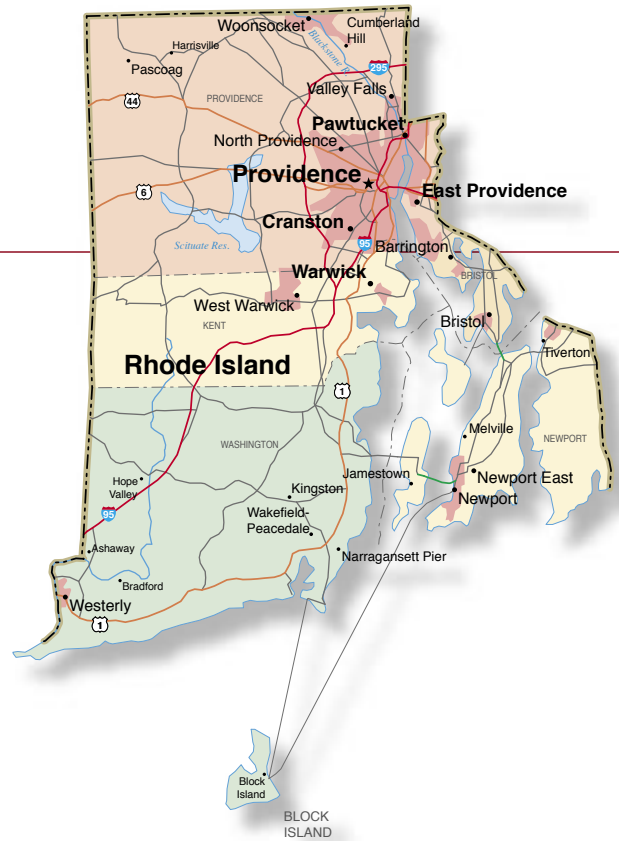




The Continental Sloop "Providence" is part of the "Providence Piers" project, which is giving the city's harbor a facelift.



## Small State, Big Offerings

by Barbara E. Cohen

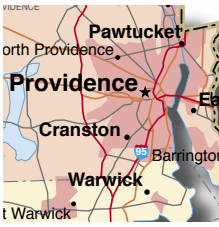
It may be the smallest state, but Rhode Island is full of historic, recreational and picturesque sites that make for great travel packages.

"Rhode Island offers a microcosm of New England in about 1,200 square miles," said Katrina White, group tour manager for the Rhode Island Tourism Division.

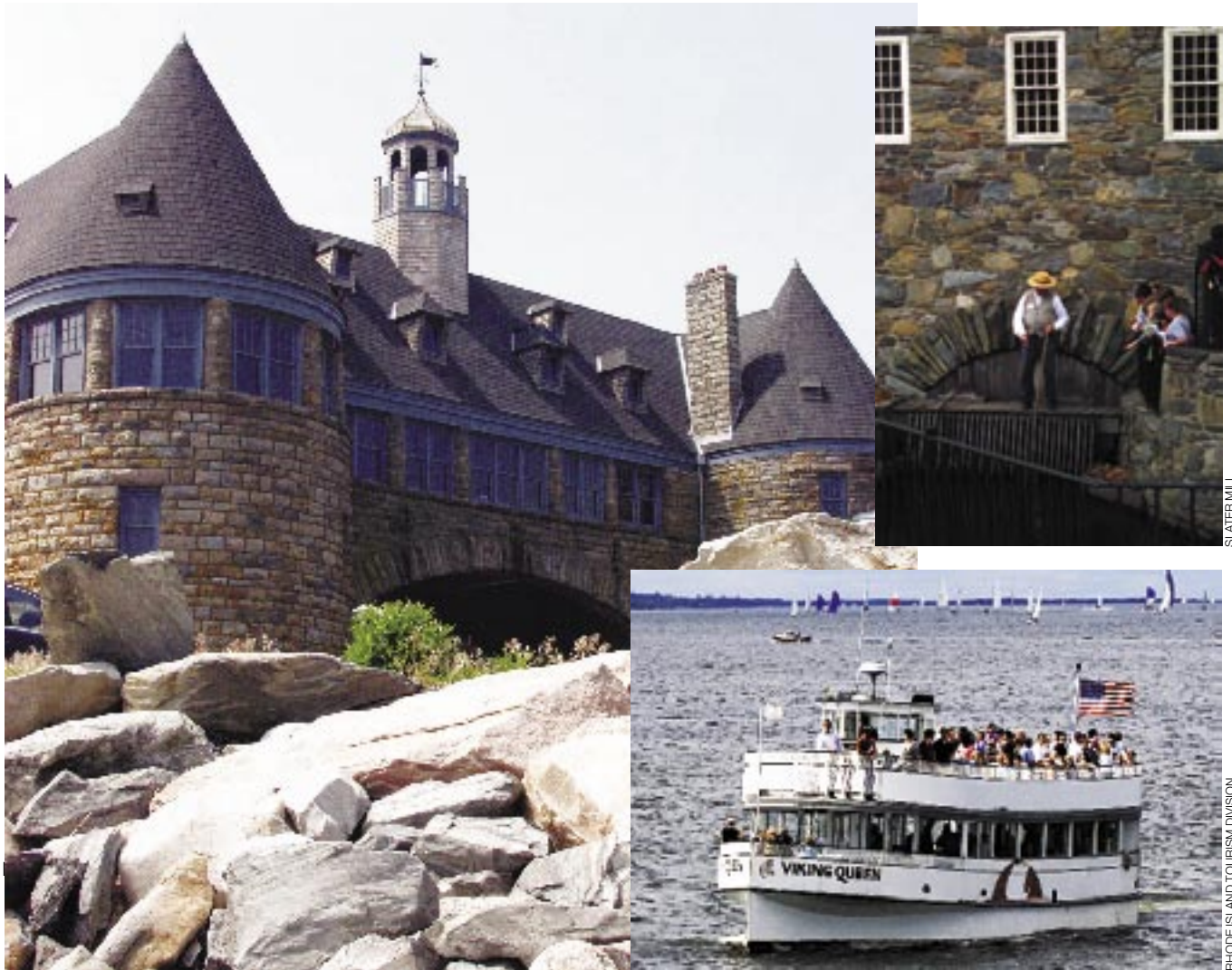
"Groups can travel a short distance — from the picturesque rural countryside to Colonial seaports or post-industrial hip, artsy cities — and cover close to 400 years of history at the same time."

The state's compact size means that all options can be included in an exciting and memorable Rhode Island/New England itinerary. Seven distinct vacation regions within the state are within 45 minutes of each other, enabling groups and FITs to experience all of Rhode Island's diverse

# Rhode Island



# Rhode Island



Clockwise from left: The Narragansett Towers, part of the historic Narragansett Pier Casino, is now a popular venue for special events. Slater Mill in Pawtucket is an interactive living history museum with organized programs for students. Narrated cruises aboard Viking Tours of Newport's "Viking Queen" are available for groups or FITs from mid-May through mid-October.

cultural and recreational offerings without a lot of time on the road between attractions.

## SEVEN DISTINCT REGIONS

Rhode Island tour itineraries can travel back and forth between cultural and geographic zones or stick to specific themes.

1. **BLACKSTONE VALLEY** is rich in history and architectural beauty. The Slater Mill Historic Site in Pawtucket commemorates the first American cotton mill, which was established in 1793.

2. **BLOCK ISLAND** is a seaside resort that brings to mind a period of American history devoted to high-minded leisure. Just 12 miles off the coast, it was declared to be one of the 12 "last great places in the Western Hemisphere" by the Nature Conservancy in 1991, which has been active in preserving significant portions of the island's ecosystem. Thanks to high-speed ferry service that began this summer, visitors can travel between Newport or Port Judith and Block Island in half the time of a regular ferry run.

The following company has placed advertising in support of this travel guide.

**Newport Marriott** **153**

3. With its laid-back charm, **EAST BAY** is perfect for antiquing or wandering village squares. The patriotic spirit has been on view in Bristol's Fourth of July parade since 1785, making it the oldest event of its kind in the United States.



The leisurely pace of life on Block Island makes it a major draw for visitors to the Ocean State.

4. Newport's mansions draw the bulk of the state's tourists, but other resort towns in **NEWPORT COUNTY** are worth exploring, too. In season, cruise Newport Harbor aboard the "Viking Queen," a 140-passenger excursion boat operated by Viking Tours of Newport, for a unique perspective of the area.

*Seven distinct vacation regions within the state are within 45 minutes of each other, enabling groups and FITs to experience all of Rhode Island's diverse cultural and recreational offerings.*

5. **PROVIDENCE**, the state capital, offers historic landmarks and first-class cuisine, shopping, art galleries and museums.

6. **SOUTH COUNTRY'S** 11 quaint villages beckon. Drive through the countryside, visit the sandy beaches or stroll along the streets of small-town New England.

Ad here

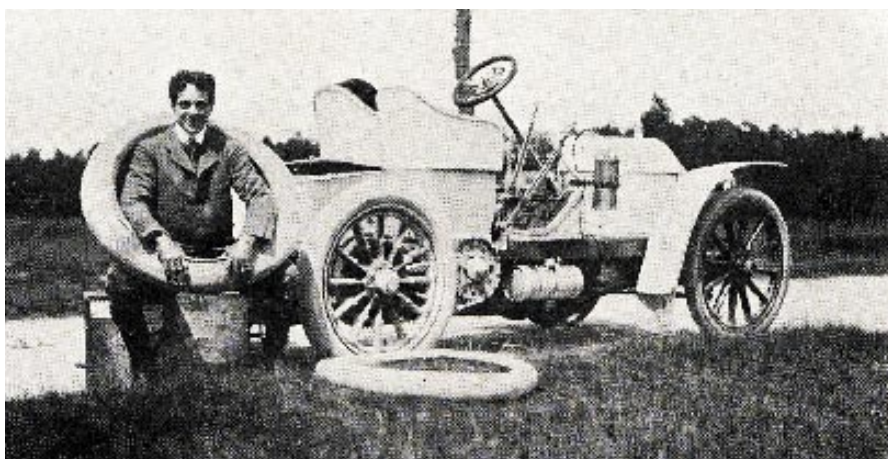
7. On the WEST BAY, Cranston and Warwick are a shopper's paradise, full of boutiques and cozy bistros when you are ready for a break.

### NEW ATTRACTIONS AND EVENTS

Part of the multi-million dollar Providence Piers redevelopment project, the "Providence Piers," a new 49-passenger sightseeing boat, offers tours of the harbor. Docked nearby, the Continental Sloop "Providence," a tall ship that was the first command for John Paul Jones, offers educational programs and sailing lessons. She starred as both a Turkish ship and a British vessel in the popular film "The Pirates of the Caribbean II: Dead Man's Chest."

Planning agritourism itineraries just got easier thanks to the launch of RI Farmways ([www.rifarmways.com](http://www.rifarmways.com)) this summer. Developed by the Rhode Island Center for Agricultural Promotion and Education, Farmways connects tour groups with working farms that are open to visitors.

In Newport, two first-time events — the Newport Mansions Food and Wine Festival and the Newport



THE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF NEWPORT COUNTY

The contributions of William K. Vanderbilt Jr., one of the early pioneers of automobile racing, will be featured in the Newport Preservation Society's inaugural Vanderbilt Concours d'Elegance, July 26-29, 2007.

Preservation Society's Vanderbilt Concours d'Elegance — are giving visitors a feel for the city's history. The inaugural Food and Wine Festival, which was held in late September, included auctions of international wines, a Grand Tasting on the lawn of one of Newport's summer cottages, themed dinners that paired Newport's best chefs with great wineries and a gala celebration in the ballroom of another Gilded Age mansion. The Concours

d'Elegance, which focuses on historic automobiles and the early days of car racing, will debut July 26-29, 2007, at the Newport Mansions. The event will celebrate all things automotive by featuring legendary drivers, competition cars and classic automobiles from all eras. Additionally, the Astors' Beechwood Mansion has inserted "The Beechwood Follies" to its lineup of evening entertainment — and group tours never wait in line. ■

## Whimsical Sculpture at Johnson & Wales



RHODE ISLAND TOURISM DIVISION

Numerous cooking- and dining-related items are on display as part of a new exhibit at Johnson & Wales University's Culinary Archives and Museum.

"Foodies" are fond of Rhode Island thanks to graduates of Johnson & Wales University who have stayed on to make Providence one of the finest culinary destinations in the United States. Johnson & Wales University maintains a strong network with its 60,000 alumni, many of whom are employed throughout the restaurant, food service and hospitality industries. Celebrated graduates include The Food Network's Emeril Lagasse, Tyler Florence and Michelle Bernstein.

Through Jan. 31, 2007, view 3,000 kitchen gadgets and utensils in the off-beat assemblage sculptures by Harry Hasson, a florist and artist from Ventnor City, New Jersey. They are on exhibit, along with other food-related items, at Johnson & Wales University's Culinary Archives & Museum in Providence. Items in the regular collection include cookbooks, restaurant menus, kitchen gadgets and objects owned by famous chefs and food authors such as Julia Child. The museum offers discounts for groups of 10 or more. — B.C.