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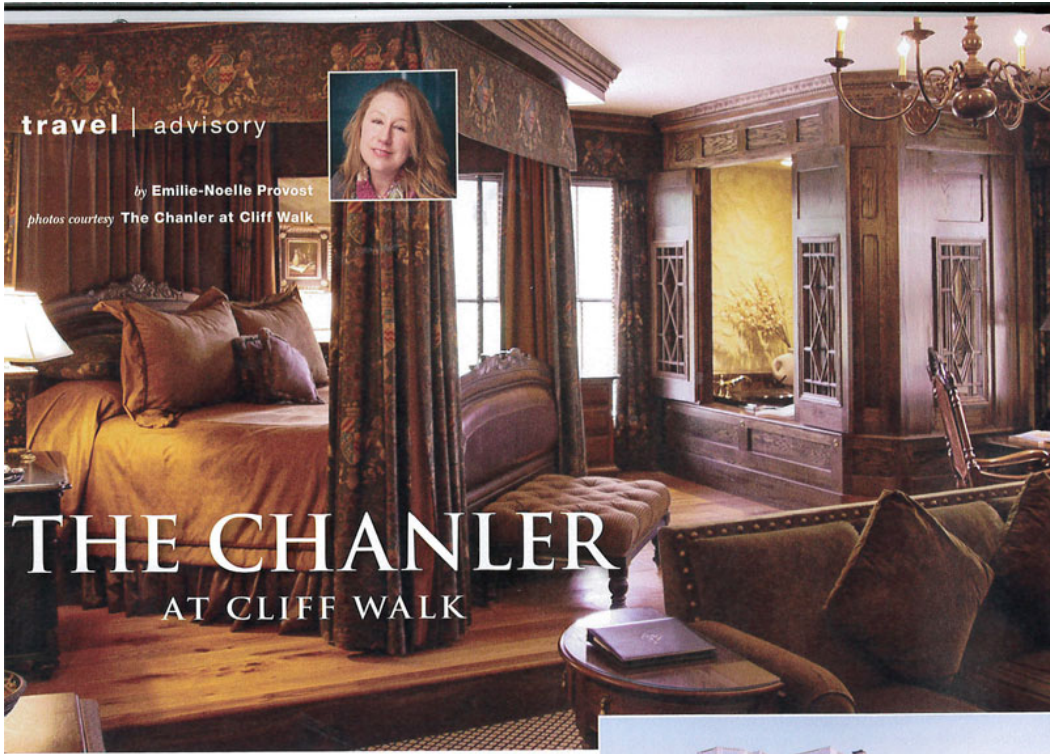
by Emilie-Noelle Provost

photos courtesy The Chanler at Cliff Walk



THE CHANLER

AT CLIFF WALK



Often called "America's First Resort," Newport, R.I., is considered by many to be the crown jewel of seaside vacation spots in New England. Once counted among America's largest seaports, the city's heritage as a maritime hub led it to become home to a United States Navy base late in the 19th century and to the America's Cup sailing race for several decades in the 20th.

Newport is perhaps best known, however, for its Gilded Age mansions — colossal, opulent oceanfront homes that served as summer "cottages" for the fabulously wealthy families of oil tycoons and shipping magnates. Now open to the public, these mansions are today one of Newport's most popular attractions. What most people don't know is that you can spend the weekend at one of them.

Built by U.S. Rep. John Winthrop Chanler of New York in the early 1870s as a seasonal retreat (President Theodore Roosevelt once stayed there as a guest), the former private residence that is today The Chanler at Cliff Walk has 20 lavishly decorated guest rooms, many with panoramic water views. Just a short stroll from Newport's public Easton's Beach, The Chanler is located on the Cliff Walk, a 3.5-mile long public walkway high above the ocean. About a mile from Newport's bustling downtown and close to the city's many other attractions, The Chanler offers its guests a complimentary, door-to-door car service to local attractions that enables them to avoid parking difficulties.

The Chanler at Cliff Walk's restaurant, Spiced Pear, is another reason to visit — even if you're not a hotel guest. A high-end, fine dining



Top: The English Tudor room, one of 20 unique and lavish guest rooms at The Chanler at Cliff Walk, evokes the feel of Tudor England with its hand-carved wood paneling and ornate fabrics. Inset: Once a private summer home, The Chanler is set on Newport's famous Cliff Walk, a 3.5 mile long public walkway with fantastic ocean views. Seen here is a view of the hotel from the walking path.

establishment, Spiced Pear is known for its romantic vistas and creative interpretations of traditional New England cuisine, with seafood being a star player. On the night I visited with a friend, I enjoyed locally raised oysters on the half shell — among the best I've had — and simply prepared, briny, sweet sea scallops served with root vegetables. Spiced Pear has an extensive wine list, too, making it a great place to celebrate special occasions.

If you're looking for a less formal meal, the wood-paneled Spiced Pear bar offers an elegant alternative to the dining room with its lighter menu and extensive cocktail list. In the warmer months, the bar's offerings are also available outdoors on The Chanler's spacious patio.

If notified in advance, dietary restrictions are thoughtfully and seamlessly accommodated by Spiced Pear's staff. This was the first restaurant I'd eaten in since being diagnosed with a wheat allergy, and I was pleasantly surprised when I was offered a wheat-free dinner roll (I was also happily surprised by its flavor; if you've ever tried wheatless bread, you know what I mean). In addition to being a good conversationalist, our waiter was quite knowledgeable about the ingredients in each menu item, a great help when deciding what to order.

The Chanler's rooms are all custom decorated to reflect a historical theme or place. I had the good fortune to stay in the Louis XVI room, a sumptuous, French-inspired space with a gas fireplace, whirlpool tub and a walkout deck overlooking the ocean. Other guest rooms include the English Tudor room, a suite with hand-carved woodwork and stucco walls, and the Nantucket room, a nautically themed, ground-floor suite with a private deck. The guest rooms, along with the hotel's public areas, feature original works of art and antique furniture, making The Chanler feel more like a private home than a hotel, a nice touch that adds to its relaxing atmosphere.

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The Chanler at Cliff Walk (\$329 to \$1,555)
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TheChanler.com