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TIPS FOR TRAVELERS AT HOME AND ABROAD



FORK IN THE ROAD | FAIRFIELD, CONN.

At Rawley's, a hot dog is the star of the show

One in a series on iconic New England eateries.

By Patricia Harris and David Lyon
GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS

Martha Stewart was probably too well-mannered to carve her name into the wood-paneled walls of Rawley's Drive-In, located along a busy commercial stretch of Route 1 on Connecticut's Gold Coast. But the former resident of neighboring Westport left her mark anyway. Walk in the door of the humble hot dog shack and practically the first thing you'll see is a sign announcing "Rawley's — A Martha Stewart Favorite." More than a decade ago she named Rawley's as one of the best small restaurants in the country in Martha Stewart Living magazine, proclaiming her allegiance to the hot dog "with the works" and extra bacon. That's tall praise for a sandwich served on a decidedly unfancy paper plate.

According to Bill Stefan, who has worked at Rawley's since 2002, Stewart would sit at a stool at the counter and hardly speak. He regrets never meeting another celebrity regular, Paul Newman, but he has served John Malkovich, Drew Barrymore, Richard Belzer, and Fairfield native Justin Long. "I'm sure there are other celebrities I don't know," he says.

But then celebrity-watching isn't really the point at Rawley's, the red-shingled eatery that does one thing so well that road food fanatics make the detour off Interstate 95 to claim a green-painted booth with a bright red Formica table. The surrounding walls are unfinished vertical soft wood boards where patrons have inscribed their names with knife, pen, marker, and who knows what other implements. But it's not just the opportunity to indulge in schoolboy vandalism that draws the cognoscenti. While the menu includes several burger variations and classics like tuna melt and grilled cheese, the dog's the thing.

Rawley's buys its hot dogs from Hummel Bros., a meat market turned manufacturer in New Haven, and gets soft, fresh rolls from Chaves Bakery in Bridgeport. The dogs are first deep-fried to make them plump and juicy, Stefan explains, noting that the practice is not uncommon. Then they go onto a hot griddle next to the buns to give them crisp grill marks.

"Then come the condiments," says Stefan. Dog and bun are but the framework on which

diners can lavish their toppings of choice. "People love bacon, of course, and our homemade hot relish," he says. "Then there's the chili cheese dog — people love that too. But 'the works' is the real signature." Loaded with yellow mustard, green pickle relish, sauerkraut, and broken pieces of bacon, "the works" practically bursts from its bun and rightfully commands the awe and respect of hot dog lovers. It's best accompanied by a milkshake made with hard ice cream, which, Stefan notes, runs a "close second" to "the works" as the most popular item on the menu.

Celebrities and road foodies notwithstanding, locals are the backbone of Rawley's diners. At lunch time on a recent weekday, the group included Doug Fleisch, a 40-year veteran (Rawley's dates from 1947), and Gwynne Alperovich, who was initiating her toddlers into the Rawley's tra-

dition. Jill Clark, who was raised in Fairfield but now lives in Vermont, had stopped in for her hot dog fix. "I'm a hot dog person, with 'the works,'" she said. "Once you have moved away from Rawley's, you have to come back to get your fill."

RAWLEY'S DRIVE-IN 1886 Post Road, Fairfield, Conn. 203-259-9023. Open Mon-Sat 11 a.m. to 6:45 p.m. Hot dogs, burgers, and sandwiches \$3-\$6.50.

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Counterclockwise from Martha Stewart (above): Justin Long, John Malkovich, Drew Barrymore, Richard Belzer, and Paul Newman all have eaten hot dogs at Rawley's.

HERE

CONNECTICUT GREEN ACRES DELUXE

Can a working farm double as a luxury resort? At the newly rebranded Winvian Farm in Connecticut's Litchfield Hills, the answer is a resounding yes. Set on 113 acres bordering extensive woods and lakes, the Relais & Châteaux property features 18 individually designed cottages, one suite in the historic 1775 farmhouse, five-star candlelight dining, a 5,000-square-foot spa, new 40-foot outdoor swimming pool, plus three acres of vegetable and fruit gardens, four greenhouses, an apary, and livestock including sheep, pigs, and chickens. Executive chef Chris Eddy and proprietor Margaret Smith are committed to serving organic, non-GMO cuisine from products either grown on the farm or locally sourced. In the spirit of agricultural tourism, guests are encouraged to help pick produce for their next meal. Seasonal rates from \$459-\$1,375. 860-567-9600, www.winvian.com

PROVINCETOWN EXHIBITION FOR CRITCHLEY

Visual, conceptual, and performance artist, environmental activist, and visionary Jay Critchley has shown and performed his work in Argentina, Japan, England, the Netherlands, Germany, Colombia, and the United States. This spring, the Provincetown Art Association & Museum (PAAM) presents "Jay Critchley, Incorporated," the first-ever museum survey of this longtime P-town resident. Spanning more than 30 years, the exhibit chronicles the highlights

of his career including projects, corporate personas, and enterprises — both humorous and serious — that tackle the big issues of our time, including global pathogens, plastics, car culture, climate change, and corporate domination. May 1-June 21, \$10. Opening reception May 8, 7 p.m. Free. 508-487-1750, www.paam.org/exhibitions/

THERE

'JUNK RETHUNK' AT PHILADELPHIA ZOO

An 8-foot-long pink crocodile made of chewing gum, a 900-pound gorilla made of recycled car doors (pictured here), and a 3-foot-tall rhinoceros made from silver trays are just several

of the sculptures crafted from recycled, reused, and repurposed materials on exhibition at the Philadelphia Zoo through Oct. 31. Featuring the work of 11 artists from five countries, "Second Nature" aims to use large-scale contemporary art installations to forge a connection between wasteful human behavior and animal endangerment. Of course, there are plenty of real animals to see. The zoo's 42-acre Victorian garden is home to more than 1,300 animals, many of them rare and endangered, including cheetahs, hippos, giraffes, reptiles, birds, monkeys, apes, polar bears, and more. Adults \$20, children ages 2-11 \$18, under 2 free. 215-243-1100, www.philadelphiazoo.org

SHOP TILL YOU DROP IN MIAMI... OR DUBAI

Attention, shoppers! Conrad Hotels & Resorts is offering its guests a unique way to experience the cities they visit. Available in Miami through May 22, the Shop the City by Conrad package provides a customizable shopping day complete with



expeditions to Burberry, Saint Laurent, and Tourneau, as well as a local boutique, The Webster. Includes two-night luxury accommodations, breakfast-for-two each morning, and a full day of shopping at the city's chicest boutiques from the comfort of your own chauffeured vehicle. In addition, the hotel's concierge can offer recommendations for cultural destinations based on your preferences. Rates from \$405 per night, two-night minimum. The brand is also offering limited-time Shop the City by Conrad stays in select cities throughout 2015, including: Conrad Dubai, Conrad Istanbul, Conrad Tokyo, Conrad Beijing, Conrad Hong Kong, and Conrad New York. 1-800-CONRAD, www.conradhotels.com/ShoptheCity

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Style meets durability in the new waterproof iPhone case by Catalyst. Fully dust-, dirt-, and snow-proof, the ultra-slim case is tested IP-68 waterproof to a depth of 16.4 feet, and military-grade impact protection safeguards from drops and shocks up to 6.6 feet. A sensitive touchscreen film gives full access to all iPhone functions and features, and the signature hard-coated optical lens en-

sures perfect photography even under the wettest conditions (pictured above). Additionally, the cases are manufactured to work with the majority of aftermarket chargers and headphones, meaning you no longer have to remove the case to use the ports and jacks. Available in a variety of colors. \$64.99 (iPhone 4/4S/5/5S); \$69.99 (iPhone 6); \$74.99 (iPhone 6 Plus). catalystcase.com

WIRELESS HEADPHONES

Designed for travelers and commuters, Kinivo's Wireless Bluetooth Headphones (BTH240) offer a lightweight way to make hands-free calls and wirelessly stream music directly from your mobile devices. A built-in noise-canceling microphone automatically pauses music when receiving an incoming call, and buttons let you switch tracks and adjust volume. An integrated rechargeable lithium-ion battery provides 10 hours of continuous active audio, or 200 hours when in standby mode, and a mini port allows for charging with USB cable (included). The curved design and cushioned pads provide comfortable behind-the-head, over-the-ear use. The slim and foldable headphones fit into a carrying pouch that can easily slip into your backpack, purse, or briefcase. \$20. www.kinivo.com

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