



Adapted Travel by Mike Cohen

Cape Cod accommodates travelers with special needs

Yarmouth: home to the Red Jacket Resort

My family and I recently returned from our first trip to Cape Cod in six years. Based on previous experience I started the process of booking accommodations in January. We began our summer vacation with a four night stay at the Red Jacket Beach Resort (www.redjacketresorts.com) in beautiful South Yarmouth and what an excellent choice this was. We actually squeezed an additional full day at the beach by packing our car up before check-

out time, keeping our safety deposit box and requesting the front desk to place our cooler of perishables in their fridge. That turned out to be an excellent decision.

Nothing can quite compare to this locale. Situated directly on the beach, we secured a spacious family room with a balcony overlooking the ocean and only seconds from the heated outdoor and indoor pool, the latter of which also has a whirlpool. You can practice your swing on the private tennis court or enjoy a quiet afternoon game of shuffleboard. There is also a spa on the premises. Wireless internet is available throughout the complex and in each room. The resort has 150 guest rooms and 14 cottages, totaling 164 total guest units.

The convenience of being able to go back and forth to your room cannot be understated. Upon entering the private beach you are provided with towels, beach chairs and umbrellas. Because this is the South Side of the Cape the water is exceptionally warm. The hotel is humming with different family activities. You can also choose from a variety of water sports offered by Gold Coast Parasail (www.goldcoastparasail.com). We opted in favor of

the jet ski (\$115 plus \$15 per passenger) and banana boat (\$25 per person for 20 minutes) options. Just a mile down the road from the Red Jacket are sister properties the Blue Water and Riviera Beach Resorts. The former is where we went for the banana boat ride, which I strongly recommend. You need to actually swim over to the boat, which I found kind of cool.

Gold Coast Parasail is operated by Kurt Kossman and his wife Sarah. Kurt, 39, is also a race car driver. One of the most amazing aspects of his successful career is the fact that he lost his left leg to cancer in 1988. Kurt was diagnosed with an osteosarcoma and had to have an above the knee amputation. Even with the amputation Kurt was given only a 30 percent chance of survival. He underwent 13 months of chemotherapy and through strength and perseverance he survived. While in the hospital Kurt designed a unique prosthetic so that he could shift the race car flawlessly and continue his racing career. He parasails, jet skis and in the winter skis down the steepest hills of snow. His message to others in his predicament? "You have to learn to adapt. It definitely changes the way you do things."



Despite wearing a prosthetic leg, Kurt Kossman (seen here with his wife Sarah), water skis, jet skis, parasails and is a car racer.

Staff here aim to please. Ken Smith, director of operations for the Red Jacket group, has been with the company for 25 years, while Red Jacket Beach general manager Thomas Moore – who married a Montrealer named Sylvie Trudeau – has been on board for a decade. As Moore explained, every effort is made to organize different activities for the kids such as hermit crab races. There are evening buffets, with live music. You can call 1-800-CAPECOD or email info@redjacketresorts.com. The large Cape Cod Mall in Hyannis is an easy 15 minute drive from the hotel. That could be a little longer during the very busy traffic season.

If you are in Cape Cod during the end of July, make sure not to miss the sensational Barnstable County Fair (www.BarnstableCountyFair.org). Keep in mind that you are going to face heavy traffic on the way there and since it ends at 10 p.m. each night (the midway stays open longer), do not wait until early evening to leave. Some the terrain may be difficult for wheelchairs to navigate and you would be

advised to try and get a spot in the reserved parking section. The Fair features interesting kiosks, all kinds of animals and live musical presentations. This past summer we got to hold a baby kangaroo.

For special needs guests, the Red Jacket offers several options, including first floor rooms, grab bars and stools in showers, Visual Alarm, TDD phone equipment and raised commode seating. Indoor and outdoor pool decks and the restaurant and lounge are wheelchair accessi-



An overview of the Red Jacket Resort in South Yarmouth.

ble. There is a small zero entry pool, which can be used for people in wheelchairs. Just let the reservation agents know your requirements.

When seeking out a dining spot in Yarmouth, someone pointed me to the website of the Skipper Restaurant and Chowder House (www.skipperrestaurant.com). As an old fan of the TV show Gilligan's Island I was immediately intrigued by the Skipper's take of the show's theme song. The Skipper was established in 1936, and it is one of Cape Cod's oldest waterfront restaurants with the pristine views of Nantucket Sound. The Skipper Crew have made this restaurant the huge success that it is, by hard work and taking care of customers.

Owner Alan Delaney and his chefs work hard to present the finest and freshest fish you can find, Angus cuts of beef and not to mention their award winning clam chowder. All entrees are cooked to order and they have a great kids menu. Located at 152 South Shore Drive, the Skipper is open from mid-April until October 31 and only minutes from the Red Jacket. Delaney bought the restaurant in 1998 and has expanded the building's size in recent years and just added an ice cream bar. The night we went, folks were lined up outside the door for tables. It is no wonder why. The chowder was superb. Ditto for the crispy calamari and my family's selections of the skipper scampi, the seafood trio (shrimp, scallops and lobster sautéed in a saffron tomato cream sauce with rice or pasta) and a pound-and-a-half lobster which our waitress Miriam cut up nicely for us. Open for lunch and dinner, you can call 508-394-7406 for reservations. The Skipper is wheelchair accessible, with a ramp at the entrance. Make sure to book a table on the first floor.

Eastham: Cape Cod's Gateway to the National Seashore

With miles of sandy coastline, the Cape Cod towns of Eastham, Orleans and Wellfleet represent a haven for beachcombers and pail-

toting youngsters. Only 25 miles up Route 6 from the bustle of shopping in Hyannis, this Gateway to the National Seashore is often referred to as the Cape's little secret. If you are planning a holiday here, consider this area for your base.

The western border of Eastham is lined with six miles of beautiful beaches overlooking Cape Cod Bay. Just as magical as the National Seashore, Cape Cod Bay offers calmer and warmer waters, amazing flats at low tide and breathtaking sunsets. We enjoyed Coast Guard Beach, only a few blocks from our hotel. It is \$15 to park your car and take a shuttle. Limited handicapped parking is available directly on the beach, where they also have beach wheelchairs. There is a free beach pass for those who are permanently disabled or legally blind.

When we last visited this area six years ago, we discovered the Four Points by Sheraton Eastham Cape Cod (www.capecodfourpoints.com), a modern full-service hotel which just kind of appears before your very eyes as you travel on busy Route 6, which consists mainly of small motels. For summer trips, an early winter booking is highly recommended. Hyannis is only 45 minutes away. The hotel has beautiful indoor and outdoor swimming pools and is close to the beaches. Some rooms have balconies overlooking the indoor pool, which is beautifully heated and a fabulous place to go after returning from the beach. There is also a jacuzzi. This hotel has one of the most magnificent suites I have seen in a long time. The Nauset Suite has two separate bedrooms – one with a king bed and another with two twins. There is ample cupboard space. Each has a flat screen television. The very large living room also has a flat screen, a couch, four comfortable chairs, two end tables, a large working desk, a dining room table for four, another clothing closet and a small kitchen with a full-sized fridge, a microwave, dishes and silverware. In the bathroom you will find a large shower with glass doors. Oh yes, let me tell you about the balcony. It is gigantic, with two lounge chairs, two picnic tables and 10 plastic chairs – ideal for entertaining friends or family. This is traditionally used for businessmen, as the hotel hosts a lot of conferences. But for a family seeking good space for everyone, this is a luxury.

The free wireless high speed internet is indeed "high speed" and faster than what most other hotels offer. There is also great service from the front desk, starting with the printout of descriptions and directions to the local beaches.

This hotel also has a fitness facility, a game room, refrigerators and coffee makers in each standard room, an on-site restaurant (Bellamy's) and five meeting rooms in case you want to hold a company conference here.

The hotel has two rooms with a roll in shower and five handicapped accessible rooms in all, located on the first floor. They have the wider doorways, raised commodes, hearing impaired smoke detectors and lowered thermostats, etc. The hotel also has the TTY equipment and closed captions on all televisions. General Manager Jacqui Frost says all staff are re-



quired to watch a video on disabilities to have a better understanding of guests with disabilities and how best to accommodate them.

Orleans: Academy to become more accommodating

Nestled between spectacular Nauset Beach on the Atlantic and tranquil Skaket Beach on Cape Cod Bay, Orleans offers something for everyone. One of the prime draws in Orleans is its Academy of Performing Arts (www.apa-cape.org), Cape Cod's finest quality theatre and studio. Located at 120 Main Street in what was once Orleans Town Hall, the Academy Playhouse delivers the best drama, musicals, comedies and original works you can find on the Cape. It is a year-round source of great entertainment for all ages. Established in 1975, this non-profit organization is dedicated to producing high quality performances and nur-



Entry to the pool at the Sheraton Four Points in Eastham is wheelchair accessible.

turing the artistic development of our community. Last summer my family and I attended a performance of Rent.

The cozy 162 seat theatre, which captures the essence of live theatrical experience, hosted an enthusiastic crowd the evening my family was in attendance.

The Playhouse is not presently wheelchair accessible. You need to climb stairs to get to your seats. Plans are now in place to mount a rigorous capital campaign to restore the front of the theatre, as well as to provide ADA compliant handicap accessibility by installing an elevator.

The top restaurant on our list from the last trip was the Orleans Waterfront Inn (www.orleansinn.com). Right on Route 6A, in a beautiful setting overlooking the water and next to Windmill Park. Just like last time we made this our dinner prior to going to the theatre. Our waitress Kara, an aspiring performer herself, was wonderful in getting us our dinner in enough time for us to get to the show on time.

This is a family-owned establishment. Ed Maas, his wife Laurie and their eight children have all played a role in making this historic property a must stop since purchasing it 14 years ago. The restaurant offers the finest menus, from a varied selection of fresh local seafood, produce and grill specialties. There is a kids menu, offering everything from chicken fingers and burgers to pasta and pizza. Homemade desserts, specifically the chocolate layer cake, are to die for. If you order lobster, this place will crack it up for you. Also, try the clam chowder.

Ed's two twin daughters and his eldest son

now manage the restaurant. Three of his children were adopted and each of them has special needs. Two work at the restaurant, which is fully wheelchair accessible with a ramp at the front.

On the evening we went was dinner delicious: clam chowder, an appetizer of seafood cakes, a 12 ounce teriyaki ginger crusted sirloin steak, lobster and scallops. The triple layer chocolate cake was perfect to share for three. Ed was busy attending to two of his grandchildren. He has four in all and a fifth on the way.

A huge Stop & Shop grocery store is across the street from the Orleans Inn. It is conveniently opened till midnight and has everything and more you wish to stock your fridge with. A CVS Pharmacy is just as few more blocks up the road.

The Lower Cape's largest and best 18 hole mini-golf course is located right at the Orleans Rotary (next to Wendy's). Cape Escape Adventure Golf (www.capeescapeadventures.com) is operated by the McCarty family and has the backdrop of a beautiful nautical setting, featuring waterfalls, fishing vessels and live koi fish you are encouraged to feed. Michael McCarty has been working at the course for 19 years, since he was 12. It is open from April until October (9 a.m. until the last group enters the course at 10:30 p.m.). We really enjoyed the ambience. The course itself was fun. Good music played in the background and everyone was friendly. Each hole is named after a different town in Cape Cod, with Plymouth, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket added in for good measure.

While individuals in wheelchairs cannot navigate this course, McCarty says clients with crutches have managed to complete the course. There have also been many visually impaired individuals as customers.

Orleans, the Queen of the Cape, is dotted with many fresh water ponds as well as having the very popular Nauset Beach, a long sandy stretch right on the Atlantic Ocean. It also boasts an accessible ramp on fresh water Crystal Lake.

Wellfleet: fine seafood at Van Rensselaer's

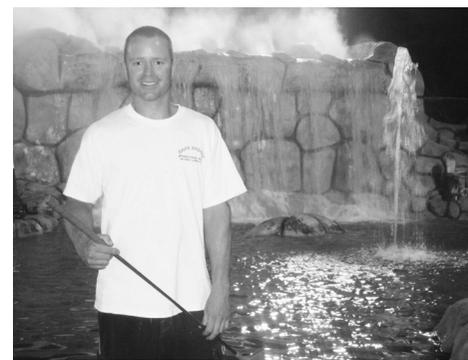
Wellfleet (www.wellfleetchamber.com) on Cape Cod offers something for everyone. Located some 30 miles out into the Atlantic Ocean, Wellfleet has an abundance of quaint seaside character and charm. Bounded on the east by the Atlantic Ocean and the west by Cape Cod Bay, 61 percent of the land area of Wellfleet is in the Cape Cod National Seashore Park. Wellfleet has a total upland area of approximately 13,100 acres (20.47 square miles). Of this total, about 8,000 acres (12.5 square miles) are within the Seashore boundaries, leaving 5,100 acres (8 square miles) outside.

We did venture to Wellfleet for dinner. Van Rensselaer's (www.vanrensselaers.com) has been family owned and operated for over 35 years. In 1968, Howard and Anne Hall opened Southfleet Restaurant, serving a variety of

Cape Cod fare. Many a customer today recalls those summer nights when a Wellfleet entertainer by the name of Arnie would fill the place with song. But 1980 marked the beginning of Van Rensselaer's, a name chosen from Peter Hall's Dutch ancestry. A trace of the family line leads to Steven Van Rensselaer, a name highly associated with New York's Rensselaer County and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Today, Peter and Diane Hall proudly continue to serve the freshest locally caught seafood and superbly prepared meats. As Peter told me, his wife was originally a dental hygienist before they were married and assumed running the restaurant from April until October. It is fully wheelchair accessible, with an accessible washroom as well.

Van Rensselaer's hosts two to three special wine dinners each year - generally, one in the spring and two in the fall. These five-course dinners are a wonderful opportunity to try some innovative, new wines paired with some delicious and creative courses from their chef and kitchen staff.

Located on State Highway 6 in South Wellfleet, opposite the entrance road to the Marconi area of the Cape Cod National Seashore, the restaurant actually draws diners from as far away as New Hampshire who drive in for the evening. My family enjoyed a wonderful dinner. The virgin pina colada was a quenching beginning while the salad bar and homemade New England clam chowder were excellent. We were urged to try the house speciality appetizer, lobster cakes, a creation of Peter's brother-in-law. They were spectacular. For the main course I would recommend the barbecue beef short ribs, braised in red wine, green and wax bean sauté, corn bread and zesty barbecue



Michael McCarty runs Cape Escape Adventure Golf in Orleans. sauce or the one and one quarter outer cape roasted lobster.

Provincetown has eclectic arts and culture scene

Meanwhile, a trip to Cape Cod is not complete without exploring Provincetown (www.provincetowntourismoffice.org)---literally the last town on the Cape until you run out of land.

Located 120 miles from Boston along the National Seashore on the outermost tip of Cape Cod and surrounded on three sides by the Atlantic Ocean and Cape Cod Bay, Provincetown is a year-round destination with a fascinating history and extraordinary qualities. From incredible beaches and boundless natural beauty

to an eclectic arts and culture scene and world-class dining and shopping, Provincetown offers something for each of the diverse visitors it hosts throughout the year.

Bubala's By The Bay (www.bubalas.com), at 183 Commercial Street, not only has a delightful menu for all three meals of the day. It also offers free parking, a true luxury on what is the best place for people watching in town. Before or after dining, take a walk and check out all of the interesting shops.

Bubala's began in 1993 upstairs at the Cafe Edwige. Noreen Bahring ran the floor and Rose Kennedy was the executive chef. Bubala's moved to its current location at the beginning of the West End of Provincetown in 1994. John Yingling is the owner, Liz Roberts runs the bar and floor, Tom Conklin is the general manager, and Gui Yingling is the kitchen manager. They even have a chef named Mike Cohen, who I was unsuccessful in meeting the night we went.

The clam chowder is outstanding. I would also recommend the Cajun calamari as an appetizer while the grilled lamb rack cuts like butter and is very tasty. The pan seared scallops and cod in parchment are also worth considering. A children's menu for those 12 and under includes penne pasta, pasta alfredo, pasta with tomato sauce and chicken fingers.

There is a nice selection of homemade desserts from which to choose from, notably the chocolate truffle torte. The restaurant is fully wheelchair accessible. In the warmer months there is also a popular outdoor patio.

Chatham Bars Inn (www.chathambarsinn.com) is a spectacular property which I had a chance to tour and visit for the day, experiencing a private beach and enjoying lunch at the Beach House Grill.

The Chatham Bars Inn has been an idyllic Cape Cod family vacation retreat noted for its excellent service, fine cuisine and beautiful surroundings since 1914. The Inn is nestled near the heart of Chatham on 25 beautifully landscaped acres overlooking Pleasant Bay and the Atlantic Ocean.

This world-famous turn-of-the-century landmark has a remarkable ambiance. The expansive lounge, front veranda and main dining room have been returned to their original grandeur, affording panoramic ocean views and gentle sea breezes. If you're looking for boat charters on Cape Cod, you'll love the top-notch fleet operated by Chatham Bars Inn. A variety of luxury boats offer unforgettable Cape Cod experiences. Memorable and unique boating excursions offered by Chatham Bars Inn include Cape Cod sunset cruises on Pleasant Bay, big game sport fishing, sailing tours, family activities, and private charters to Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. You'll also love their Cape Cod sailing packages, including the popular Cape Cod Sunset Cruises Package.