

harbor hopping



Woods Hole

BY TOM KEER

Boating on Cape Cod is as common as sunburn. Nothing beats a day on the water with full sails and flying spinnakers, motoring around fishing and sight-seeing, or just plain putting along. Still, even old salts occasionally enjoy terra firma, and a visit to a harbor offers a fine reprieve.

WOODS HOLE, FALMOUTH

Clear water, virtually free of sediment, cranks past the harbor at Woods Hole. The strong currents can reach 6 knots, and the S-shaped approach to the Hole is riddled with rocks, shoals, ledges, and islands. Boaters beware: you might want to enter and exit at slack tide.

Woods Hole came by its name honestly—the water passage, or “hole,” between Penzance Point and Nonamasset Island gave the town its name. Woods Hole is Science Mecca USA, with five marine research and educational institutions nearby. Tour guides offer eco-tours around Eel Pond in July and August. If you prefer a little activity, there are tennis

courts, a volleyball court, and a ball field where pick-up baseball heats up off Bell Tower Lane. Also here, is a big playground. There is no shortage of restaurants on Water Street. **Phusion Grille**, **Leeside Bar and Grill**, and the **Captain Kidd Tavern** specialize in local seafood. Arriving in the morning or after dinner, check out **Pie in the Sky Dessert Café & Bakery** for coffee and a muffin. The **Fishmonger's Café** on Water Street is a longtime local favorite—new owners have added several unique offerings to the menu of natural foods and homemade goods. For laundry services, hardware or general shopping, grab a cab or take the **WHOOSH** trolley into Falmouth.

There are a variety of shops and gal-

Hyannis Harbor



eries are within walking distance to the harbor. **Woods Hole Handworks** on Water Street features paintings, pottery, stained glass, ceramics, and other handmade works by local artisans. You can find groceries, organic food, and prepared meals at **Woods Hole Market**—or use their delivery service to have a meal delivered to your boat.

HYANNIS HARBOR, BARNSTABLE

After sailing Vineyard Sound's open ocean, Hyannis Harbor is a welcome sight. Just beyond the half-mile long rock jetty, you'll find Hyannis Harbor to your west, and Lewis Bay and Point Gammon Light to your east. A weary sailor friend once aptly described the jetty and Point Gammon as "two giant arms welcoming you home." The bustling inner harbor is due north, and all kinds of boats trade in and out, from daysailers and luxury motor yachts, to druggers and ferries.

Known as "the home port of Cape Cod," Hyannis got its name from the Algonquin Indian sachem, Iyannos, who helped the Pilgrims survive their early years. Hyannis has attracted its share of historic visitors. English explorer Bartholomew Gosnold landed in Lewis

Bay in 1602. While Hyannis is considered "Kennedytown," former presidents Grant and Cleveland also summered here.

For such a busy port, the downtown and harbor area is pedestrian-friendly and conducive to a jaunt along the harbor and to the shops and boutiques of Main Street. Hyannis recently completed a multi-million dollar **Walkway to the Sea**, where the **Michael K. Aselton Memorial Park** is a picturesque spot for picnicking or taking a stroll. The fun **Harbor Your**

Arts series at Bismore Park is a row of sea shanties that form an outdoor gallery of all kinds of fine arts, from pottery to watercolors to oils and sculptures. If you go in mid-June, check out the **Hyannis Harbor Festival and Blessing of the Fleet**.

From the harbor, follow the Walkway right to Main Street, brimming with shops, galleries, and eateries. Plan a late-afternoon arrival in port to hit **Artscape Thursdays**, where the galleries remain

Wellfleet Harbor



open until 8:00 p.m. Also on Thursday evenings, roaming musicians serenade diners, lovebirds, and pedestrians during the TD Banknorth Music Stroll along Main Street. Outdoors on Main Street's Village Green, you'll find Tuesday nights' **Movies on the Green**, free Wednesday-evening concerts with the **Barnstable Town Band**, and the popular annual **Boston Pops-by-the-Sea** in August.

The **Hyannis Area Trolley**, or HAT, transports folks around town. With a variety of watering holes to choose from, area favorites are **Trader Ed's**, **Spanky's Clam Shack and Saloon**, **Tugboats** (all overlooking the harbor), **Alberto's Ristorante** (Italian), the **Naked Oyster Bistro and Raw Bar** (upscale bistro), and the **Roadhouse Café** (American), which is known for its great live music.

Music lovers can also catch a meal at the **Paddock** and take in a show next door at the **Cape Cod Melody Tent**. The 55 year-old west side landmark is famous for its shows. The **Cape Cod Central Railroad**, features daily tours of the marsh-

es, bogs, and dunes and offers meals on board, including an elegant five-course dinner tour.

WELLFLEET HARBOR

There is a long, winding channel that leads to Wellfleet. First you'll pass Billingsgate, now a shoal, but at one time a thriving small town. The sea reclaimed it all—the lighthouse, several buildings, homes, and a school. Great Island is to your port side, where the famous pirate Cap'n Sam Bellamy is said to have spent many a night drinking at the long-gone Higgins' Tavern in the early 1700s. Pass the oyster grants, round the breakwall, and head for your mooring.

You know you're in Wellfleet Harbor by the chime of the bell on top of the First Congregational Church, the only clock in the United States that still chimes on ship's time. Telling time is confusing to visitors, but to "Fleetians" it's simple: two bells at 1, 5, and 9; four bells at 2, 6, and 10; three bells at 3, 7,

and 11; and eight bells at 4, 8, and 12. For a quick meal, try **Mac's Seafood Grill** or the waterfront **Bookstore & Restaurant**, just minutes from the dock. If you're looking to stretch your legs, four public tennis courts and a basketball court are sandwiched in between the two restaurants. A round of golf at the **Chequessett Yacht and Country Club**, which is open to the public, can be mixed with a theatrical performance at the **Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theater Harbor Stage**, overlooking the harbor.

Wellfleet is a gallery town, and Commercial Street and Main Street are where you can find more than 20 established galleries. Saturday is **Gallery Night**, with wine and cheese "meet the artist" receptions and late evening hours. There are several great restaurants in town, namely, **Winslow's Tavern**, **The Wicked Oyster**, and **The Lighthouse**. You can swing your partner at Wednesday nights' outdoor **Square Dancing** at the east end of the harbor parking lot.

Most Cape & Islands harbors have several marinas that offer transient moorings and services. Here is a list of some local marinas that offer a variety of services to boaters. Some allow for advanced reservations.

WOODS HOLE

Company Name: Woods Hole Marine
 Monitors Channel: 9; Phone: 508-540-2402
 Number of Transient Berths/Mornings: 28/37
 Depth Approach/Dockside at Mean Low Water: 7/28 feet
 Hookups: Fresh Water/Wireless/Cable TV
 On-call mechanic
 Launch Services: Yes

HYANNIS

Company Name: Hyannis Marina
 Monitors Channels: 9/72
 Phone: 508-790-4000
 Accommodates vessels up to 200 feet
 Depth Approach/Dockside at Mean Low Water: 13 feet +
 Hookups: Fresh Water/Wireless/Cable TV
 Pool, Courtesy Cars, Full-service parts dept.
 Launch Services: No

WELLFLEET

Company Name: Town of Wellfleet Marina
 Monitors Channels: 16/9
 Phone: 508-349-0320
 Number of Transient Berths/Mornings: 12/15
 Depth Approach/Dockside at Mean Low Water: 4/2 feet (Tidal Harbor)
 Hookups: Fresh Water/Phone
 Launch Services: Yes

NANTUCKET

Company Name: Nantucket Boat Basin
 Monitors Channels: 9/11
 Phone: 508-325-1350
 Number of Transient Berths/Mornings: 240
 Depth Approach/Dockside at Mean Low Water: 13/14 feet;
 Hookups: Fresh Water/Cable TV
 Launch Services: Yes

-T.K.

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Nantucket Harbor



NANTUCKET HARBOR

The passage, with strong currents can be eventful, but the entrance to the island is not. You'd be hard-pressed to find a harbor more perfect than Nantucket. The long jetty on the west side breaks up the currents, and natural Coatue Point sweeps down from the east. Once you pass the classic lighthouse at Brant Point, you've arrived.

Nantucket, the Grey Lady, gets her nickname from her dense fog and the weathered shingles of her houses. While the island has changed dramatically since the Wampanoags hunted whales from dugout canoes, there are timeless reminders of Nantucket's whaling ship heyday—widow's walks atop ship captains' homes; cobblestone streets; wrought-iron boot scrapes; and pineapples, the symbol of hospitality, adorning iron archways. A stroll through town is enough, but there is more in store.

Rent a bike from either Cook's or Holiday Cycle and explore the 15-mile long island. The Whaling Museum on Broad Street is in an old "tryworks," a ren-

dering plant for refining whale oil. If you don't get enough history there, try the Nantucket Historical Society—get too rowdy, and you may wind up in one of the two wooden cells of the 1700s Old Gaol. For nature-lovers, the Maria Mitchell Science Center features island plants, animals, and an aquarium. Eco-walks are conducted throughout the summer.

The island has shopping to suit everyone's fancy, from souvenirs to a pair of famous Nantucket Reds from Murray's Toggery. Catch dinner on Straight Wharf at Cap'n Tobey's Chowder House. Afterward, take a stroll and indulge your sweet tooth with a box of Aunt Leah's Fudge in the nearby Courtyard. Other favorite local dining spots include the historic Jared Coffin House on Broad Street and the Brotherhood of Thieves, an 1840s-style whaling bar.

This summer, make it a point to bounce from harbor to harbor. And when you arrive, be sure to whoop it up like a sailor on shore leave. 🦋

Tom Keer is a freelance writer who lives in Wellfleet.