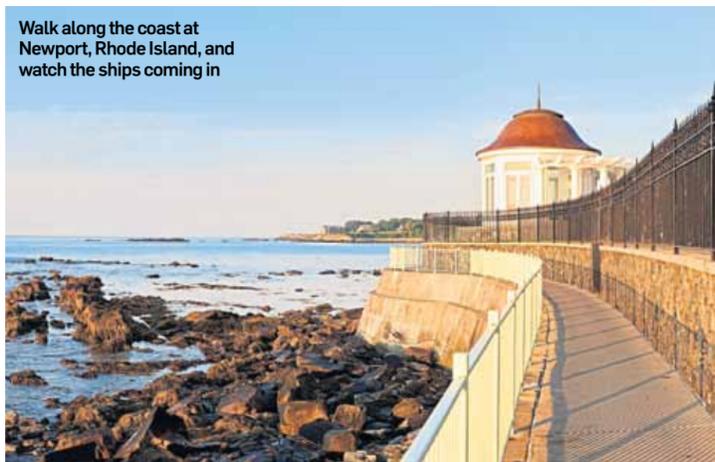


Ocean House is the quintessential New England guest house and resort, offering its clients five-star luxury



Walk along the coast at Newport, Rhode Island, and watch the ships coming in



The bustling Federal Hill area of Providence is popular with visitors

The skyline of Providence, capital of Rhode Island and the state's most populous city



jumped on a ferry in Galilee over to Block Island, a 10sq mile piece of land that has long attracted New Englanders seeking sun and surf.

We rented bikes and cycled over to Mohegan Bluffs and the Southeast Light lighthouse, where we quenched our thirst with Del's Frozen Lemonade.

Then, arriving at the New Harbour, we hired kayaks to see more of Trims Pond and Rat Island.

After snoozing on the ferry back to the mainland, we joined scores of other tourists and locals at the popular George's of Galilee.

Fish tacos and a seafood platter with fresh pasta set us up nicely for a tasting session at the Sons of Liberty Spirits whiskey and vodka distillery in South Kingstown.

For the final couple of days in Rhode Island, Rachel and I set a course for the "sailing capital of the world", Newport.

From our lodgings at Hotel Viking, we went for a driving tour of Ocean Drive, learning more about Eisenhower House and the Bay Walk around Adams State Park fortress,

campuses, attractions and entertainment in the Renaissance City.

On our first morning, we saw Providence from the sunlit water during a River Boat Tour, as Captain Tom pointed out the city's landmarks.

Following that, we strolled around the RISD Museum – one of America's largest art museum's – before an alfresco dinner of clam chowder, paella, lobster and crab cakes at Hemenway's.

On the second and final morning of our short-but-sweet stay in Providence, we lined our stomachs with breakfast at Greek restaurant Kleos in the theatre district, before heading south on I-95.

From our next base at the new Fairfield Inn and Suites by Marriott in South Kingstown, we were all set to explore South County, the coastal region centred on Rhode Island's seasonal vacation communities.

After Armando's claim a couple of days before, there was only one place to start – Ocean House.

Perched high on the bluffs of Watch Hill, with views of Long Island and Connecticut, this quintessential New England seaside guest house and resort is apparently a firm favourite of the Clintons, among others.

Not only is it a Forbes five-star hotel, its OH! Spa and Coast restaurant are also five-star rated, making Ocean House one of only 13 triple five-star resorts in the world in 2018.

The lavish property was meticulously reconstructed in 2003 to reflect its rich turn-of-the-20th-Century history, and some of its quirky touches – the cosy cinema, colourful gelato stall and pale blue striped towels – are reminders of a bygone era.

However, Ocean House's highlight is unquestionably its beach, where the warm waves of the Atlantic lap the golden sugary sand, and waiters in smart polo shirts shower guests with cocktails and snacks.

Making the most of the good weather, we

LITTLE BUT BEAUTIFUL

As we deal with another Scottish winter, it's a good time to start looking at summer holiday destinations.

Richard Jones can highly recommend America's smallest state

Armando Bisceglia is a well-travelled man. Over the years, the restaurateur and sommelier has scoured the globe for the best food and wine to use at his Italian eatery, Trattoria Zooma, in Providence. But despite frequently jetting off to some of the world's most picturesque locations, Armando's own "happy place" is not too far away from his home in Rhode Island.

"There is nothing better in life than sitting on a deck chair on the beach at Ocean House," he says.

My wife Rachel and I had just begun our tour of America's smallest state, and just a few hours before dining with Armando in the bustling Federal Hill area of Providence, we had flown into Boston, before driving an hour south in our rental car.

Our hotel for the first couple of nights was the landmark Omni Providence Hotel.

Connected to the Dunkin' Donuts Center and the popular Providence Place mall, the Omni is within walking distance of the college

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TRAVEL FACTS

Richard Jones flew to Boston Logan airport with Virgin Atlantic. One-way flights from Manchester cost from £467. Visit virginatlantic.com or call 0344 874 7747. Car hire from Boston Logan airport with Hertz (hertz.co.uk) starts from £31 a day. For more information see visitrhodeisland.com, goprovidence.com, southcountryri.com and discovernewport.org

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