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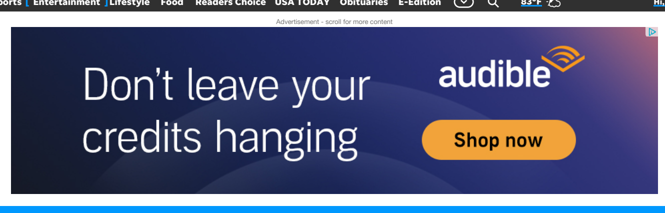

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Why Westerly is worth the drive: Great seafood, delicious cocktails and waterfront views

Gail Ciampa
The Providence Journal

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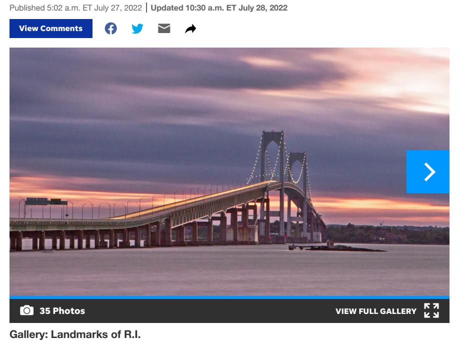

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Visiting Westerly is like going on a vacation.

It might only be an hour from Providence, but Westerly is another world, one with wonderful food and drink offerings, many in spectacular settings. From breathtaking water views to quaint, historic dining rooms, this town has it all.

You can drink local beers, wines, spirits and cider. There are elegant chocolates, creamy ice cream, superlative baked goods, as well as burgers and burritos.

New restaurants dot downtown while Watch Hill offers quaintness and carousel rides. There's dining on the ocean, river and ponds as well as on many a patio, weather-dependent, of course.

There are plenty of lobster rolls and other treats from the sea. You can spend a fortune or dine on a budget with creative sandwiches.

It's more than anyone can do it one day. So you'd better get started, one day at a time.

Andrea Beach Bar

If you like feeling ocean breezes while you dine and enjoy watching the waves break, there is no better place to be than Andrea Beach Bar. It's right above Misquamicut Beach at 89 Atlantic Ave.

Clam cakes are on the menu at the Andrea restaurant, right by the beach in Misquamicut. *Gail Ciampa/Providence Journal*

Until Sandy ravaged the shore in 2012, the Andrea Hotel stood on the spot. It was so damaged it had to be torn down and the owners chose not to rebuild. The fireplace from the hotel is outside now, the centerpiece of the patio dining. It is just part of the expansive restaurant that also includes a stained glass window from the hotel.

The owners have created the ideal summer dining setup with a large tented space that includes a bar. There's also a takeout window for sunbathers or others wanting the clam cakes or lobster rolls to go.

$50 for a reserved spot on the beach?: Likely legal, but 'kind of gross,' activists say

The parking here is easy, and the atmosphere fun and casual. Go online to make your reservation. There are daily specials of food and drink and all those summer standards of a clam shack. They also have sandwiches, pasta and seafood entrees and burgers. The drinks include cocktails and non-alcoholic selections including a piña colada.

The Andrea Beach Bar Lobster Roll. In the background is the fireplace that was once in the hotel destroyed during Superstorm Sandy. *Gail Ciampa/Providence Journal*

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The Andrea restaurant is so close to the beach in Misquamicut, you'll enjoy ocean breezes with your food. *Gail Ciampa/Providence Journal*

Their seafood cakes are chock full of tiny shrimp and scallops. Their Lobster Roll ($30 last week) had two full claws in it.

They start serving for lunch at 11 a.m. but are open for dinner too, through 9 p.m. Under the stars and by the ocean must make for one perfect summer dinner.

Bay Street in Watch Hill

Bay Street is the commercial center of Watch Hill, home to small shops and the 1876 Flying Horse Carousel and more. Here are some highlights.

RI Best: 22 can't miss food and drink adventures for summer 2022

Sift Bake Shop

Even at the height of tourist season, Watch Hill is quiet at 8 a.m. when Sift Bake Shop opens at 102 Bay St. You'll find the parking easy and the lattes hot or cold. Choose your dose of caffeine and one of the fab breakfast pastries. Chef Adam Young opened this summer outpost of his Mystic, Connecticut, bakery, and that makes us very lucky.

Take your croissant (chocolate, classic, almond or lemon lavender), or breakfast sandwich, or muffin or scone, and grab a spot on a bench across the street. Enjoy a few peaceful moments looking out on the picturesque harbor on Little Narragansett Bay.

Don't forget to pick up entremets, rich little pastries, or bread to take home.

Olympia Tea Room

For many, dining at the Olympia Tea Room is an annual rite of summer. The landmark offers atmosphere inside with mahogany booths, and Euro-style sidewalk tables at 74 Bay Street. If you like old-world charm – think vintage 1920s, a bistro menu and classic cocktails – you won't be disappointed.

A Lemon Tart and Opera Cake are among the many entremets available at Sift Bakery Shop from owner/baker Adam Young. *Sandor Bodo, The Providence Journal, File*

Visitors to Watch Hill sit outside at the Olympia Tea Room on Bay Street to eat and relax. The restaurant opened in Westerly in 1916. *Bob Breidenbach, The Providence Journal, File*

St. Clair Annex

St. Clair Annex at 141 Bay St., is an ice-cream shop and casual restaurant. It has been around since 1887. The ice cream has been made the same way, on-site, in small batches, for several generations. There is a great variety of flavors, from Peppermint Crunch to Blueberry Mojito. Try to get one of the porch tables outside and watch the well-heeled world go by. You can enjoy breakfast here, or lunch with lobster rolls and other summer classics.

Political Scene: Here's where you can find state lawmakers at the beach. Who goes to Westerly?

Ocean House

The bright yellow Ocean House, perched atop a hill overlooking the Atlantic Ocean at 1 Bluff Ave., offers many opportunities for enjoying food and drink, even if you aren't staying at the hotel.

There's the upscale dining room at Coast. Dalia is a new casual, open-air lunch and dinner dining concept on the Seaside Terrace with views of the Atlantic.

St. Clair Annex in Watch Hill is famous for its ice cream but serves breakfast and lunch, too. *Sandor Bodo, The Providence Journal, File*

The Secret Garden is a pop-up champagne bar with breakfast service. Then between noon and 9 p.m. it is for adults only with music, crepes and Veuve Clicquot cocktails. At The Verandah, locally sourced oysters, clams, and hot and cold lobster rolls are served.

The Cooked Goose

If a warm breakfast of eggs and creative dishes is the way you like to start your day, eat like a local and head to The Cooked Goose at 92 Watch Hill Rd. You can dine inside or outdoors on the patio. Breakfast service starts at 7 a.m.

There are many spots to enjoy a glass of wine, or more, at Ocean House in Watch Hill. *Sandor Bodo, The Providence Journal, File*

The Cooked Goose has been a crowd favorite of locals and tourists for years. *Kris Craig, The Providence Journal, File*

The lunch menu is offered beginning at 11:30 a.m. Many folks like to get one of their great sandwiches to go if they want to beach it or have a picnic, maybe at Wilcox Park, a gem of place. The park and arboretum are at 44 High St.

Tastings of beer and spirits

Westerly is also the perfect spot to enjoy tastings of beer and spirits.

Experience the culture: Dominican festival brings MLB superstar, famed artists and food to Providence

Wilcox Park in Westerly is lovely for walking, reading and more. *Sandor Bodo, The Providence Journal, File*

Grey Sail Brewing

Grey Sail Brewing's taproom offers great beers as well as cocktails at 63 Canal St. There is indoor and outdoor seating available. Leashed dogs are allowed outdoors.

Grey Sail Brewing was among the first craft beer makers to open in Rhode Island. It just celebrated its 11th anniversary. *Sandor Bodo, The Providence Journal, File*

Grey Sail owners Jennifer and Alan Brinton expanded to create South County Distillers with co-owner/distiller Ryan Gwozdz back in 2020. Think fabulous canned cocktails like mojitos and Tropical Storm, their take on a dark and stormy.

Langworthy Farm Winery

Langworthy Farm was built in 1875 on the historical homesite of Rhode Island Colonial Gov. Samuel Ward. Now wine grapes are grown there for Langworthy Farm Winery. You can sit on the porch for a tasting at 208 Shore Rd. You can enjoy a glass or a bottle of their lineup of wines, which includes riesling, chardonnay, merlot, cabernet franc, vidal blanc and more.

This is also the home of Langworthy Farm Bed & Breakfast should you want to spend a night.

You can visit Langworthy Farm Winery for a tasting or even stay the night in the Inn. *Frieda Squires, The Providence Journal, File*

Tapped Apple Cidery & Winery

Five-year-old Tapped Apple Cidery & Winery is at 37 High St. in downtown and makes its wine from apples. Apple Pie is its dessert wine and Cerise Noir is its best-sellier, made with cherries and apples. Sunset Orchard in North Scituate is the source of its apples.

They also make hard ciders which have become very popular. First Bite is their signature hard cider and is off-dry.

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Rhode Island Beach Guide: Everything you need to know about the best beaches in the state

You can have sample flights of wines and ciders. Tapped is open Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

More Westerly dining

Ella's Fine Food & Drink

There is no lack of upscale dining in Westerly. That includes Ella's Fine Food & Drink at 2 Tower St. Chef Jeanie Roland and her husband, James, also own The Perfect Caper in Punta Gorda, Florida. Because this is the 10th anniversary of Ella's and the 20th for The Perfect Caper, she has brought some dishes from Florida to Rhode Island for the first time. They include Shrimp Tempura, Pan Scallops with mashed potatoes and Moroccan Spiced Lamb. Not leaving her menu are all the popular duck dishes, and her signature pâtés.

Chef Jeanie Roland of Ella's Fine Food & Drink of Westerly, in her dining room. *Steve Szydlowski, The Providence Journal, File*

Weekapaug Inn

The elegant Weekapaug Inn on Spray Rock Road is a summer retreat on Quonochontaug Pond. But you don't have to stay there to enjoy the special dining events they host all summer. Coming up are Pitmaster BBQs on Aug. 1, 8, 15 and 22; and Lobster Boils on Aug. 4, 11 and 18.

Find more online at oceanhouseevents.com.

The Deck at the Weekapaug Inn is open for summer dining. *Courtesy Photo*

Dining choices include The Deck with main-level and upper-deck seating, with beautiful water views of the pond. Coastal classics such as clam chowder, clams and watermelon salad are served. The Bath House is a beachside breakfast and lunch spot. The SeaRoom and The Bar offer afternoon light bites, casual dinners and laid-back nightcaps by the fireplace.

Graze Burgers

They may seem like a Shake Shack clone, but Graze Burgers is farm-to-bun beef patties. Their grass-fed burgers come from JW Beef in Stonington, Connecticut, which is about eight miles away from the restaurant at 127 Granite St. Farm owner Joshua Welch is co-owner of Graze Burgers.

Bridge

Bridge is co-owned by farmer Joshua Welch and David Parr. Here the concept is all about the raw bar and the outdoor dining over the Pawcatuck River at 37 Main St.

A tray of burgers outside in the patio dining area of Graze Burgers, along with a shake and fries. *Sandor Bodo, The Providence Journal, File*

There is outdoor dining on the "island" at Bridge in Westerly, where tables and a bar are set up over the Pawcatuck River. *Sandor Bodo, The Providence Journal, File*

Bomb Burritos & Bowls

Bomb Burritos & Bowls offers fast casual service for flour tortillas, bowls and more at 240 Post Rd.

Bomb Burritos & Bowls in Westerly is a fast casual restaurant with food made in a fine dining restaurant style. *Bob Breidenbach/The Providence Journal, File*

The Malted Barley

The Malted Barley at 42 High St. offers an incredible selection of beers, wonderful homemade pretzels and excellent bar food. There is a second one in Providence.

A flight of beers at The Malted Barley in Westerly. *Bob Thayer, The Providence Journal, File*

Nana's Bakery & Pizza

Nana's Bakery & Pizza at 82 High St. is a new organic bakery and pizza shop with bar that is the newest outpost of a Mystic, Connecticut, restaurant. The Mystic Nana's was among Esquire magazine's Best New Restaurants in 2021. There is indoor and outdoor seating.

Cinder Restaurant

Cinder is a new restaurant serving smoked meats, tofu tacos and a variety of salads at 169 Main St. on the Pawcatuck River. There is indoor and outdoor seating. Cinder sells lunch and dinner and brunch on Saturday and Sunday.

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Here are the 15 best ice cream spots: Did your favorite make the list?

Longo's Ristorante & Pizzeria

Longo's Ristorante & Pizzeria, at 84 High St., began on Federal Hill in Providence before moving to Westerly. There is indoor and outdoor seating and a children's menu. It has the same owner as Jerry Longo's Meatballs and Martinis at Bally's Twin River.

To bring home from your Westerly visit

Vesta Bakery

Vesta Bakery, at 47 Railroad Ave., is one of the state's best bakeries and worth any ride. A Rhode Island native, Allyson Mansfield learned to bake in the San Francisco area, and opened Vesta Bakery 11 years ago. She makes breakfast pastry as well as sweets such as cookies, eclairs, cupcakes and coconut-custard tarts. And she makes cakes for weddings and other events.

You never know what delicious and whimsical offerings will be coming from Allyson Mansfield at her Vesta Bakery. *Kris Craig, The Providence Journal, File*

But her favorite thing to do is bake breads. Her lineup includes Italian, baguette, cinnamon raisin or swirl, multigrain cranberry, seeded multigrain, whole wheat, whole wheat walnut, Portuguese sweet bread, potato rosemary, fruit and nut, Asiago cheese, ciabatta, Kalamata olive, rye, pumpernickel, oatmeal, herb focaccia, and Pane Bianco, a soft white bread with roasted tomatoes, garlic, herbs and fresh mozzarella. Call ahead to order to avoid disappointment.

Hauser Chocolatier

Hauser Chocolatier, at 59 Tom Harvey Rd., is a second-generation, family-owned company making truffles and assorted chocolates. Bring a cold bag so you can pick up enough to satisfy any craving and it won't melt in the car.

Some of the chocolates at Hauser Chocolatier in Westerly. *Bob Breidenbach/The Providence Journal*

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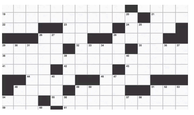

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