



Summertime in Newport, RI; inset, the makings of a Yankee clambake

# New England Resorts

Maybe it's the **EVER-CHANGING** weather, but New England has a talent for making a virtue out of necessity. Not satisfied, for example, with having four glorious seasons, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Maine, and Connecticut have added a fifth, which occurs in or about the month of March.

**MUD SEASON**, better known as spring thaw, may be a messy time for tourism, but for groups, it helps combine New England's **BENEFITS** and its best **VALUE**.

By Terri Hardin



**READERS RECOMMEND**

Our subscribers gave Pinnacle Awards to the following:

- Newport Rhode Island CVB
- Providence Warwick CVB
- The Equinox, a RockResort
- Foxwoods Resort Casino
- Mohegan Sun
- Babson Executive Conference Center
- Dolce Heritage
- Stoweflake Mountain Resort & Conference Center

For complete facilities listings visit Destination Guide at [www.mimegasite.com](http://www.mimegasite.com)

**FACILITIES UPDATE CONNECTICUT**

Last year, the 1,200-room Mohegan Sun launched **New England Hospitality**, offering DMC services and staff to non-competing properties in the region.

■ Under way for **Foxwoods Resort & Casino** is a \$700-million expansion that includes an 825-room hotel tower and a 21,000-sf spa, a 50,000-sf ballroom, and a 5,000-seat multipurpose theater. The project is scheduled for completion in 2008.

**VERMONT** The 125-room **Topnotch Resort and Spa** will complete a multi-million-dollar soft goods renovation in June.

■ **Stowe Mountain Resort** is planning **Spruce Peak at Stowe**, a \$300-million, mixed-use makeover of its 5,210-acre master-planned alpine neighborhood.

■ The new **Lodge at Stowe** is slated to open in early 2007 with guest rooms and function space for 600 to 700.

■ **Killington Resort** is expected to break ground on a new resort village this spring.

■ This year, **Stratton Mountain Resort** will debut **Hearthstone Lodge**.

**FUN ACTIVITIES FOR GROUPS**

Compared to the Sun Belt, summers are mild. Attendees can savor outdoor activities, such as those provided by the **Bicycle Tour Company**, based in Kent, CT, which can craft outings for up to 90 people. And along **New England's** shores, where "clambakes" are a also a summertime favorite, **Woodman's Clambake Catering** of Essex, MA, can stage an alfresco seafood party for up to 5,000.

Skiing is always popular, and this year, the **Bretton Woods Mountain Resort** in **New Hampshire** offers an unlimited ski pass for \$499. Many resorts are expanding their winter activity menus for the ski challenged. The 203-room **Balsams** in **Dixville Notch, NH**, for example, opened for the winter season for the first time, offering snowshoe hiking, skating parties, and fireside chatting. In **Manchester, VT**, the 183-room **Equinox Resort & Spa**, a **RockResort** has creat-

ed a challenging winter teambuilding treasure hunt that involves all-terrain vehicles, GPS tracking units, and snowshoes. (In summer, the last item is exchanged for sneakers.)

**GROUPS SHOULD CONSIDER** these recommendations from the *Successful Meetings* Home Team experts. In CT, top choices include the 100-room **Spa**

at **Norwich Inn**, the 80-room **Saybrook Point Inn**, the 1,400-room **Mohegan Sun**, the 1,200-room **Foxwoods Casino**, the 167-room **Water's Edge**; in NH, the 161-room **Marriott Wentworth Resort Hotel & Spa**; in ME, the 43-room **Inn by the Sea** and the 194-room **Cliff House Resort & Spa**; in MA, the 205-room **Chatham Bars Inn**; in **Newport, RI**, the 25-room **Inn at**

**The Bicycle Tour Company**  
[bicycletours.com](http://bicycletours.com)  
 1-888-711-KENT

> New England Resorts

**Backyard Broadway**

Theater-savvy [backstage.com](http://backstage.com) correspondents Bill Gale (Providence) and Michael Eck (Berkshires) weigh in:

Gale recommends:  
**Trinity Repertory Company.** Everything from *The Music Man* to *Hamlet* can be seen on the three stages of Providence's most important company, which also maintains a top drama school with Brown University. [www.trinityrep.com](http://www.trinityrep.com)  
**The Gamm Theatre.** Thrives through a combination of an intimate space in a former brewery in Pawtucket and incisive, topical productions. [www.gammtheatre.org](http://www.gammtheatre.org)  
**The Everett Dance Theatre.** Often takes more than a year to investigate major subjects of its works, like science. The results are intimately personal and professionally done. [www.everettdancetheatre.org](http://www.everettdancetheatre.org)  
**2nd Story Theatre.** Located in Warren, this company often fuels contemporary and classical productions with performers from its own acting classes. (Restaurant.) [www.2ndstorytheatre.com](http://www.2ndstorytheatre.com)



Eck recommends:  
**Barrington Stage Company** (pictured). The youngest of the big Berkshire houses—with new digs in Pittsfield—is known for its major musicals. [www.barringtonstageco.org](http://www.barringtonstageco.org)

**Williamstown Theatre Festival.** The Tony Award-winning festival is known for attracting big stars, developing new ones, and sending occasional revivals to Broadway. [www.WTFestival.org](http://www.WTFestival.org)  
**Berkshire Theatre Festival.** At 77, it is the senior house in the Berkshires, and it has a reputation matching its longevity. [www.berkshiretheatre.org](http://www.berkshiretheatre.org)  
**Shakespeare & Company.** Legendary Tina Packer's company is a Shakespearean boot camp for actors and audiences alike. [www.shakespeare.org](http://www.shakespeare.org)

(For more information on the theater scene, click on [www.backstage.com](http://www.backstage.com))

Castle Hill, the 222-room **Viking**, the 264-room **Hyatt Newport**, the 317-room **Marriott Newport**; and in VT, the 183-

room **Equinox** and the 142-room **Woodstock Inn.**

**GROUP DINING** These restaurants

have group facilities and were selected from the **Zagat Survey of Massachusetts and Connecticut** regions ([www.zagat.com](http://www.zagat.com)): In MA, restaurants serving American cuisine include **Lambert's Cove Country Inn** (West Tisbury), **Regatta at Cotuit** at the **Crocker House** (Cotuit), **Bramble Inn** (Brewster), and **Twenty-Eight Atlantic** (Chatham). Others include **Il Capriccio** (Waltham, Italian), **Blue Ginger** (Wellesley, Asian Fusion), and **Oga** (Natick, Japanese). In CT, restaurants include **Cavey's** (Manchester, French), **Carole Peck's Good News** (Woodbury, American), and **Copper Beach Inn** (Ivoryton, French). ■

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Contributors to this section include Home Team members Joann Chmura, CMP; Lorraine Cruz, CMP; Mark Kustwan, CMP; Lynne V. McNamara; and Liz Sutton. Contact them at [siteseditor@successfulmeetings.com](mailto:siteseditor@successfulmeetings.com)