

TOWN&COUNTRY

Here's what to do, eat, and see in the picture-perfect City by the Sea



Classic Cruises of Newport

by [SAM DANGREMOND](#)

There's a reason some of America's grandest houses were built in this city by the sea. Along with spectacular coastal scenery, Newport is among a rare breed of [summer destinations](#) where dressing up in the evenings is still encouraged. At the Sky Bar, the top floor dining room of the [Clarke Cooke House on Bannister's Wharf](#), men are strongly urged to wear a jacket (and even a tie). It's also a place where [coaching](#) is still a regular activity.

The town is entirely walkable, and it's nice to start your visit with a stroll along the 3.5-mile [Cliff Walk](#), along which many of the Gilded Age "cottages," built by

rusticating families like the Vanderbilts and Astors, are perched. Many are still privately owned but others, like [The Breakers](#) and [Marble House](#), are open to the public through the [Preservation Society of Newport County](#). Below, a few of T&C's favorite spots and activities around town.

Best First Afternoon in Newport: [Classic Cruises of Newport](#)

24 Bannister's Wharf

Why: If you are new to the coastal town, the best way to get a feel for it is from the sea. Book a cruise on the 58-foot motor yacht Rum Runner II or the 72-foot sailing vessel Madeleine. Both boats offer trips around Narragansett Bay that offer a comprehensive introduction to the historic scenery.

Best Place to Break a Sweat: [The International Tennis Hall of Fame](#)

194 Bellevue Avenue

Why: For a Wimbledon experience on this side of the pond, visitors can play on the famed [grass court](#). The [Hall of Fame Tennis Championships](#), an ATP World Tour event, has been held here every year in July since 1976. Newport has also been called the sailing capital of the United States (the [New York Yacht Club](#), which maintains its on-the-water clubhouse here, chose it as the venue for every America's Cup between 1930 and 1983).

Best Outdoor Dining: [Scarpetta at Gurney's](#)

1 Goat Island

Why: Opened in 2017 as a sister property to the Hamptons institution, Gurney's Newport Resort & Marina revamped the Hyatt Regency on Goat Island and debuted in 2017 with 257 renovated guest rooms, four restaurants, pools, a spa, fitness center, and the largest meeting space in the region. Its waterfront restaurant, Scarpetta, is an outpost of the [popular Italian dining group](#) that features one of the best views in town.

Best Over-the-Top Destination: [Marble House](#)

596 Bellevue Avenue

Why: [The Breakers](#) may be the most well-known of the Newport Mansions, but our favorite has always been Marble House. (This may be a biased opinion; the author's father worked as a consultant for the Preservation Society of Newport County in the 1990s and had a family apartment in Marble House.)

The house, built between 1888 and 1892, was modeled on Versailles's [Petit Trianon](#) by the architect Richard Morris Hunt for William and Alva Vanderbilt. And the cost of construction was reported to be \$11 million or \$280 million in today's dollars (a full \$7 million of the original sum went toward 500,000 cubic feet of marble).

Take a stroll down to the seaside cliff to visit the exotic Chinese Tea House, where Alva Vanderbilt hosted rallies for the women's right to vote, a right that was granted 94 years ago today.

Best Outdoor Drinks: [Castle Hill Inn](#)

590 Ocean Drive

Why: This [Relais & Châteaux](#) property offers stunning views of the Newport Bridge and [The Lawn](#) is the place to be. With a drink in hand and a claim to one of the Adirondack chairs on the sprawling lawn, you'll understand why there's not a better spot in town to watch the setting sun. Cocktails and seaside-appropriate fare like clam chowder and lobster rolls are offered; the dining room offers a more formal dining option (including a tasting menu featuring a duet of Angus beef and passion-fruit soufflé) while still retaining the incredible view. For a true getaway experience, book one of the charming—and very private—[beach cottages](#).

Best New Restaurant: [TSK at The Revolving Door](#)

509 Thames Street

Why: New this season, the beloved Thames Street Kitchen opened up shop in the Revolving Door, which has previously hosted guest chefs in residency. The *Providence Journal* says the concept has "[a pleasing blend of elegant dishes and inspired flavors](#)." The Revolving Door's cocktails have always been fantastic, and that has not changed.

Best Vintage Store: [Closet Revival](#)

30 Broadway

Why: This store is great for the same reason The Church Mouse in Palm Beach is one of our favorite vintage shops: the clientele in the community is an excellent resource for inventory. (I found this turquoise blazer there for \$60.)

Best Movie Theater: [newportFILM](#)

Why: newportFILM hosts screenings of films in outdoor venues around the city. 2018 includes *The Price of Everything* on the Newport Art Museum Lawn and *Far from the Tree* at The Elms. As if you needed more of a reason to attend than watching a film outside on a movie theater-sized screen at sunset, the events are free and include pre-film live music and food vendors.

Best Co-Ed Fashion Boutique: [Rib & Rhein](#)

86 William Street

Why: Brands like ETRO, Marc Jacobs, and Turnbull & Asser are represented at this boutique opened in 2008 by husband-and-wife team Thomas and Erin Riberio. They call the ethos of the store "Anglo-Indo WASPy luxury." But the store is about more than just clothes—it's an environment worth exploring all by itself; when I saw back issues of *Town & Country* alongside vintage Kennedy photographs, I didn't want to leave.

Best Nighttime Scene: [Clarke Cooke House](#)

26 Bannister's Wharf

Why: This is where the see-and-be-seen crowd gathers on Saturday night. On an average night, you'll find men of all ages in blue blazers twirling women in preppy sundresses on the dance floor of the Sky Bar, while a less gussied-up crowd mingles throughout the other three floors of the restaurant cum nightclub. If you eat dinner here, make sure to leave room for the [Snowball in Hell](#), a chocolate-coated goblet filled with chocolate roulade and vanilla ice cream, and topped with Callebaut chocolate sauce and toasted coconut.

Best BYOB Restaurant: [Winner Winner](#)

677 Thames Street

Why: Chefs Chad Hoffer and Tyler Burnley, who own and run Winner Winner with their twin sister wives Julia and Anna Jenkins (this is reality and not an HBO pitch), met while working as chefs at BLT Prime in New York. The Fifth Ward restaurant serves fried and rotisserie chicken and a variety of comfort-food side dishes like Southern-style biscuits, and Winner's sister restaurant, [Mission](#), serves delicious burgers, hot dogs, and falafel.

Best Place to Splurge on a Dress: [Isoude](#)

118 John Street

Why: Isoude's fun patterns like a brushstroke-dotted print make these ladylike dresses stand out in a crowd.

Best Boozy Distraction: [Newport Craft Brewing & Distilling Co.](#)

293 JT Connell Highway

Why: The owners of this joint enterprise began brewing beer back in 1999, and added the distillation side of the business until 2006, making Thomas Tew the first distillery in the state in over 135 years. The free self-guided tour tells the entertaining story of how four Colby College buddies followed every fraternity brother's dream of opening a brewery—and succeeded (there are also daily guided tours at 3 p.m.). Beer (\$9) and rum (\$10) tastings are available at the end of the tour. This season they're debuting a gin as well as a new IPA, and the pavilion on the back patio is the perfect place to enjoy cocktails and brews.

Best Family Activity: [Rail Explorers](#)

1 Alexander Road, Portsmouth

Why: A scenic ride on these pedal-powered vehicles using existing railroad tracks along Aquidneck Island and Narragansett Bay is an experience you will not soon forget. It's also an activity that everyone can enjoy—no matter their age.

Best Place to Stay: [Hotel Viking](#)

1 Bellevue Avenue

Why: This historic hotel, built in the heart of town in 1926, offers Old World charm and modern amenities like flat-screen TVs and an award-winning [spa](#) that offers 12 different types of massages. The hotel celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2016 and recently completed a multi-million dollar renovation to the lobby, restaurant, guestrooms, and meeting space that refreshed the décor with lighter and brighter colors.