

Orleans showcases outstanding Cape Cod theatre

Travel Spotlight

MIKE COHEN

One of the prime draws in Orleans is its Academy of Performing Arts (www.apacape.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 nurturing the artistic development of our community. Last summer my family and I attended a performance of Rent. I must tell you that I am still humming the songs to this day. This is not an easy show to put together, with 36 songs in all, but the young cast pulled it off beautifully.

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 cast are all volunteers, hoping for future stage careers. Take Nic Chad for instance. The 19 year old was the "Season's of Love" soloist. At my hotel, the Four Points Sheraton in Eastham, there was Nic working behind the front desk. He spoke about what a thrill it is to be part of this theatre group and how he will be pursuing his career this fall in L.A.

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

ORLEANS – Nestled between spectacular Nauset Beach on the Atlantic and tranquil Skaket Beach on Cape Cod Bay, Orleans offers something for everyone.

next to Windmill Park. Just like last time we made this our dinner prior to going to the theatre.

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. Ed's two twin daughters and his eldest son now manage the restaurant. The restaurant offers the finest menus, from a varied selection of fresh local seafood, produce and grill specialities. 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.

The Inn itself was built in 1875 and eventually served as a boarding house, a summer vacation hotel and restaurant. While it presently boasts 11 beautiful guest rooms, the place is mainly used for weddings and corporate functions in the elegant downstairs Cove Room. It leads to the waterfront deck and has a seating capacity of 150.

Dinner on the evening we went was 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.

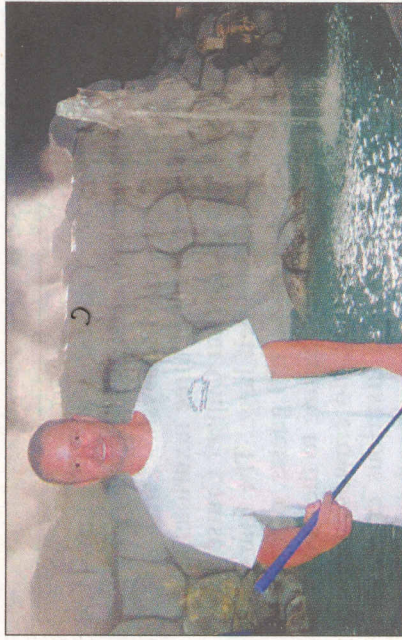


Photo: Mike Cohen

It's a little cold for mini-golf right now, but when it warms up next spring Michael McCarty's colourful course in Orleans will be back in action.

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 water falls, 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. Each hole is named after a different town in Cape Cod, with Plymouth, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket added in for good measure.

The McCarty clan actually operates this entire block. Across the street is Mike's Bike Rental, Mandy's Cape Creamery and Cape Tradewinds gift and beach shop.

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