

# VOGUE

## All About the Charming Rhode Island Village Where Taylor Swift’s “Holiday House” Sits Quietly on the Beach

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The Watch Hill Lighthouse Photo: Getty Images

As the song goes, for many years, Watch Hill sat quietly on the beach of Rhode Island... and then a home there was bought by Taylor Swift. In 2013, Swift acquired the historic coastal home Holiday House, and it's since been the location of many a celebrity-laden Fourth of July parties—plus, of course, the subject of “The Last Great American Dynasty,” from Swift’s 2020 album *Folklore*. (In the song, we hear about the home’s provenance—its former matriarch was the unrestrained heiress Rebekah Harkness, less swan and more society black sheep—and Swift draws lyrical parallels between herself and Harkness.)

Over the weekend, the home once again played host to Swift's A-list circle of friends. The purpose of the gathering? Blake Lively's 37th birthday, which was reportedly attended by Ryan Reynolds, Travis Kelce, Jason Kelce, Bradley Cooper, Patrick Mahomes, and Brittany Mahomes. And here, we have *Vogue's* guide to the picturesque town.

Less crowded than the Hamptons, and easier to reach than Nantucket, Watch Hill is located on the southernmost tip of the state, part of the larger town of Westerly that is known for its massive and restored historic homes and notable residents. It's a small place, so hard to miss the major attractions, but here's a guide to planning an idyllic stay.



Ocean HousePhoto: Alamy

## Where to Stay

### Ocean House

You can't truly capture the beauty of Watch Hill without mentioning this sprawling estate. Ocean House is a waterfront Relais & Châteaux property celebrating the 150th anniversary of its original build. Amenities are seemingly endless and include access to the private beach and a 12,000-square-foot spa. Their Center of Wine and Culinary Arts

offers the perfect escape from the sun with classes in their wine cellar-inspired school. Guests also have access to pastel-colored bikes and Mercedes vehicles to explore the town and surrounding area in style.

## What to Do

### Napatree Point

A hike on [this stretch](#) combines exercise and unforgettable views. Open year-round, hikers can expect to cover two to three miles, depending on the turning point.

Birdwatchers are in for an added treat: Napatree Point serves as a wildlife preserve and is a resting area for migratory birds.



Photo: Alamy

### Flying Horse Carousel

Although adults won't be able to ride on the oldest working carousel in the country, Flying Horse Carousel is still worth a visit. Built in 1876, the horses are not attached to the ground, but are suspended and swing while in motion. Admire the hand-carved

ponies, leather saddles, and real tails and manes while enjoying an ice cream cone from St. Clair Annex.

## **Where to Snack**

### **St. Clair Annex**

When your sweet tooth hits after walking Napatree Point or a long day of bronzing, this ice cream shop will satisfy. The family-owned eatery, located in downtown Watch Hill, has served customers for over 125 years and sources their cream from a local dairy.

### **Olympia Tea Room**

History is at the forefront of Watch Hill, especially in this 100-year-old restaurant. Olympia Tea Room serves a simple, bistro-style menu to be paired with an extensive wine list and craft cocktails. Snag a sidewalk seat to watch a picture-perfect sunset, or lounge in an antique booth indoors. Word to the wise: arrive early, as they don't take reservations.

### **Secret Garden**

A glass of Champagne on vacation is practically a requirement. Sit among boxwood hedges in Ocean House's Secret Garden and sip glasses of Veuve Clicquot, including Veuve Clicquot Rich Rosé. Should you get hungry, the bar is stocked with pre- or post-dinner bites such as truffle popcorn and an array of gourmet hotdogs.

### **The Candy Box**

Schedule a stop at this old-school candy shop to stock up on saltwater taffy and homemade fudge before you head to the beach or off to the train station.