

# Fall Getaways

Been there, done that. Or have you? Discover 23 weekend getaway properties so transformed, you'll never believe you'd set foot in them before (and why fall is the perfect time to visit them).

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## A Second Look 23 Hotels Reborn

### ARTICLE SEGMENT FOLLOWS:

#### **Ocean House**

1 Bluff Ave /// Watch Hill, RI (401) 584-7000/(888) 552-2588

**From White Plains:** 2½ hours

Climbing the bluff that overlooks Watch Hill harbor and the Atlantic Ocean, you can almost hear the joyous shouts of Victorian era travelers as they haul their steamer trunks to the portico of this splendid yellow and white resort. Former fans recall small rooms, shared bathrooms, squeaky plumbing, and warped floors, **though most claimed it the “most stunning location in the world.”** Originally constructed in 1868, by 2003 the 159-room Ocean House had deteriorated to the point where the top two floors were dangerously uninhabitable and “you could put a marble on the dining room floor and it would go in circles it was so warped,” says Director of



The Ocean House sits on a bluff overlooking Watch Hill harbor.

Communications Dinah Saglio. To the rescue, New York investment advisor and Watch Hill summer resident Charles Royce, who had the heart and resources (raising \$140 million) to reimagine the Ocean House as a 49-room “Preferred Boutique” hotel. Too expensive to renovate, the structure was disassembled and rebuilt as an exact historic restoration using 5,000 original pieces, some of which make up the external clapboard, railings, front door, wavy windows, reception desk, and a stone fireplace in the lobby. With a focus on exceptional service and warm hospitality, the Ocean House has been winning over the community and past guests since it reopened in May.

**Room:** Colors and appointments mesh harmoniously with sand and sea. Amply upholstered chairs, walls, window treatments and Frette bedding in subtle blues, pinks and yellows; rooms were designed to feel like a friend’s summer shore home—with free WiFi and HD TV’s. Observe your beloved relaxing in a deep soaking tub through clever cut-through shutter windows that open onto the bedroom. Shower floors are made of round beach stones and bathroom subway tile

floors mimic those of yesteryears. Though pricier, all rooms on the second floor have large terraces caressed by ocean breezes (\$355-\$855).

**Board:** The small-plates menu for in-house Seasons Restaurant is created daily from ingredients freshly plucked by Ocean House Food Forager (yes, that is her job title) Pamela Stone. A team of enthusiastic young chefs craft dishes that are creatively conceived, often witty and ultimately **scrumptious. For foodies who'd prefer to observe cooking action over surfers catching waves, ask** for a coveted counter seat facing the demonstration kitchen. The darkly paneled Club Room offers a less formal chophouse style cuisine and a 2,500-square-foot deck overlooking the private beach below.

**Only Here:** Tagged onto the room expense, a \$24 per person “resort fee” saves you from digging in your pocket every time a valet, porter or concierge does you a service. It also avails you of various fall season classes and amenities, such as the ability to tag along with Stone on her foraging expeditions to on-site herb gardens and local fish markets and farms, Yoga in the OH! **Spa, surf casting lessons on the beach, or beefing up your croquet skills on the resort’s** championship croquet lawn.

**While Here:** Poke around the tiny downtown of Watch Hill. In Autumn, all the cute shops are still open.

**Facts:** Rooms, \$260-\$855; family suites, \$500-\$10,000 per night. Daily \$24 per person resort fee includes all gratuities, afternoon tea with freshly baked goods, constantly restocked private bar, parking and valet, WiFi, and selection of daily resort activities.