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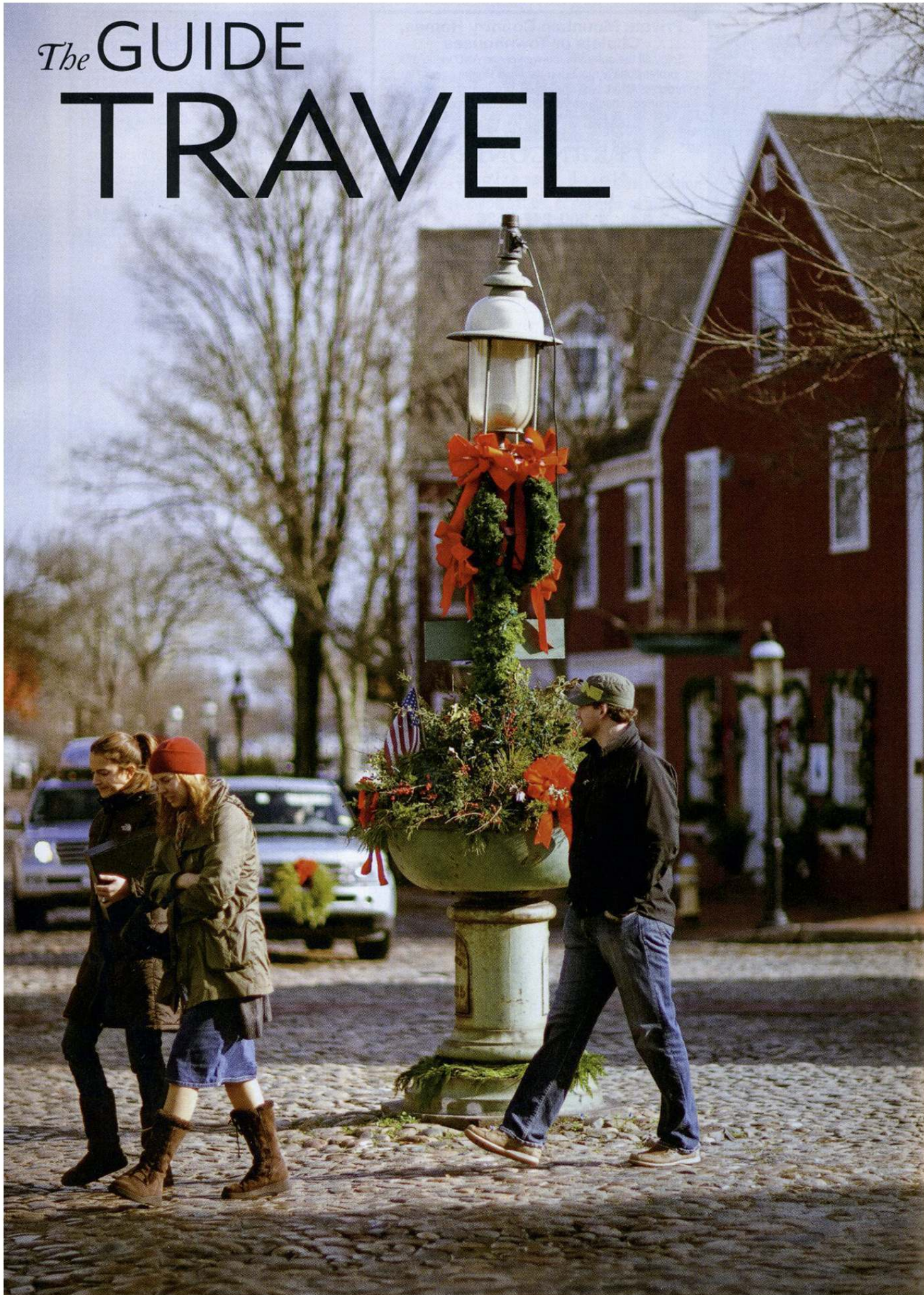
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*The* GUIDE  
TRAVEL



# Come, Let's Stroll

*The summer haven of Nantucket  
shines again on one special  
December weekend.*

BY ANNIE B. COPPS



PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
CARL TREMBLAY

# M

y first trip to the island of Nantucket was in the 1970s. My little sister was a toddler, and my older brother was spending the summer with family friends on a ranch out West. My mother sensed that I was a little jealous of both the cute baby and my big brother's adventures, so she packed us up for a long girls' weekend. We took the ferry from Hyannis and spent the weekend eating ice cream, visiting the Whaling Museum, swimming at Children's Beach, riding bikes out to 'Sconset, and window-shopping. I spent the return trip working on a needlepoint pattern that Mom had bought me and admiring my excellent sunburn.

That was the first of many trips to an island that captured my heart decades ago, as it has those of the many thousands who spill out of the ferries and fill its cobblestone streets. With its beautiful beaches, outstanding sailing, vibrant shops, and waterside dining, it's so easy to fall in love with Nantucket in the summer.

But there's *another* Nantucket. Come fall and winter, it's a sleepy New England village. It belongs again to the locals, and to the hardy souls who love walking its windswept shores with no one in sight, who duck into its warm restaurants, where everyone seems to know everyone else. There's one special weekend in December, though, when the streets hum with visitors again. Officially it's the annual Christmas Stroll Weekend—though locals call it simply "Stroll." It began 37 years ago, and the idea hasn't changed since: Give people a reason to get together, to enjoy the island, to give a big boost to its shops and restaurants, and to celebrate a place that doesn't close up when the air turns cold—it simply relaxes, and in a way its people grow warmer. Stroll brings together people in a good mood, inspired in part by festive shops decorated with holly boughs and fanciful window displays.



OPPOSITE, Nantucket's cobblestone Main Street is decked for the holidays.  
LEFT, carolers in period costume are a highlight of Christmas Stroll Weekend.  
TOP, a private residence gets into the spirit of the season.



A wreath of fresh evergreens dresses the window of this downtown Nantucket storefront.

Wharf, the Nantucket Chamber of Commerce sponsors an event called “Chamber Food Fair,” as local professional chefs and home cooks offer hot provisions to chilled and weary shoppers.

Serious dining is available as well; in fact, many restaurants re-open for Stroll Weekend. Finding a seat at one of the island’s many great venues requires patience and, better yet, some planning, but you’re bound to make new friends or even join the roaming carolers while you wait. Despite the chilly weather, the Boarding House restaurant’s outdoor oyster bar keeps the crowds pleased well into the afternoon.

As the early-winter sun slips toward the horizon, the caroling continues, and theatrical performances begin. Stage and screen actor John Shea reads Dylan Thomas’s classic *A Child’s Christmas in Wales*; the Karina Association presents its “Christmas Opera Concert.” And, if you feel the need to slip away from all this Noel activity for a bit, there’s still plenty of island left: house tours, literary and historical walking tours, book signings, bird-

watching, wine tastings, a ghost walk, and Saturday’s annual five-mile “Nantucket Winter Run.”

At weekend’s end, as you climb aboard the return ferry, you can feel the spirit all around you. You’ve shared a common experience with friends and strangers in an uncommon place, where for a few special days everyone was a stroller, everyone was an islander. 🦋

*Nantucket’s Christmas Stroll Weekend 2010 is set for December 3–5. This year’s Nantucket Noel celebration extends from November 26 through December 31.*

## WHEN YOU GO ...

For a detailed guide to the 37th Annual Nantucket Christmas Stroll Weekend, call the Nantucket Chamber of Commerce at 508-228-1700, or find a schedule of events at: [nantucketchamber.org/visitor/Stroll.html](http://nantucketchamber.org/visitor/Stroll.html)

## WHERE TO STAY

Nantucket home rentals normally are minimum one-week stays at high prices, but you can usually find reasonable, three-day deals during Stroll Weekend. Book your hotel room well in advance.

**BRANT POINT INN**  
6 North Beach St.  
508-228-5442  
[brantpointinn.com](http://brantpointinn.com)

**CLIFF LODGE**  
9 Cliff Road  
508-228-9480  
[clifflodgenantucket.com](http://clifflodgenantucket.com)

**JARED COFFIN HOUSE**  
29 Broad St.  
800-248-2405, 508-228-2400  
[jaredcoffinhouse.com](http://jaredcoffinhouse.com)

## WHITE ELEPHANT

50 Easton St.  
800-445-6574,  
508-228-2500  
[whiteelephanthotel.com](http://whiteelephanthotel.com)

## WHERE TO EAT

There’s no shortage of great restaurants, but make a reservation just in case.

**21 FEDERAL**  
21 Federal St.  
508-228-2121  
[21federal.com](http://21federal.com)

**AMERICAN SEASONS**  
80 Centre St.  
508-228-7111  
[americanseasons.com](http://americanseasons.com)

## BLACK-EYED SUSAN'S

10 India St.  
508-325-0308  
[black-eyedsusans.com](http://black-eyedsusans.com)

## BOARDING HOUSE

12 Federal St.  
508-228-9622  
[boardinghousenantucket.com](http://boardinghousenantucket.com)

## BROTHERHOOD OF THIEVES

23 Broad St.  
508-228-2551  
[brotherhoodofthieves.com](http://brotherhoodofthieves.com)

## COMPANY OF THE CAULDRON

5 India St.  
508-228-4016  
[companyofthecauldron.com](http://companyofthecauldron.com)

## EVEN KEEL CAFÉ

40 Main St.  
508-228-1979  
[evenkeelcafe.com](http://evenkeelcafe.com)

## LE LANGUEDOC BISTRO

24 Broad St.  
508-228-2552; [lelanguedoc.com](http://lelanguedoc.com)

## STRAIGHT WHARF RESTAURANT

6 Harbor Square  
508-228-4499  
[straightwharfrestaurant.com](http://straightwharfrestaurant.com)

## HOW TO GET THERE

This is a busy travel weekend, so book ahead, and leave time for traffic and parking. Ferry boats leave from two locations in Hyannis. There are also a number of direct flights from Boston and Hyannis.

## THE STEAMSHIP AUTHORITY

508-495-3278  
[steamshipauthority.com](http://steamshipauthority.com)

## HY-LINE CRUISES

800-492-8082; [hy-linecruises.com](http://hy-linecruises.com)

## CAPE AIR

866-227-3247, 508-771-6944  
[flycapeair.com](http://flycapeair.com)

## NANTUCKET AIRLINES

800-635-8787, 508-228-6234  
[nantucketairlines.org](http://nantucketairlines.org)