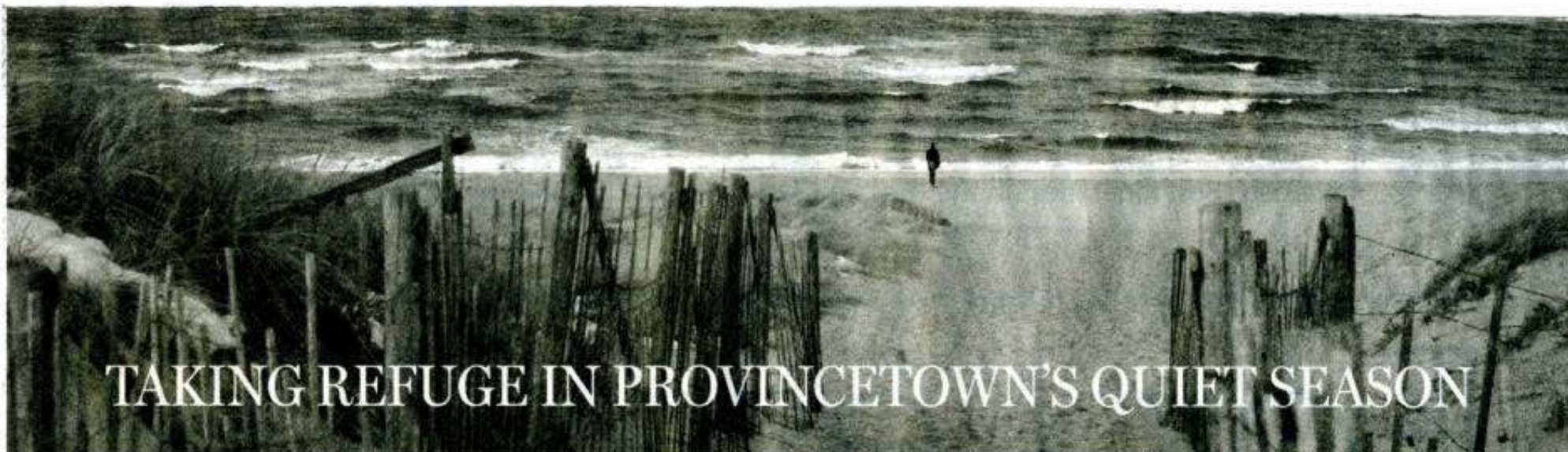


# Travel

BOSTON SUNDAY GLOBE FEBRUARY 15, 2009 | BOSTON.COM/TRAVEL



## TAKING REFUGE IN PROVINCETOWN'S QUIET SEASON

BILL REGAN FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Summer visitors flock to Race Point Beach, at the tip of the Cape, to sunbathe, but this time of year individuals are drawn here to bask in the natural beauty far from the madding crowds.

**By Jane Roy Brown**  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

"In the winter," says one sales clerk, "our favorite activity is going to Stop & Shop for groceries and gossip." He laughs, clearly relishing the quiet intimacy of the off-season.

As well he might. In a beach-resort community that shrinks from a popula-

tion of about 30,000 in summer to a core of about 3,500 in winter, the ordinary pleasures of small-town life stand out: a single pair of footprints tracing the water's edge at Race Point, relaxed waiters, downtown parking spots. And with little bustle on the ground to distract the eye, the sky dominates the landscape, its summer azure scrubbed to an ethereal

silver-blue, a shade lighter than the harbor.

In short, this is a great time to visit Provincetown, and out-of-towners need not resort to Stop & Shop for entertainment. Enough shops, inns, bars, and restaurants are open to make for a rewarding discount getaway. Inns cut their rates or dangle packages stuffed with ex-

tra goodies. Stores slash prices to make way for summer merchandise. Enough restaurants stay open to offer plenty of choices and price points, with dinner from \$13 (Michael Shay's) to \$35 (Bistro at Crowne Pointe). On a super-tight budget? Hit Chach for lunch (\$5 average) and take in a free movie at the Art House Cinema or the Cape Inn lounge,

which serves drinks and inexpensive pub fare. Although most galleries are closed, art worshipers find sustenance at the Provincetown Art Association and Museum.

One of the advantages of Provincetown is its compact downtown, and most people walk to where they're going.

**PROVINCETOWN, Page M12**

# A winter escape of deals, dunes, daily delights

## ► PROVINCETOWN

Continued from Page M10

But the wind hurtling in from the ocean can make a few blocks feel like a few miles. Lacking warm gear? Check out the half-price sale on high-quality boots, clothing, and outerwear at Cape Tip Sportswear on Commercial Street. Or shake off the chill at any of several downtown coffee shops (Wired Puppy has free Wi-Fi), or nurse a hot chocolate at the Purple Feather Dessert Café.

## OFF-SEASON

See what's happening in P-town at [boston.com/travel](http://boston.com/travel).

"Some places are open in January, but traditionally Valentine's Day weekend starts off the winter season," says Rob Adamcik, a painter who has lived here since 1991. He works as a salesperson at WA, an Asian-inspired antiques and home-goods store on Commercial Street that feels more like a Buddhist temple than a retail emporium, despite a killer back-room sale.

Peter Edmonds, a hat designer and merchant, has owned Mad as a Hatter in Commercial Street's East End for 37 years and has stayed open year-round since 1990. "More stores used to stay open off-season than now, because more people used to come down," Edmonds says. But on a recent winter weekend visit, there was no shortage of activity.

Fanizzi's Restaurant by the Sea, which overlooks a strand of beach at the east end of town, was humming after a holiday lull. On Bradford Street, the ample parking lot at Michael Shay's was almost full. At The Mews Restaurant & Café, which serves 256 kinds of vodka (and dinner), the sound of martini shakers



BILL REGAN FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Seasonal deals abound at shops and inns, but perhaps best of all, the beaches are free.

peppered the air and waiters greeted customers like old friends.

On the West End of Commercial Street, Michael MacIntyre, who owns Land's End Inn, said he and other merchants have been bracing for a financial downturn, "but so far, it hasn't hit us." Perched high above the street, the inn is decked out in Arts & Crafts pottery, Moroccan lamps, Chinese rugs, and stained glass. "This town is a great destination because you can package services from other local businesses and offer travelers some good deals," says MacIntyre, who is touting specials that wrap in massages at a local spa, champagne and flowers, drinks at Joe Coffee, breakfast, and evening wine and cheese.

The Cape Escape at the Crowne Pointe Inn bundles two nights' stay for two, a dinner at the inn's bistro, sumptuous

breakfasts, a treatment each at the Shui Spa (on the premises; massages recommended), a tasting at Truro Vineyards, and afternoon wine and cheese. Even if guests forgo the package, Crowne Pointe offers some rooms with whirlpool tubs and/or gas fireplaces. Many other inns, hotels, and guesthouses offer special winter promotions and/or off-season rates.

But the best deal in Provincetown cannot be contained in four walls. The Cape Cod National Seashore, which wraps the town in dunes and marshes, is what makes P-town's collective heart sing in all seasons. In winter, admission to the vast barrier beaches is free. Race Point catches wild ocean winds, even in summer. At this time of year opalescent light transforms the peninsula's dunes and flats of stunted pine into a golden-pink mirage, and on the beach, a biting gale sweeps down

the vast, nearly deserted corridor of sand. But look up, and the moon hangs whole in the late-afternoon sky, and only a lucky few are there to see it.

A behind-the-dunes trail, which runs roughly parallel to Route 6 between the West End and Herring Cove Beach, winds through snow-dusted valleys, wind-whipped grasses, and shuddering bayberry scrub. Snow and sand are pocked with the footprints of mice, rabbits, coyotes, and deer. Shielded by the dunes from the ocean wind, walkers can find warm refuge in sunny pockets.

The bravest souls hike the breakwater, a causeway of piled stones crossing Provincetown Harbor to the Cape's outermost curl of barrier beach. It can be treacherous — steely seawater sloshes against the rocks, frosting them in rime. But as with all other watery attractions at this

## If you go . . .

### Where to stay

#### Crowne Pointe Inn

82 Bradford St.  
508-487-6767

[www.crownepointe.com](http://www.crownepointe.com)

Two-night Cape Escape package for two, \$560.

#### Land's End Inn

22 Commercial St.  
800-276-7088

[www.landsendinn.com](http://www.landsendinn.com)

Check website for packages.

#### Cape Inn Resorts

698 Commercial St.  
800-422-4224

[www.capeinn.com](http://www.capeinn.com)

Weekend double \$69.50 a night.

### Where to eat

#### Chach

73 Shank Painter Road  
508-487-1530

Breakfast all day \$3.75-\$10,

lunch \$3.50-\$12.

#### Bistro at Crowne Pointe

(above)

Dinner \$11-\$34.

#### Fanizzi's Restaurant by the Sea

539 Commercial St.

508-487-1964

[www.fanizzisrestaurant.com](http://www.fanizzisrestaurant.com)

Lunch \$7-\$17, dinner \$18-\$24,  
Sunday brunch \$13.

#### The Mews Restaurant & Café

429 Commercial St.

508-487-1500

[www.mews.com](http://www.mews.com)

Dinner \$11-\$33.

#### Michael Shay's Restaurant

350 Bradford St.

508-487-3368

Breakfast \$5-\$17, lunch \$7-\$29,  
dinner \$15-\$30, early bird \$13-\$16.

#### Purple Feather Dessert Café

334 Commercial St.

888-211-7713, 508-487-9100

[www.thepurplefeather.com](http://www.thepurplefeather.com)

Soups, sandwiches, \$5-\$7.50,  
lobster mac and cheese \$10, hot  
chocolate \$3.50-\$4.25.

#### Wired Puppy

379 Commercial St.

508-487-0017

[www.wiredpuppy.com](http://www.wiredpuppy.com)

Coffee, tea, espresso \$1.90-\$6,  
pastries \$1-\$2.30.

time of year, few visitors will be jostling past, allowing for a contemplative walk. At sunset, local vehicles park facing the water at Herring Cove Beach, awaiting the daily spectacle, while sand and snow spin through the parking lot. Many a year-rounder will tell you that they live here for just

this reason, dervishing wind and all.

And on any frigid morning, visitors in search of an early latte will cross paths with residents taking a constitutional, accompa-

nied or not by a dog. Virtually no one complains about the weather. On a single-digit Saturday morning, one man, wrapped from forehead to ankles in storm gear, stood on a sidewalk in the West End, staring out at the placid harbor, which was ablaze with light.

"Oh, my," he said, turning at the sound of approaching footsteps. "Isn't this beautiful?"

Jane Roy Brown can be reached at [regan-brown.com](http://regan-brown.com).