



Newport and Providence in Rhode Island –
Newport: Houses, Mansions and Gardens from Colonial Days to Gilded Age
Providence: Arts and Architecture in the Capital City
Tuesday, May 11 to Saturday, May 15, 2027
Arrangements by Classical Excursions

NOTE: This trip coincides with the presentation of the ICAA's Arthur Ross Awards in New York City on Monday, May 10th

Newport was founded in 1639 on Rhode Island, which is now called Aquidneck Island. No American seaside resort is more famous or historic than Newport. In part, that's because few other places retain so superlative and intact a legacy of extraordinary buildings dating from the early colonial period to the modern day. In the eighteenth century, Newport's harbor was the most important port in the country, especially in the American Revolution, making Newport a very prosperous town. In the mid-nineteenth century summer cottages started to appear and the Gilded Age kick-off around 1865 and ran up to 1915 and World War I. Preservation of historic Newport started in 1945 with the purchase of Hunter House (c.1748) in the Point Section of town – and this led to the formation of the Preservation Society of Newport County (now popularly called Newport Mansions). Newport Preservation Foundation and other groups followed. All major architects and firms are represented in Newport starting with Peter Harrison in the mid-1700's, then to Richard Upjohn, Richard Morris Hunt, McKim Mead & White, Horace Trumbauer, Peabody & Stearns, John Russell Pope, Delano & Aldrich, Charles Platt, to name a few. Today, firms like Fairfax & Sammons, Peter Pennoyer Architects and others are all engaged in projects.



Providence is known for its blend of Colonial, Federal, Victorian, and modern architecture. The city's historic East Side features well-preserved 18th- and 19th-century homes, while downtown showcases Beaux-Arts landmarks, Art Deco buildings, and contemporary developments. Iconic structures such as the Rhode Island State House, c. 1904 by McKim, Mead & White, with its large marble dome, and the historic homes along Benefit Street reflect the city's rich architectural heritage.

The following is a preliminary itinerary as of June 2026 · Subject to change without notice.

TUESDAY · 11 MAY:

We will start in the early evening so we ask you arrive in Newport by late afternoon – 4pm. We'll start our evening with a overview drive through the colonial era Point Section and then along **Bellevue Avenue** and **Ocean Avenue** with incredible sunset views of the Atlantic.

Welcome lecture and dinner* at the **New York Yacht Club's Harbour Court** (images previous page). This once magnificent private home was built for John Nicholas Brown's family and completed in 1906. Perched high above the harbor, it offers incredible views of moored sailing vessels, yachts, Fort Adams, and Narragansett Bay. Designed by architect Ralph Adams Cram and it is inspired by the Chateau d'Osmoy. Our talk is planned to by architectural historian **John Tschirch**. John is an author of numerous books, and he is a professor at RISD and is former head of education at the Preservation Society. (*pending)

WEDNESDAY · MAY 12:

We start our touring with a visit to **Kingscote**, a Gothic Revival 1839 mansion by architect Richard Upjohn. This was the era at the beginning of the “cottage boom.” In 1880, Stanford White was commissioned to design a dining room addition – image right.

Then just up the street is the **Isaac Bell House** by McKim Mead & White dating to 1882 and is an outstanding example of the Shingle Style.



Newport Casino, now the **International Tennis Hall of Fame** – c.1881, architects McKim Mead & White, and done in the shingle style. This was originally designed with both public retail along Bellevue and then private club facilities.

Lunch, followed by a short visit to the **John N.A. Griswold House**, designed by Richard Morris Hunt and completed in 1864 in the stick-style of architecture – it now is one of three buildings of the Newport Art Museum. Another museum building was designed by Delano & Aldrich and completed in 1919.



Special visit to **Redwood Library and Athenaeum**, c.1747, by architect Peter Harrison. On this private visit we will be welcomed by Director Benedict Leca*. The Redwood was America's first purpose-built library, and the oldest continuously operating in its original location. In 1875 the Redwood added Rhode Island's first art gallery to the building. We'll be able to explore with their curator a special selection of some of the treasures in the collection. (*pending his schedule)



Our day will end with a private visit and reception at restored 1713 home. (pending homeowners schedule).
Dinner tonight on your own.

THURSDAY · MAY 13:

Special morning visit to The Breakers, the grandest and largest of all the mansions. Built for Cornelius Vanderbilt II, it was designed by Richard Morris Hunt and completed in 1895. It is in the Renaissance Revival Style with interiors by Jules Allard and Sons and Ogden Codman, Jr. The mansion stands on the site of a previous brick and shingle Queen Anne style house by Peabody and Stearns that had burned to the ground in 1892. The landscape of both of The Breakers was designed by Ernest Bowditch. In



1948, Countess Gladys Vanderbilt Széchenyi leased the property to the Preservation Society of Newport County for \$1 a year to open the first and second floors and take care of the maintenance of the property. Members of the Vanderbilt family continued to use the third floor up until 2018.

We will have a private visit to the third floor of The Breakers, an area only open by appointment. This floor contained eight bedrooms and a sitting room for guests, plus a north wing section for staff.

Following lunch, afternoon visit to **The Elms**. Built for Edward Julius Berwind and his family, it was completed in 1901 to the designs of architect Horace Trumbauer. Mr. Berwind's sister Julia kept the house until her death in 1961. Then there was sale of the contents in spring of 1962, and a developer hoped to redevelop the property for multiple housing lots. The Preservation Society was able to purchase the house and grounds in late 1962, saving it from the wrecking-ball. Since that time, approximately 20% of the original contents have made their way back – including, a recent donation of Mr. Berwind's bed and dressing console – so there is always hope for more pieces to make their way back. We'll enjoy a walk on the grounds to admire the two garden pavilions, the sunken garden, and the carriage house. Several spaces, including the kitchens, have been featured in the HBO series *"The Gilded Age."*



THURSDAY · MAY 13: *continued*

Reception and dinner at **Bois Doré**, the **private home** of Anne Fairfax and Richard Sammons on Narragansett Avenue. It is a French chateau-style mansion built in 1927, designed by New York architect Charles A. Platt for William Fahnestock, a New York banker. The house has a unique and illustrious history and was recently purchased in 2021 by Richard and Anne (of the architectural firm of Fairfax & Sammons) and is undergoing restoration. Post card image from 1927. (dinner pending)



FRIDAY · 14 MAY:

We depart for a day in Providence. Today we will be joined by Brent Runyon, architectural historian, and former Executive Director of the Providence Preservation Society, who will provide us with insights into the city and its architectural history. We start with a visit to the John Brown House on Benefit Street, c.1786. Then we'll walk to the Providence Athenaeum, completed in 1838 in the Greek Revival style, and with a 1914 addition by architect Warren Platner. Lunch will be nearby at the Providence Art Club, founded in 1880 and housed in four historic buildings on College Hill. Then we will drive through the city and visit to the State Capital building completed in 1904 to the designs of McKim, Mead and White. We return to Newport by 6pm. Images -top left: Brown House; top right: Athenaeum; Bottom left: Art Club; Bottom right: Capital.

Dinner tonight on your own.



SATURDAY • 15 MAY: Note – the tour concludes today around Noon / 12:30 pm.

Special visit before opening hours to **Rough Point**, the former home of Doris Duke and now part of the Newport Restoration Foundation which she founded in 1968. The English Manorial style home was designed by architectural firm Peabody & Stearns for Frederick William Vanderbilt. Construction on the red sandstone and granite began in 1887 and was completed 1892. In 1922, the property was acquired by James Buchanan Duke and in 1925, 12-year-old Doris inherited the property upon her father's passing. Images below: exterior; Atlantic Ocean facing sunroom porch.



Private visit to Vernon House, c 1760. This architecturally distinguished colonial-era house is an unrestored property and not generally open to the public. It is a National Historic Landmark as it is known for its extraordinary Asia-inspired wall murals. During the American Revolutionary War, it served as the headquarters of the Comte de Rochambeau, commander of the French forces from 1780 to 1783.



NOTE: We may substitute some of the visits if we have the opportunity for private visits to some homes.

The **BRENTON HOTEL** is a new boutique hotel opened in July 2020 and overlooks the harbor on one side and the other looks up to historic Colony House on Washington Square. We will have deluxe rooms for 4-nights – you may also request through Classical Excursions to arrive a day ahead or stay longer after; Harbor view rooms are available by request at an additional charge. Breakfast is included each morning. Valet parking is available. Images: exterior; night view towards Colony House; sunset from hotel lounge; hotel's The Living Room space for breakfast, and evening drinks and dining.



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Ocean Avenue along the Atlantic