

# 30 GREAT INNS

Searching for that perfect hideaway?  
We combed the nation for the  
best undiscovered inns and B&B's, and  
found something for every taste.

From mountaintop lodges to beachside cottages, desert oases  
and wine-country manors, here are 30 of our new favorites—plus  
five all-time classics worth the splurge



Island escape. **RIGHT:** The porch at Hob Knob Inn on Martha's Vineyard. **FAR RIGHT:** Room No. 17.

# seaside

30 GREAT  
INNS

for nature-lovers

## INN AT CASTLE HILL

**IPSWICH, MA** | Situated on a thin slice of the historic Crane estate, 30 miles north of Boston, the shingle-style Inn at Castle Hill counts among its assets 2,000 acres of protected salt marshes, pine forests, meadows, maritime forest—and a 4½-mile white-sand beach on the Atlantic. The estate has been under the care of the Trustees of Reservations, a Massachusetts conservation organization, since 1948. While on the property, make time to visit the Stuart-inspired Great House,



The tavern at the Inn at Castle Hill.

built in the late twenties for plumbing magnate Richard Crane, with (no kidding) sterling-silver taps, carved library moldings by Grinling Gibbons, and a glamorous Olmsted-designed allée. The inn's 10 rooms uphold such old New England values as double-hung windows, polished pine floors, and sailing charts. Request Higinbotham (the largest room), Miné (the only one with a fireplace), or Cornelius (the best views).

280 Argilla Rd.; 978/412-2555, fax 978/412-2556; www.theinnatcastlehill.com; doubles from \$175.

## HOB KNOB INN

**MARTHA'S VINEYARD, MA** | Don't worry if you track beach sand through the front door at the Hob Knob Inn, minutes from the ferry dock in Edgartown. The staff at this 20-room Gothic Revival retreat won't blink an eye: on the Vineyard, you're expected to dig castles on the tide line, ride old-fashioned cruiser bikes, and fish for striped bass off Gay Head on the inn's 27-foot Boston Whaler. Freshly squeezed lemonade and hot scones with local berry preserves greet you on the front porch; breakfast is served in bed, and picnic baskets are always packed for a day at the shore. (Pail and shovel optional.) The Hob Knob may just spark a revival for glazed English chintz: yards and yards drape the guest rooms, which have that classic style—quilted bedspreads, floral wallpaper, overstuffed chairs, varnished antiques—generally found in prominent Yankee family compounds. As a young senator, JFK slept here. Probably felt right at home.

128 Main St.; 800/696-2723 or 508/627-9510, fax 508/627-4560; www.hobknob.com; doubles from \$225.

## PALMS CLIFF HOUSE

**HONOLULU, HI** | On the eastern shore of the Big Island, 13 miles north of Hilo and 100 years back in time, stands the Palms Cliff House. Built on a former cliffside plantation, the inn still maintains an unhurried gentility. Each morning, you'll climb from your Italian lace-trimmed sheets to watch from your lanai as the sun rises over migrating humpback whales, and then sit down to a breakfast of fruits plucked from the adjacent gardens: rambutan, breadfruit, mango, six kinds of banana. Nearby, a short trail leads to Akaka Falls, which spill 420 feet down a lava-rock cliff fringed in palm trees



and ferns. At the end of the day, let a massage therapist rub you with heated lava rocks soaked in oil as you drift off to the sound of the surf. That's life on the quiet side—passing the time where time doesn't pass at all.

28-3514 Mamalahoa Hwy.; 808/963-6076, fax 808/963-6316; www.palmscliffhouse.com; doubles from \$175.

## THE MERMAID & THE ALLIGATOR

**KEY WEST, FL** | With at least 80 inns and B&B's squeezed onto the eight-square-mile island, Key West may well be America's most "inn" town. So what makes the Mermaid & the Alligator stand out? Try the crystal chandelier glittering from the royal poinciana tree out back, or the plunge pool with built-in bench for sipping Meursault. Or is it simply that the inn, though only a 10-minute walk from the beach, hides in a palm and bromeliad jungle, secure from tourist-mobbed Duval Street? The owners intended to create a respite from Key West's hubbub when they bought the 1904 Victorian house five years ago. They planted every exotic they could find, then decorated the rooms with refreshing details like Polynesian tapa cloths and Haitian and Cuban artwork depicting island life. None of the nine guest rooms have phones or TV's, but instead encourage lingering at mahogany writer's desks. But first, you'll need to check in at the kitchen—there's no reception desk here.

729 Truman Ave.; 800/773-1894 or 305/294-1894, fax 305/295-9925; www.kwmermaid.com; doubles from \$108.

Top: Minh + Wass (2). Bottom: Bill Tipper