

The Bolder Shoulder Season

SUDDENLY, LUXURIOUS WEEKEND GETAWAYS ARE ALL DEALS, NO CROWDS.

Savvy New Englanders know the ocean here is at its warmest not in July or August, but in September. And whether or not that compels you to want to dive right in, the so-called shoulder season is when prices at many of our plushiest beachside properties take a dive. At the same time, the crowds around them thin out to manageable levels, and usually-impossible-to-get-into resorts suddenly have deals on their toniest suites. Besides: Given the abbreviated summer we've had, we're ready to declare an endless summer — at least until October.



MARTHA'S VINEYARD

The Harbor View Hotel

Edgartown's grande dame isn't quite offering the prices from opening day in 1895, but after Labor Day, non-weekend rates for the newly renovated property fall to nearly half the in-season prices, and include a free 3-course dinner or lobster clambake. For weekends, book two nights and stay three or book three nights and stay five. Hot mulled cider and fresh-baked cookies take away the nip in the air. ■ 131 N. WATER ST., EDGARTOWN, 508-627-7000, HARBOR-VIEW.COM.

NANTUCKET

The White Elephant The Summer House

The island's sparkling new White Elephant Residences were packed to the gills all summer, but as of this month not only have vacancies, but also are offering a third night for free when you stay for two, alongside free transport, plus special prices on the spa and in-house restaurant. (Meanwhile, it's easier than ever to get a tee time, which is easily secured through the property's discounted golf package.) Meantime, rates also plummet at the ultrapopular Summer House — worth a visit in its own right for its pristine rooms and idyllic beachside locale, but now more than ever for the transformation that Boston chef Marc Orfaly (of Pigalle fame) has given the main restaurant. Pass up his addictive crab cakes at your own peril. And speaking of addictive, September means it's suddenly possible to get a much-coveted table at American Seasons, the casually chic little spot that turns out some of the most formidable dishes east of Boston — from buttery local flounder and basil-marinated lobster to gingery duck with cherry vinaigrette.

■ WHITE ELEPHANT RESIDENCES, 50 EASTON ST., 508-228-2500, WHITEELEPHANTHOTEL.COM.

■ THE SUMMER HOUSE, 17 OCEAN AVE., SIASCONSET, 508-257-9976, THESUMMERHOUSE.COM.

■ AMERICAN SEASONS, 80 CENTER ST., 508-228-7111, AMERICANSEASONS.COM.

KENNEBUNKPORT

The Beach House

You can't get much closer to the ocean than The Beach House's wraparound front porch, which overlooks the waves of Kennebunk Beach. Rooms here are bright and summery, with clean lines and fluffy white comforters. But it's during fall when the rates drop by a third or more (hint: look for online specials). To get your leaf-peeping fix, book a "foliage cruise" up the Kennebunk River aboard the inn's 44-foot yacht. ■ 211 BEACH AVE. KENNEBUNK BEACH, 207-967-3850, BEACHHOUSEINN.COM.

PROVINCETOWN

Land's End Inn

The sensuous art-nouveau antiques that cover every inch of this hot P-town property put one in the mood for romance (to say nothing of the expansive views over Great Point from its cliffside location). During fall, however, the inn turns up the heat with discounted two-night packages that include a couples massage and bottle of champagne upon arrival. How you take away the night chill is up to you.

■ 22 COMMERCIAL ST., PROVINCETOWN, 508-487-0706, LANSENDINN.COM. —MICHAEL BLANDING