

In addition to super seafood, The Pearl serves cool cocktails, including the best Dark & Stormy on the island.

Boston magazine's New England Travel & Life's
2007 BEST
 of NEW ENGLAND

city

► NO. 9 PARK

9 Park St., Boston, MA, 617-742-9991, no9park.com

Set in an elegant townhouse in Boston's most historic neighborhood, No. 9 Park is more than on par with the best restaurants in New York, London and Paris. Chef Barbara Lynch's cuisine is a sophisticated blend of regionally inspired Italian and French classics. Prune-stuffed gnocchi is paired with a decadent seared foie gras in Vin Santo glaze and is one of the few staples on the seasonally changing menu. The service and wine list are as stellar as the food.

city other than boston

► HUGO'S

88 Middle St., Portland, ME,
 207-774-8538, hugos.net

In Portland, a city where the outstanding restaurants are generally celebrated for their rustic appeal, Hugo's stands out for its precise execution and witty urbane sensibility. Chef Rob Evans, who cooked at The Inn at Little Washington and The French Laundry before coming to Maine, offers constantly changing prix fixe, tasting, chef's and bar menus that have been deservedly lauded for their steadfast use of local ingredients. But those menus never take themselves too seriously: A recent entry was Maine soft-shell lobster and potato "rice-a-roni" (yes, that's what they called it), dressed perfectly with aged pecorino, orange Agramato olive oil and salted fines herbes.



special occasion | THE WHITE BARN INN RESTAURANT, ME

See listing on page 107.

clam shack

► BOB'S CLAM HUT

315 U.S. Rt. 1, Kittery, ME,
 207-439-4233, bobsclamhut.com

We were a little surprised to find the region's best clam shack smack-dab in the middle of the Kittery outlets. Where are the water views, the ocean breezes, the seagulls? As it turns out, the surroundings aren't so important when the shack is serving up meaty (never rubbery) clams, juicy scallops, traditional haddock and chips, and one-of-a-kind finds such as onion nuggets and clam

cakes. With a history dating back to 1956, Bob's has plenty of its own charm. And honestly, we never really missed the gulls.

cocktails

► B-SIDE LOUNGE

92 Hampshire St., Cambridge, MA,
 617-354-0766, bsidelounge.com

The B-Side, with its 1950s style and old-time vinyl record player, is hardly a dive bar. It's a cocktail mecca. Mixologist-owner Patrick Sullivan serves up flawless renditions of clas-



HEATH ROBBINS (PEARL); COURTESY OF WHITE BARN INN (WHITE BARN INN); JUDGE (ICE (MUSH-ROOMS))

BEST OF THE STATES

MASSACHUSETTS

NEW CHEFS

► Straight Wharf Restaurant

6 Harbor Square, Nantucket, MA,
 508-228-4499, straightwharfrestaurant.com

Before chefs Gabriel Frasca and Amanda Lydon took over this 30-year-old Nantucket institution last summer, the food was decent. Now it's phenomenal, creative and loaded with local, seasonal ingredients—and an even bigger attraction than the restaurant's outstanding location and waterfront view.

LANDLOCKED SEAFOOD

► Catch Restaurant

34 Church St., Winchester, MA,
 781-729-1040, catchrestaurant.com

Winchester might not be top of mind when you're pondering great seafood destinations. It should be. Chef Chris Parsons dishes local scallops, Atlantic salmon, striped bass and Maine lobster better than anyone in the area.

CITY GARDEN

► Oleana

134 Hampshire St., Cambridge, MA,
 617-661-0505, oleanarestaurant.com

There's a romantic oasis just off Cambridge's Inman Square. You can't get a reservation (for outside, that is), and the wait can be tedious. But it's worthwhile when the payoff is a table tucked away in Oleana's back patio—and plates of James Beard Foundation Award-winning chef Ana Sortun's brilliant eastern Mediterranean food.

mean they use it in the dining room at The Old Inn on the Green. Candlelight and firelight illuminate the rustic, wood-floored restaurant, where chef Peter Platt's tasting menus are at once surprisingly forward-thinking (in elegant technique and presentation) and refreshingly old school (in their commitment to locally farmed produce and meats).

oysters

► **B&G OYSTERS**

550 Tremont St., Boston, MA,
617-423-0550, bandgoysters.com

Connoisseurs claim the subtlest difference in water temperature, depth and salinity will change the taste of a really good oyster. At B&G you can test that theory to your heart's content. Chef Barbara Lynch's raw bar, on a stylish corner in Boston's South End, has a master list of more than 200 oysters, with nearly 30 from Massachusetts alone, including plump Bee's River oysters, salty Cuttyhunks and classic briny Wellfleets. They're all unique, for sure, and every one is delicious.

romantic

► **ARROWS RESTAURANT**

Berwick Road, Ogunquit, ME,
207-361-1100, arrowsrestaurant.com

Romance can pop up just about anywhere. In Arrows' candlelit, glass-walled dining room overlooking the garden, it's all but guaranteed. After sampling aphrodisiacal oysters, lovers can steal glances at each other between bites of the delicious, garden-fresh cuisine—perhaps a duo of pan-roasted beef and brisket laced with huckleberries, or a crown roast rack of spring lamb with a cornbread and roasted garlic pudding and a trio of custards. If sparks don't fly after a few bites of chocolate terrine with toasted anise seed ice cream, we're pretty sure they never will.

sandwiches

► **ALL STAR SANDWICH BAR**

1245 Cambridge St., Cambridge, MA,
617-868-3065, allstarsandwichbar.com

This is a sandwich bar, plain and simple, where every option, from the tangy BBQ pork layered with coleslaw to the thinly sliced "Beef on Weck," is made with love, respect and locally culled ingredients. The pork is smoked next door at sister restaurant East Coast Grill & Raw Bar; the breads are baked in Cambridge; house-made pickles and freshly prepared sides accompany each sandwich. Meaning it's all plainly and simply delicious.

seafood

► **THE PEARL**

12 Federal St., Nantucket, MA,
508-228-9701, boardinghouse-pearl.com

New England chefs take seafood seriously. Sometimes too seriously. So seriously, in fact, it seems they're afraid to do much more than boil it or serve it raw. Not so at The Pearl, where chef-owner Seth Raynor transforms local catches into stunning Asian-influenced dishes such

as his justifiably famous yellowfin tuna martini, wok-fried lobster and caramelized miso-cured black cod. The Pearl is a jewel in Nantucket's culinary crown.

special occasion

► **THE WHITE BARN INN RESTAURANT**

37 Beach Ave., Kennebunkport, ME,
207-967-2321, whitebarninn.com

Even if the food is refined and a level of old-school propriety pervades (jackets required for gentlemen), the White Barn Inn's dining room, housed in a renovated barn, exudes homey warmth. Chef Jonathan Cartwright's tempting four- and six-course tasting menus showcase inventive, locally inspired dishes—if it's available, don't miss the seared salmon filet with American caviar, Aroostook County potato sauce and bacon roasted Brussels sprouts. Flawlessly welcoming service and lovely extras, like a decadent selection of petit fours, guarantee guests an enchanted evening.

steakhouse

► **GRILL 23 & BAR**

161 Berkeley St., Boston, MA,
617-542-2255, grill23.com

The pleasures of tucking into a thick, char-grilled steak and taking slow sips of rich red wine are deliciously enhanced by the powerful ambiance at Grill 23. Underneath the dining room's sculpted ceilings and mahogany interior, those juicy chops, along with chef Jay Murray's range of weekly specials (such as Chatham cod in littleneck stew or sushi-grade tuna crusted with almonds) and flavorful sides (six styles of potato including truffled tater tots) far surpass standard steakhouse fare.

water view

► **TOPPER'S RESTAURANT AT THE WAUWINET**

The Wauwinet, 120 Wauwinet Road,
Nantucket, MA, 508-228-8768, wauwinet.com

All the elements are in place here for a night to remember: a wine list deep enough to floor even the most jaded oenophile, crisp linens and foie gras torchon as smooth as the spot-on service. When the sun melts into the bay lapping the shore a short distance away, turning the sky neon pink, diners might actually applaud.

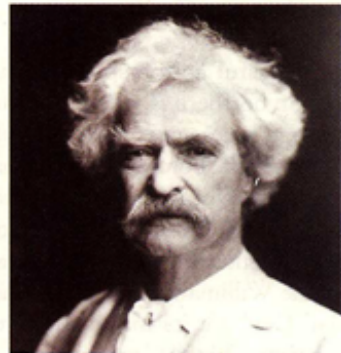
wine list

► **THE INN AT SAWMILL FARM**

7 Crosstown Road, West Dover, VT,
802-464-8131, theinnatsawmillfarm.com

A truly great wine list allows you to push your limits and sample hard-to-find bottles. And where else but The Inn at Sawmill Farm can you try a Burgundy grand cru from 1955? Chef-owner Brill Williams has traveled the globe to pick up deliciously rare vintages from small producers. The Inn offers "verticals" (same wines, different years) of all five Bordeaux grand crus, as well as cult Californians from the early '70s. There are equally special bottles priced under \$100 for everyday sipping. ■

The Man



The House



The Museum



A NATIONAL LANDMARK...AN AMERICAN TREASURE

In the backyard of the Hartford, Connecticut home where Twain penned classics about Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, our museum showcases the trends, arts and ideas that influenced an American original. Brush up on Twain's biography with a film by Ken Burns. Visit Twain's Victorian mansion. Shop in our store. Dine in our café. And go home wiser and wittier.



The Mark Twain
House & Museum

www.MarkTwainHouse.org
351 Farmington Avenue
Hartford CT
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seafood | THE PEARL, MA
See listing on page 107.

