

# Don't leave Fido behind during your next vacation

**Travel** | Accommodations pamper both people and pooch at sea, land and city.

By PEGGY NEULAND  
Correspondent

Sometimes, it all goes to the dogs. So, you have to pamper the pet when you travel.

Buster, my Labrador retriever, is a bit neurotic, afraid of thunderstorms, black frying pans, doorbells and fireworks. But he loves a good trip. Especially if there are dog bones, treats, a soft patch of ground to sleep on and plenty of places to smell. He'll hear the car keys jangling and see me heading toward the garage, and he'll be at my feet.

All fears thrown away, all for the joy of adventure on the road.

There are three wonderful places for the dog in your life – one on the sea, one by a mountain and another in the city. Choose your place, and have a happy dog.

## Seaside

The Inn by the Sea in Cape Elizabeth, Maine, is the perfect retreat. It is a beachy place with a spa appeal. Visitors stay right on a secluded cove, complete with foggy islands and wild roses, with in-room spa services for both pet and pampered guests. Buster was greeted with water bowls, a cozy blanket, gourmet bones and a pet menu for the evening.

"We have massage therapists for dogs," the manager says.

Forget the dog, what about me? The inn has six treatment rooms with a full array of natural massages, facials and body treatments. Designed and built with eco-friendly materials, the six rooms offer tranquility with a maritime-inspired, chemical-free theme.

"Next time," I tell Buster. The day is bright and the fog is rolling away from distant, craggy Ram and Richmond Islands.

The inn also provides lists and directions to various walking trails around lakes and through woods, dog-friendly beaches and leash-free parks. We take the wooden boardwalks to the sea through pine and scrub oak. There are more than 5 acres of indigenous landscape surrounded by wildlife sanctuary. The silence and sea air combine with Buster's wagging tail.

Crescent Beach is empty and filled with seaweed and shells. A tide rolls



Lola enjoys the lap of luxury at Boston's Copley Square Hotel.

Courtesy photo of COPLEY SQUARE HOTEL

out slowly, and there are paths leading through open fields and granite ledge.

Cape Elizabeth is famous for Two Lights, lighthouses built in 1828 to mark the entrance of the Portland Harbor. Today, both lighthouses on their rocky promontories are a photographer's muse with white clapboard and crashing waves.

It's time for a pre-dinner nap.

Our spa suite features two levels of elegant comfort. Upstairs is a loft bedroom with king-size bed, bathrobes and a marble bathroom with spa tub and deluxe amenities. Downstairs, there's a kitchen for stocking light snacks and drinks, but the real treat is the balcony with a view.

I fall asleep in the deck chair with the sound of foghorns in the distance.

That night, Buster inhales his room-service beef tips and rice dinner. Decadent, yes, but a wonderfully silly splurge when the dish is licked clean and your dog smiles widely.

I take my time at the Sea Glass restaurant – not inhaling or licking the plate, but occasionally wanting to. Using local produce and seafood from nearby farm and sea, the intimate dining room faces east toward a gently

pink sky. Pan Seared Scallops with Truffle Parsnip Puree, followed by Atlantic Salmon with Baby Artichoke sets the mood for a decadent Souffle Cake with Chocolate Bark.

I don't bring Buster any leftovers and find him asleep on his provided doggie bed. Leaving the windows open and balcony door wide, distant ocean lulls even the wide awake to dream.

## In the mountains

The Glynn House is another pet wonder.

Nestled along a quiet side street in Ashland, it's in the center of lake and mountain country. Glenn, the owner, tells me that Frank L. Hughes built the house in 1896.

Located on what was originally called "Millionaire Row," dogs are still free to be dogs. Immediately upon arriving, Buster goes hunting for bushes and trees, and he finds hidden nooks and crannies for exploring.

At check-in, dogs are given welcome packages of toys, treats, water and food bowls and a choice of floor mats. Buster is, of course, too busy to pick his bed for the evening, so I choose a fleece cushion with squirrels on it for his enjoy-

ment. Glenn gives me two homemade cookies and takes me to the Eisenhower Suite, where Buster and I will sleep.

With a private porch and cushioned swing as a greeting, I'm tempted to just sit and swing. The suite has a four-poster queen bed and two-person jetted hot tub. There's even a separate sitting area with flat-screen television.

But Buster and I came for the hiking.

Driving up toward the picturesque town of Holderness (about a 20-minute trip), Rattlesnake Mountain is a hike with a view of Squam Lake. Famous for being the locale used for "On Golden Pond," Squam Lake sits in sapphire brilliance below Buster and me.

Buster chases squirrels and chipmunks up into trees and under fallen logs. The air is clear and strong at the top, and whitecaps are whipping the lake into a frenzy. Boats bob and a water skier creates a miniature wake as I take in Carr Mountain, Mount Kineo and Stinson Mountain. Although a little more than 1,500 feet in elevation and a quick 2½ miles round trip, this is a hike not to miss for the 360-degree view of mountain blending into lake.

That night, I sit in bubbles in the jetted tub and toast the night with a glass

of Chardonnay. Buster chews his rawhide bone. His tail curls against his squirrel bed.

After a gourmet breakfast of frittatas and fresh fruit, a parade takes precedence in town center. Buster and I watch the bands and floats as people wave and dogs run in circles. Fifteen minutes later, we head toward the mountains again.

There are squirrels to chase and views to find.

## Downtown

Buster should almost be wearing a doggie sweater, and I should be called Paris Hilton. But not quite.

There's an urbane funkiness at Copley Square Hotel in Boston that is comforting and a bit of an escape from reality. With a 5 o'clock complimentary wine tasting in the side lobby, the leather couches are filled with Newbury Street shoppers, Red Sox couples and those away for the weekend. Candles line the windows and tables and give everyone a glow.

Located in Back Bay, the hotel is within walking distance of shopping, museums, Fenway Park and Faneuil Hall, and the attitude is friendly chic. Upscale but not uptight, it's like coming home to an intimate gathering of friends. The lights are low. The muted jazz is on. And they allow dogs.

In fact, they love dogs. There's a "Hotel Dog" named Lola who occasionally wanders the lobby and the wine-tasting nooks. All dogs are given elegant water and food bowls and complimentary biscuits. There's even room service for dogs and bottled water.

Our room is contemporary in taupe and gray, with sleek furniture and windows with a city view. Outside are trolleys and shoppers, while inside, it's hushed and plush, with multiple pillows on the bed and a window seat for people watching. If not for the allure of Boston adventure, we'd be content with WiFi, our iPod docking station, MP3 radios and 32-inch LCD TVs.

Opened in 1891 as the first hotel in Back Bay, this local landmark has been hosting the jazzy crowd for generations. Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday and Duke Ellington once roamed the spacious rooms and wide parlors. Now, there's a club in the hotel called Saint. Rooms in it are named Bordello and the White Room, and there are VIP entrances and stairs. I imagine the likes of Leonardo and George and Giselle and Tom roaming its intricate hallways.

But dogs need walking, as do people. So, I walk the wide-open streets of Boston. It's about to rain and feels like a perfect night to take a stroll toward the Charles River.

# Cultivating their native garden

**Massachusetts** | New England society's garden in full bloom with native flowers.

By SUSAN SPANO  
Los Angeles Times

FRAMINGHAM, Mass. – Trillium, goldenstar, five spot, wild bleeding heart.

They sound like the ingredients for a magic potion.

Actually, they are what I found blooming at the New England Wild Flower Society's Garden in the Woods near Framingham, about 20 miles west of Boston.

The 45-acre preserve is no vast, encyclopedic horticultural museum; it's no Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, England. It is, instead, a precious, little safe box containing the native plants of Massachusetts, especially its wildflowers.

Botanic garden Director Scott LaFleur, who walked me through the garden on my late-spring visit, said some visitors complained they didn't see any flowers.

Tut, tut, I'd say. They aren't looking closely. Around Mother's Day, the garden is a big bouquet of spring ephemerals that rush to flower and seed before the trees leaf and cast them in shade.

At other times, the garden is all about delicate details etched on the forest floor by native plants that thrived in the region before European settlers and rapacious foreign species began to threaten the landscape of New England.

Nor are there showy, shallow-rooted, mass-produced annuals on display – your summer petunias and fall chrysanthemums in disposable plastic pots. The Garden in the Woods is devoted to organic, insect-friendly, sustainable gardening using home-made compost and the right plants in the right places.

A brook lines the western boundary, forming a wetland that state law says cannot be cultivated. The garden's ridges and dells are covered with oak,

## IF YOU GO

**New England Wild Flower Society's Garden in the Woods.**

**WHERE:** 180 Hemenway Road, a few miles north of Framingham, Mass.

**WHEN:** Open April 15-Oct. 31.

**COST:** Admission is \$8.

**MORE INFORMATION:** Visit [www.newenglandwild.org](http://www.newenglandwild.org).

beechness, pine and hemlock – none of it virgin because by the time the preserve took shape in the 1930s most of the region's hardwood forests had been chopped down. Beneath the canopy, smaller native plants grow in apparent abandon, which is deceiving. They were raised from seeds cultivated at the Wild Flower Society's Nasami Farm nursery in western Massachusetts, so the choice and placement have been meticulously planned.

From the shop and classrooms at the entrance a trail winds into the recently established White Walk, which commemorates founder Will Curtis' favorite color. He was a Boston landscape designer who noticed a fine stand of hemlocks on a drive in the country, jumped out of his car and took a look at what was then a railroad company gravel pit. Recognizing its topographical diversity, he fell in love with the parcel and soon moved there with his partner, Bill Stiles, to start the garden and live like Henry David Thoreau at nearby Walden Pond.

Some considered Curtis a curmudgeon, LaFleur told me. Curtis chased away children and refused to use power tools, cutting dead wood with a pull saw. Fearing for his life's work when suburban development arrived in the 1960s, he deeded the property to the New England Wild Flower Society, a venerable organization founded around 1900 by a group of prominent Boston women who wanted to stamp out the profligate picking of wildflowers. I picture them in bustles and pith helmets with netting, dividing their energy between wild-

flower rescue and the temperance movement.

The buckwheat hull-lined path crunches underfoot as it descends to the lily pond, passing rustic wood benches made in classes at the garden. Education is the principal mission of the society, which offers courses on topics such as "Introduction to Seed Collecting" and "Survey of New England Ferns."

We stopped at the pollen-coated pond, fringed by native blue irises. It is a sultry spot beloved by frogs, turtles, black snakes, dragonflies and mosquitoes that found me at once and left red welts on my neck. Chemical insecticides are never used in the garden. Indeed, gardeners cultivate certain kinds of plants to attract butterflies, honeybees and other insects.

Beyond the pond, the natural topography of the garden frames Massachusetts habitat displays, including a swamp with skunk flowers, the first green plants to push out of the snow in February and a bog where carnivorous yellow pitcher plants catch flies.

Finally, LaFleur and I came to the invasive plant jail, where marauding foreign species such as Norway maple, black locust and Japanese honeysuckle do time in wooden cages. The display underscores the Wild Flower Society's dedication to teaching people how to identify and eradicate invasive flora so that New England natives can grow and prosper.

After the tour I sat on a bench at the entrance, scratching my bug bites and thinking about the late first lady, Lady Bird Johnson, who helped start the Wildflower Center at the University of Texas in Austin, and my friend Bill Wolverton, a resource management ranger at Glen Canyon National Recreation Area who undertook a one-man quest to eradicate non-native plants in the canyons of Utah's Escalante River – two warriors in a battle I never understood before visiting the Garden in the Woods.

Now I will think twice before coming home from the nursery with potted plants I know I'll only have to throw out later. I'll think of trillium, golden star, five spot and wild bleeding heart.



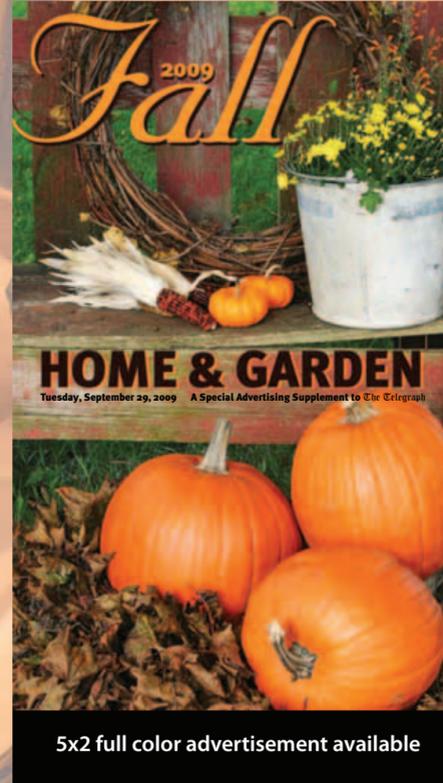
Customers pick up garden essentials at The Plant Shop at the New England Wildflower Society's Garden in the Woods.

Photo by LOS ANGELES TIMES

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