ForeWord Reviews

Enchanted Summer: A Romantic Guide to Cape Cod Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard
Cynthia Mascott
Hunter Publishing
978-1-55650-818-9
(September 1998)

Romance is quite subjective. Seclusion for one person is Dullsville for another. Busy little seaports for you might be jammed little tourist traps to me. And so on.

Yet Cynthia Mascott, a Cape Cod resident for only four years, manages to cover all the bases. This guide lets you know whether the reservation you're making is for a bed-and-breakfast with "friendly" owners (doesn't that make you think they're going to be IN YOUR FACE?) or an inclusive resort where you don't even have to leave to buy souvenirs.

The book is divided into sections covering every imaginable town on Cape Cod, as well as the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. There's even a chapter on Boston, gateway to the Cape. The sections on each town and island are further divided into lodging, eating and playing. Playing is even further divided into touring, calendars of events, nature, recreation and more.

The sections on lodging are quite extensive; it appears everyone and their mother is running an inn on the Massachusetts shore. Mascott lets us know how many rooms are available and how they're decorated, if you'll have to share a bath, what the yard looks like and what to expect for food. The listings also rank prices, ranging from two dollar signs for inns and hotels that cost less than $100 a night (not too many of those) to four dollar signs for $200 and up. The addition of Web and email addresses are helpful, although most places don't have them.

The restaurants also appear to be plentiful and Mascott has done some yummy research. Many of the listings include specific menu items that are good, but others are as generic as "traditional American food."

The design of the book, however, is a bit neurotic. There are pleasant sketches by Donna M. Blackburn, who grew up in Massachusetts, but they're not labeled. You might assume the drawing of an inn goes with the listing that's closest to the picture, but I'm not sure that's a safe assumption. And the type they chose as "romantic" is all flowery, swirly and rather tough to read.

There are a lot of historical tidbits in here, locations of the nice beaches, good places to ride bikes, where to shop, etc. Pick up this book a few months ahead of your holiday and you'll be able to schedule every minute.

Jodee Taylor