

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

CHECK IN | MARRIOTT, NEWPORT, RI

GRANDLY SHIPSHAPE

By Ellen Albanese
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

At the redesigned Newport Marriott, you feel like you're staying on a classic sailing ship — if a classic sailing ship had comfortable beds, multiple-jet showers, and a 55-inch flat-screen TV in every room, that is.

The city's largest hotel has reopened after a \$35 million renovation of all 320 rooms and suites, common areas, and second-floor function space. The nautical décor, by Malcolm Berg of Florida-based Edge of Architecture EoA Inc., is clever, pleasing, and well integrated, from a reception desk that looks like a sleek, wooden boat turned on its side to thick ropes used as dividers and focal points to a softly backlit sail stretched behind the headboard in every guest room.

In the soaring lobby, a circle of hanging ropes defines a seating area (pictured below) around a low fountain; the gurgling water provides a pleasing sound track. Horizontal "sails" float above another cluster of furniture, and a fluorescent blue light defines an undulating wave along one wall. The Plank bar, named to acknowledge those who risked punishment rather than give up their liquor during Prohibition, doubles as a coffee counter by day. At the other end of the lobby, the Skiff bar has an entire ceiling made of short lengths of rope, and — in a rare deviation from marine motifs — wrought iron-style entrance gates, modeled after those at The Breakers. The Skiff has great harbor views that will be ex-



panded when an outdoor terrace opens later this month.

Our room on the seventh floor had a harbor view (above); other rooms, some with balconies, look out onto the lobby or the city. The décor was a soothing palette of whites and off-whites, with a large nautical painting and a blue accent pillow on the white bed cover providing pops of color. Accessories such as fishnet-wrapped clear glass globes and a floor lamp modeled on a "Jacob's staff," a surveying instrument once used for nautical measurements, added to the theme. Soft, gray-beige tiles on the bathroom floor and in the two-person shower suggested ridged sand. There was also a desktop with discreet outlets and USB ports and a firm, comfortable upholstered chair.

Most rooms have showers, said Ryan Yalanis, the hotel's director of sales, but some also have tubs. Families can take advantage of king rooms with an upholstered chair that doubles as a pullout bed, two-

bedroom suites, or adjoining rooms.

In the new restaurant, Mainsail, curved banquettes across from floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the harbor echo the shape of a boat's stern and are defined, again, by creative use of ropes. Overhead light filters through a series of rough-hewn planks in an unusual chandelier.

The menu is thoughtful and reasonably priced, with plenty of appetizers, salads, and sandwiches, along with a good selection of wines by the glass and craft beers. On our server's recommendation, we tried an appetizer of pan-seared Halloumi cheese and watermelon with red onion marmalade and mint; the salty cheese contrasted nicely with the sweet watermelon. Lobster sliders were on the bland side and the house-made chips much too salty.

The hotel also has a spa, fitness center, and indoor saltwater swimming pool, which were not part of the renovation.

The location could not be more convenient for exploring Newport. The hotel is next door to the visitors center and an easy walk to the city's dining, shopping, and historic heart. The hotel will soon have bicycles for guests to rent for a "suggested donation" that will benefit the Children's Miracle Network at Hasbro Children's Hospital in Providence and the Newport Boys & Girls Club, Yalanis said.

NEWPORT MARRIOTT 25 America's Cup Ave., 401-849-1000, www.newportmarriott.com. From \$119; summer rates from \$299.

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CHECK IN | GILDED, NEWPORT, RI

B&B IN BOLD COLORS, QUIET SETTING, MIX A DRINK, PLAY A GAME, GO OUT

By Diane Bair and Pamela Wright
GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS

If you hate the hovering hosts and Victorian vibe of old-school New England bed-and-breakfast inns, here's one that's an antidote to all that chintz. Gilded, a sister property to The Attwater, opened May 8 in the former Brinley Victorian Inn in Newport. Set in a quiet residential neighborhood a few blocks from Thames Street, Gilded is a paint box of vivid hues of peacock, fuchsia, and purple, designed by Boston's Rachel Reider Interiors. The new owners, Lark Hotels, didn't change the architectural details of the house (foyer pictured below), but went playful with color and eye-catching accents, like butterfly-printed patterned wallpaper and a plush purple settee. Seventeen guest rooms and suites are set in the main house and a carriage house, attached by the breakfast room. Guest rooms are unique, ranging in size from 145 to 411 square feet (that's the Lark Suite, the best room in the house), with 40-inch LED TVs and iPads preprogrammed with local information. Wi-Fi is complimentary.

Breakfast, included in the room rate, is a bit different, too, featuring a collection of small plates like a grapefruit and avocado tostada and bananas brulee with walnuts, honey, and cinnamon. The five or six dishes might include a breakfast salad or a pizza among the savory options,



GILDED

plus pastries, homemade bread, and yogurt. Afternoons bring "G and Tea" time — Gilded provides the mixers if you bring the booze, not a difficult thing to procure in Newport. When the weather warms up, bring your tippie to the outdoor courtyard, where a croquet set is ready to go (a nod to Gilded Age amusements), or test your skills at the custom-made white lacquer billiards table.

As always, Newport is a happening haunt this summer, with a roster of events that includes three music festivals (including the Newport Jazz Festival, July 31-Aug. 2), and the 20th anniversary of the Newport Flower Show (June 19-21, at Rosecliff Mansion, birthplace of the American Beauty rose). Hotel rooms in high season are typically pricy, and most have two-night minimums on weekends. Gilded is somewhere in the middle of the market. The Gilded team can set you up with a sailing trip or dinner reservations, so you get the service of a hotel with the intimacy and feel of staying in a neighborhood. Call it a modern take on the B&B experience.

GILDED 23 Brinley St., Newport, R.I., 410-619-7758, www.gildedhotel.com. Summer room rates from \$249 (midweek); \$329 (weekends.) Two-night minimum stay required on weekends from May to mid-October; three-night stay required for some festivals and holidays.

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PHOTOS BY ELLEN ALBANESE FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

HERE

ISLAND ESCAPE DEBUTS IN PORTLAND, MAINE

The Inn at Diamond Cove makes its debut on June 25 on Great Diamond Island, a short ferry ride from bustling downtown Portland, Maine. Built in the former soldiers' barracks in Fort McKinley, in the heart of Casco Bay, the Inn features 44 deluxe guest rooms and suites, balconies, fireplaces, and kitchenettes. This private island community is virtually car-free, making it easy for visitors to explore scenic trails by bicycle or foot, visit the Fort McKinley Museum, or simply relax by the inn's heated in-ground pool with cabana bar. The Diamond's Edge Restaurant offers views of the bay and fresh local seafood. Call sister property, the Portland Harbor Hotel, or reserve online. Rates from \$325. 207-775-9090, www.innatdiamondcove.com/

MAINE LOBSTERS AND LIGHTHOUSES

Jump start summer with the Lobsters, Lighthouses & Luxury package offered throughout June by the Historic Inns of Rockland. Stay two consecutive nights in luxury accommodations at the Granite Inn, LimeRock Inn, or Berry Manor Inn

and receive two tickets to Captain Jack's Lobster Adventure Cruise; tour one of the area's oldest working lobster pounds; savor a Maine lobster lunch with fixings on the wharf; and acquire two "Got Lobstah" T-shirts and chocolate lobsters. The package also includes breakfast for two each morning; tickets to the Maine Lighthouse Museum; self-driving map to six local area lighthouses; and a souvenir lighthouse map highlighting all of Maine's lighthouses. Two-night packages from \$475 for single or double occupancy, depending upon dates, choice of inn, and room. 207-596-6611, www.historicinnsofrockland.com/lobsters-lighthouses-luxury/



ALAN ABONYI/INCA

THERE

NEW HOTEL ANOTHER STAR IN TORONTO

Those heading to Toronto for the 2015 Pan Am Games (July 10-26) or Parapan Am Games (Aug. 7-15) may want to book a room at the newly opened Delta Hotel, the city's newest four-star hotel located in SouthCore, a developing neighborhood adjacent to downtown's financial, sports, and entertainment districts. The sleek, 46-floor hotel, filled with modern amenities — plus lap pool, well-equipped gym, stylish restaurant, and intimate whiskey bar — is steps away from the CN Tower, Ripley's Aquarium, Steam Whistle Brewing, the Rogers Centre, and Union Station, and

offers direct access to Toronto's indoor pathway system that links much of the city. Spacious accommodations offer views over Lake Ontario or the urban skyline. Rates from \$168. Planning to attend a game (tickets to the aforementioned games from \$20; www.toronto2015.org), concert, or other event? Book the online Special Events Rate and show your ticket at check-in for additional savings. From \$152. 1-416-849-1200, www.deltahotels.com/Hotels/Delta-Toronto

LUXURY AND LOVE IN CATALONIA

Romance is in the air every day in Barcelona — a destination renowned for its architecture, culture, fashion, and cuisine — Spain's second-largest city and capital of the autonomous community of Catalonia (www.catalunya.com). Now visiting couples can be pampered in style with the Romance Package offered by Hotel Arts Barcelona, a 44-story, luxury seafront property. Package includes accommodations in a deluxe room or executive suite; breakfast for two in-room or in Café Veranda; chilled cava and chocolate covered strawberries; and late checkout at 2 p.m. Enjoy five on-site restaurants, including two-star Michelin rated

Enoteca; relax in the 3,000-square-foot spa; or loll around the outdoor pool overlooking the Mediterranean and architect Frank Gehry's iconic fish sculpture. Available thru Dec. 31. Rates from \$326. 011-34-93-221-1000, www.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/Barcelona/Default.htm

EVERYWHERE

ECOTOURISM, ADVENTURE, AND SAVINGS

For adventure travelers who also love luxury, International Nature & Cultural Adventures crafts trips to seven select destinations: Antarctica, Alaska, Galápagos, Patagonia, Peru, Turkey, and the Sea of Cortez. Embracing the principles of ecotourism, INCA creates "adventures with a conscience" with most scheduled trips limited to 16 travelers. INCA has just announced a \$1,000 savings on fall cruises in the Galápagos (pictured at left) for departures starting Oct. 1 through Dec. 10 (excluding Thanksgiving holiday), including the popular 11-day "Origin of Species" voyage (\$5,795 per person, double occupancy). Tour includes two nights in Quito; an overnight on Santa Cruz Island to see giant tortois-



es in the wild and the Charles Darwin Research Station; seven-night cruise through the Galápagos Islands aboard the luxury yacht Integrity or Reina Silvia; and all meals and excursions. 510-420-1550, www.inca1.com

ORIGAMI-STYLE FOLDING TRAVEL BOXES

Getting ready for a road trip? New foldable boxes are perfect for camping or beaching it, tailgate parties, or picnics. Inspired by origami, they fold down to conserve space, and pop open when needed. Made of durable tear-proof, water-repellant, and dirt-resistant polyester, the lightweight boxes make it easy to carry up to 65 pounds of groceries, cooking equipment, beach toys, and any other items you need for your trip. Integrated handles make transport easy. Available in black or grey dots. The Container Store is offering a promo rate (\$27.99) through July 21 (normally \$34.99). www.containerstore.com/shop?showDS=true&Ns=default&Ntt=foldable+boxes&submit=

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