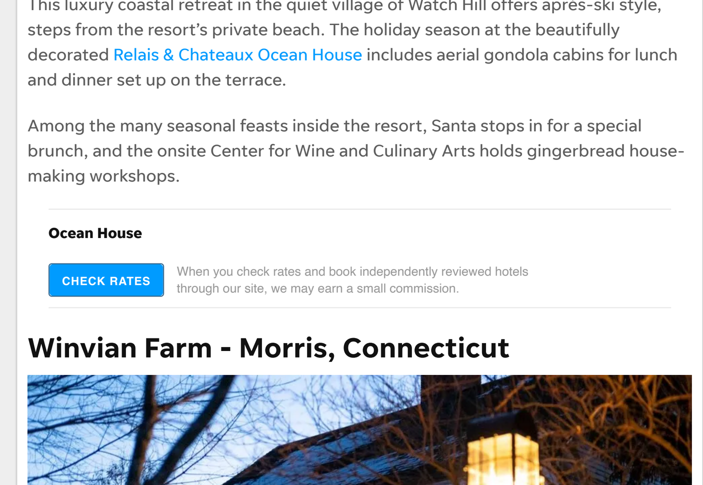
Ocean House - Westerly, Rhode Island



Ocean House in Westerly, Rhode Island — Photo courtesy of Ocean House

This luxury coastal retreat in the quiet village of Watch Hill offers après-ski style, steps from the resort's private beach. The holiday season at the beautifully decorated Relais & Chateaux Ocean House includes aerial gondola cabins for lunch and dinner set up on the terrace.

Among the many seasonal feasts inside the resort, Santa stops in for a special brunch, and the onsite Center for Wine and Culinary Arts holds gingerbread house-making workshops.

Ocean House

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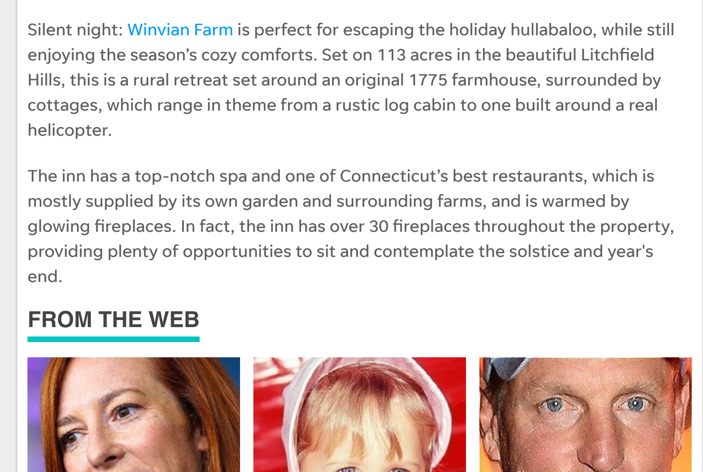
Winvian Farm - Morris, Connecticut



Winvian Farm in Morris, Connecticut — Photo courtesy of Winvian Farm

Silent night: Winvian Farm is perfect for escaping the holiday hullabaloo, while still enjoying the season's cozy comforts. Set on 113 acres in the beautiful Litchfield Hills, this is a rural retreat set around an original 1775 farmhouse, surrounded by cottages, which range in theme from a rustic log cabin to one built around a real helicopter.

The inn has a top-notch spa and one of Connecticut's best restaurants, which is mostly supplied by its own garden and surrounding farms, and is warmed by glowing fireplaces. In fact, the inn has over 30 fireplaces throughout the property, providing plenty of opportunities to sit and contemplate the solstice and year's end.

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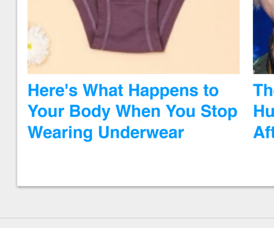
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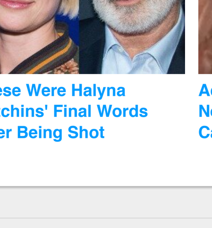
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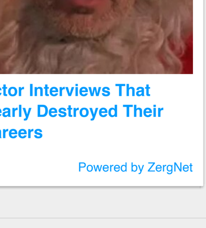
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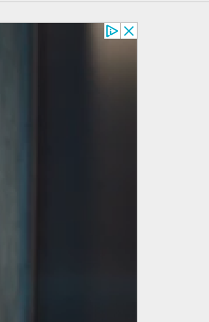
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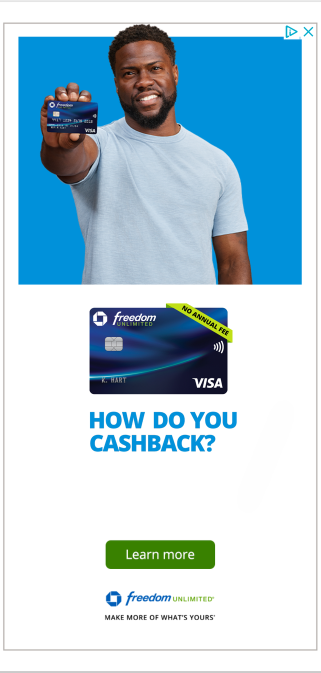

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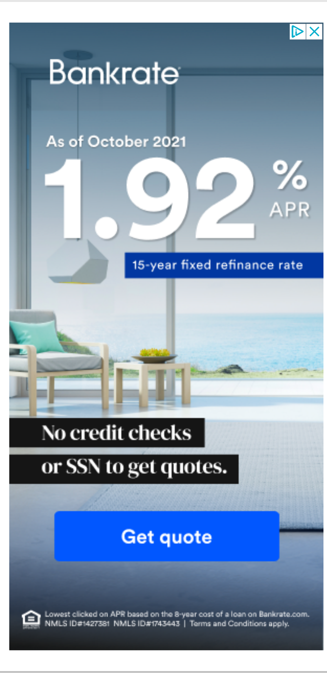

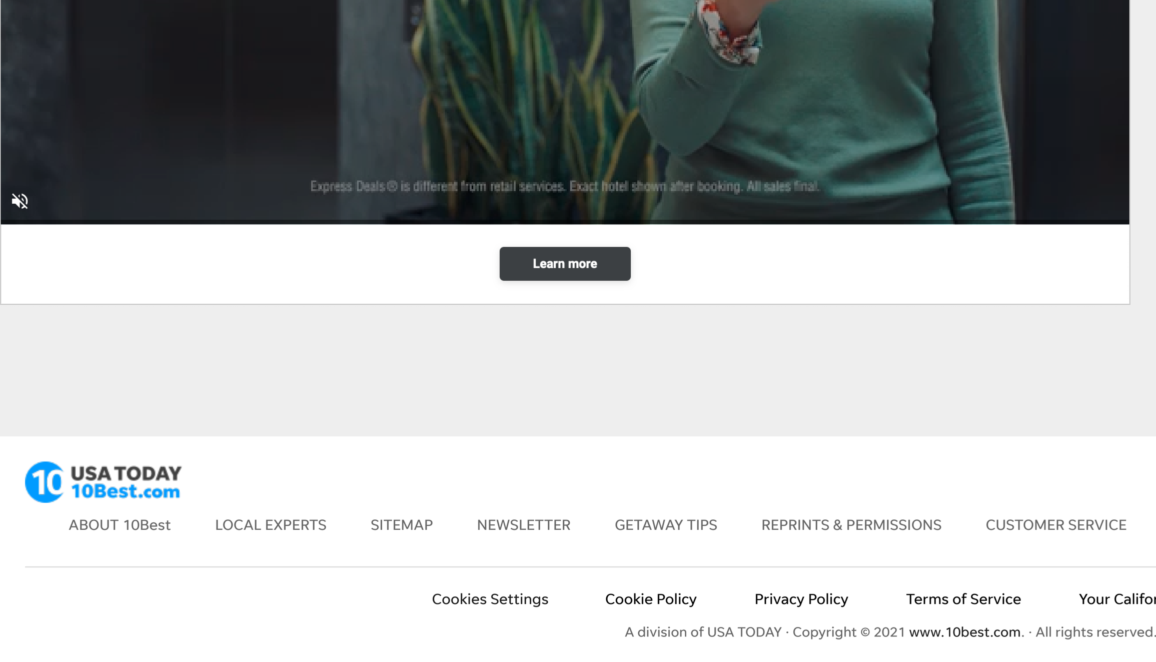

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