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THE TRAVEL PUBLICATION FOR ENGAGED COUPLES & ROMANCE TRAVELERS

# Rhode Island

## GOOD THINGS COME IN SMALL PACKAGES

Words by Carolyn Steere



Castle Hill

**Rhode Island may be known as the smallest state in the U.S., but it packs an enormous amount of diversity, historical charm and beauty within its borders. Locals like to refer to Rhode Island as “America’s first resort town,” with visitors making it their destination of choice since the early 1900s. Whether your wedding day vision is seaside, quaint historic inn or downtown chic, your options here are endless.**

Newport, Rhode Island is long known for its rich sailing tradition, exceptional cuisine, charming shops, galleries and stately mansions. The boutique Vanderbilt Grace Hotel, conveniently located in downtown, dates back to 1909 and is an ideal location for small wedding gatherings. The Rooftop Deck is the perfect spot to sip a cocktail and enjoy the spectacular view as the sun disappears over Narragansett Bay. The Hotel Viking is just steps away and has been the choice of notables like Will Rogers, Ella Fitzgerald and John and Jackie Kennedy. Its historic Kay Chapel is a charming setting for a storybook-inspired ceremony and its stately dining rooms make for an elegant reception. For a truly unique setting, you might consider hosting your nuptials (or pre-nuptial events) at the Tennis Hall of Fame & Museum, a Victorian-inspired complex where you can be surrounded by

memorabilia of the tennis greats. “The Great Gatsby” provides rich inspiration if you choose Rosecliff, a mansion modeled after the Grand Trianon, the garden retreat of French kings. Belle Mer and Regatta Place are superb waterfront venues where the sea can be the backdrop to your ceremony and you can dance the night away nautical style.

As you leave the town of Newport and drive along the iconic Ocean Drive with acres of rolling lawns on one side and the sea on the other, you come upon OceanCliff. This breathtaking estate was built in 1864 and offers one of the largest ballrooms in Newport and world-class cuisine. Nearby Castle Hill is magical with expansive green lawns on the edge of the ocean where chefs artfully prepare local seafood and regional specialties.







Laid-Back luxury



Photos courtesy of: (top to bottom, left to right) Ocean House, Discover Warren (Angel Tucker), GoNewport.com (2nd & 4th) and Castle Hill

The city of Providence has enjoyed a renaissance in recent years and one venue not to be overlooked is the Providence Public Library which was founded in 1875. A newly renovated 1,225 square-foot hall has been transformed into a magnificent event space where you can make your entrance through rich mahogany doors and descend down an elegant marble staircase through towering arches supported by ornamented columns. A number of uniquely appointed rooms off of the main hall provide variety and flexibility in how you stage your event. If a garden setting is more your vision, you might consider the Roger Williams Park Botanical Center, which is the largest public indoor-display garden in New England. Their greenhouses are home to 150 different species of plants including 17 different varieties of palms. Since many venues in this area allow for outside catering, check out Russell Morin Fine Catering to provide customized and inspirational cuisine.

A short drive down a peninsula heading back toward Newport is the "Most Patriotic Town in America," Bristol, Rhode Island. Rich in historic significance, this tranquil little town is a bit off the beaten path, but should not be overlooked. For an intimate

setting you might consider Linden Place, where presidents and the rich and famous were entertained, or Blithewold Mansion Gardens & Arboretum, a 33-acre historic property overlooking Narragansett Bay for a grand event perfect for all seasons.

Perched high on an ocean bluff in Watch Hill, Rhode Island sits the AAA Five-Diamond Ocean House, which opened its doors in 1868 and welcomed guests for 136 years. It was then completely demolished and rebuilt with great care taken to duplicate its original design. Luxury suites are richly appointed with the soft colors of its seaside surroundings, making the Ocean House a perfect honeymoon choice as well. From small weddings to grand affairs with up to 400 guests, this seaside resort is an idyllic setting.

This small state still holds the charm and glam which made it the choice of the rich and famous of yesteryear. From Gatsby-style historic mansions overlooking the sea, to sophisticated city sites, Rhode Island offers a wide variety of amazing wedding venues to serve as the backdrop to the destination wedding of your dreams.

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