

DEPARTURES

M A G A Z I N E

June 25, 2012



UPDATE

Seems Like New Times

Six American resorts take on the future by sensitively reinterpreting the past.



The Greenbrier *White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia*
Local businessman Jim Justice II invested some \$250 million to bring the centuries-old 6,750-acre resort back to life (and out of bankruptcy) in 2010. Carleton Varney updated Dorothy Draper's original interior design for the 710-room neoclassical hotel, and this fall the resort will launch private train service, in Varney-designed railcars, from Washington, D.C.'s Union Station. Rooms start at \$220; 300 W. Main St.; 855-453-4858; greenbrier.com.



The Inn at Little Washington *Washington, Virginia*
When Patrick O'Connell opened The Inn in 1978, he transformed this tiny town, about an hour and a half outside D.C., into a gastronomic destination. The hotel has expanded over the years to include many other buildings; one of the most recent additions is the 3,200-square-foot Claiborne House, named for the late food critic Craig Claiborne. Rooms start at \$425; 309 Middle St.; 540-675-3800; theinnatlittlewashington.com.



Inn by the Sea *Cape Elizabeth, Maine*
With just 61 rooms, this 27-year-old hotel is a family- and pet-friendly resort on Crescent Beach. The LEED-certified property, which underwent a multimillion-dollar renovation in 2008, is opening ten Beach Suites in June, set in a separate building with unobstructed ocean-front views. It's also a stone's throw from the historic lighthouse seen in Edward Hopper's famous painting *Lighthouse Hill*. Rooms start at \$210; 40 Bowery Beach Rd.; 800-888-4287; innbythesea.com.



La Playa Hotel *Carmel-by-the-Sea, California*
Built in 1905 as a private home for a Ghirardelli heiress, La Playa has served as the grand hotel of chic Carmel-by-the-Sea since 1916. The group that restored Arizona's Biltmore Hotel acquired the property last fall, spending \$3.8 million on upgrades, including entirely redone rooms and suites (there are 75) and social hubs (lobby, library, bar and lounge). It reopens in August. Rooms start at \$250; Camino Real at Eighth Ave.; 800-582-8900; laplayahotel.com.



The Cloister *Sea Island, Georgia*
New ownership at the end of 2010 followed an epic (and costly) rebuild of the exclusive vacation community's signature hotel The Cloister. Since then, the focus has been on enlivening the timeless Southern charm at this resort, which specializes in expert sports instruction; Sea Island now hosts one of the PGA's most popular new events, the McGladrey Classic, held in October. Rooms start at \$325; 100 Cloister Dr.; 855-572-4975; seaisland.com.

IN TIME FOR SUMMER **The Nantucket Hotel & Resort** *Massachusetts*
Built in 1891 and almost destroyed by a fire in 1925, the Point Breeze Hotel is back this July as the family-friendly Nantucket, aiming to restore the original's grandeur while featuring modern conveniences and a rooftop lounge. Rooms start at \$435; 77 Easton St.; 508-310-1734; thenantuckethotel.com.

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July 5, 2012

America's Most Charming Inns



© Courtesy of The Inn at Little Washington

it's felt like we've been hosting one continuous house party."
Rooms from \$490; Middle and Main Sts.; 540-675-3800;
theinnatlittlewashington.com.

The Inn at Little Washington, Washington, Virginia

No discussion of charming inns would be complete without a nod to Patrick O'Connell's Virginia gem, just an hour's drive from our nation's capital. In 1978, O'Connell opened a country house in "Little" Washington, Virginia (population then: 158), as a love song to the culinary arts. Antique oil paintings of famous gastronomes bedeck the walls, and the inn's 18 rooms are named for American culinary pioneers. O'Connell soon established a reputation for impeccable service and witty cuisine. (Try ordering the caviar-crab-and-cucumber Tin of Sin without smiling.) Meanwhile, London set designer Joyce Evans turned heads with her approach to interior design. The inn's classic white exterior feels distinctly New England; step inside and it's suddenly olde, with a surplus of baroque tapestries and English antiques. Three decades after he opened The Inn at Little Washington, O'Connell continues to delight and surprise. In a note to guests, he writes, "For over 30 years,

