



Ghosts, Gangsters, Generals, and Gastronomic Delights, all Resurrected at the General Stanton Inn

Historic Inn to begin welcoming guests May 1

by **Thom Cahir**
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General Stanton Inn

The General Stanton Inn arises from the frequent fog on Old Post Road in Charlestown like one of the specters that are rumored to inhabit its halls and is a beacon for locals and tourists alike. The brightly painted yellow-with-white-trim former Colonial Inn re-opened in August of 2022 as a restaurant and tavern and is planning to start welcoming guests to their newly opened accommodations on May 1 according to owners David and Jackie Moore.

While touring the property with David Moore, he quickly noted that the plan all along was to make sure they provided outstanding food and service to local patrons because they would sustain the business year-round, and that tourists would eventually find their way in during the season. He feels they are on target and have accomplished what they set out to do because they differ from other restaurants in town and compete more with properties like the Matunuck Oyster Bar, Coast Guard House and Weekapaug Inn.

Transitioning from the 50-seat tavern through the Narragansett Room and into the larger 60-seat Prohibition Room, it's clear to see how they've blended the modern amenities of today while maintaining the colonial charm and rustic feeling. The inn has another dining room that seats about 60 that can be rented out for functions. Moore says they have the capacity to do 300 meals a night, and ideally, they want to get back to what the Inn was doing in its heyday 40 years ago when it comes to weddings and events. This year they have 4 weddings and 20 other events booked so far.



The General Stanton Inn

As for the colorful history of the Inn, it is long and storied. It was built in 1740 by Joseph Stanton II, a man who served in the Seven Years' War with George Washington. So, when talk of rebellion started and George Washington was a leader, and the Sons of Liberty began meeting, it was natural that Joseph Stanton III became a local leader, and his inn a safe meeting place.

The oral history is that Washington met Lafayette to plan the first cooperation of French and American troops to oust the British from Newport. The Inn also served as a stopping point for fugitive slaves traveling north on the Underground Railroad and looking to gain their freedom prior to the end of slavery. The Inn also gained notoriety for its reputation for illicit gambling as far back as the 1840s, and with the easy access to the water, it became a favorite transit point for rumrunners during Prohibition. Diamond Jim Brady and John D. Rockefeller were said to have enjoyed using the retractable roulette wheel embedded in the ceiling, and Al Capone once stopped in for a drink and a meal while not serving time for tax evasion.

The Inn is also home to several ghosts. Joseph III, of Sons of Liberty and Revolutionary War fame died at the Inn in 1821 and his remains are buried at the east end of the property. "The General," is the first of the apparitions. Several instances of his presence have been reported over the years, especially on the second floor, and employees, especially bartenders and housekeepers, have seen door handles turn and felt cool breezes on warm nights that can't be explained. The second ghost is "The Captain's Wife," and is said that she died of a broken heart waiting for her husband to return (most likely he died in the Hurricane of 1815) while watching from a third-floor window. There have been many reports from the second floor of footsteps from above, especially on stormy nights. And "The Ghost Cat," that's right, a feline phantom that is said to brush up against patrons' ankles, cast cat shadows on walls, and for years people have reported hearing "meow," when no cat was present.

As for the rooms about to be rented, there are 14, and a guest house that Moore envisions as a Bridal Suite at some point soon. The rooms accommodate two, while the house is available for up to four and has a kitchen. They come in an assortment of amenities and bedding configurations. The carpentry and tile work are modern but harken back to colonial artisanship, and there is even a Melville-inspired painting in one room that invokes the movie poster from "Jaws."

When it comes to small, beach community inns, The General Stanton Inn, punches well above its weight class. Not many others can claim the historical significance, boast the quality of the menu, and now offer beautiful rooms, all just a two-minute ride within white sand beaches, boat ramps, marinas, and national wildlife refuges.

To learn more about their room rates, menu, hours of operation, events, or history, visit their website at: <https://www.thegeneralstantoninn.com/> or you can call (401) 364-8888 or email general questions to: General@TheGeneralStantonInn.com

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