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# Historic Inns Close to Home

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COURTESY OF LONGFELLOW'S WAYSIDE INN / PHOTO BY TED FITZGERALD

it's a peculiarity of human nature. We take for granted noteworthy places in our own backyards that others come from around the world to see. Take, for example, the historic inn. When was the last time you dined in a Colonial-era tavern? Or relaxed for a weekend in a Victorian home? If you don't have room for all of your visiting guests, need a temporary place to stay during home renovations, or simply need a change of scenery for a night or two, think about visiting one of these inns that boast a rich and storied history.

*Longfellow's Wayside Inn is the oldest licensed inn in the United States*

### **Longfellow's Wayside Inn, Sudbury**

It had been years since I attended wedding and birthday celebrations at the Wayside Inn. I thought of it as a tourist destination. I'd forgotten its stature as the oldest licensed inn in the United States. I didn't remember the antiques in period rooms; the picturesque chapel, grist mill, and barn; and the schoolhouse credited as the origin of "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

Months before its upcoming 300th anniversary, I rediscovered the inn that predates the American Revolution and inspired one of our nation's most cherished literary works.



COURTESY OF LONGFELLOW'S WAYSIDE INN / PHOTO BY JONATHAN DAISY

## excursions “cozy atmosphere”

*Since 1960, Longfellow's Wayside Inn has been a nonprofit Massachusetts Historic Landmark*

Ford acquired surrounding land, relocated several historic buildings and brought in artifacts to create a living museum of American history. Upon his death in 1947, the central 125 acres was placed in a nonprofit trust.

Artist Childe Hassan, who visited the inn in 1882; Charles Lindbergh, a guest in 1928; and former president and Mrs. Calvin Coolidge, who stayed in 1930; are among past guests. Also in 1930, John D. Rockefeller came for lunch and to collect ideas for his new project, Colonial Williamsburg.

Since 1960, Longfellow's Wayside Inn has been a nonprofit Massachusetts Historic Landmark. It is self-sustaining, reliant on income from its hotel and restaurant operations, and conducts educational programs for all ages.

“There are elements here from all phases of American history, from the Revolution through the Civil War and the present, although we home in on the revolutionary period,” notes Steve Pickford, the eleventh innkeeper. Honoring its heritage, Pickford brought back fox-hunting (minus guns and chasing only fox scent) in 2014. The grounds are perfect for the sport, a carryover from the British tradition that ended in 1955.

The Wayside Inn restaurant is among the most popular in MetroWest for casual dining and special celebrations, hosting graduations, reunions, and more than 100 weddings a year. Open to the public for lunch and dinner daily, breakfast on weekends, and special events like wine dinners, Oktoberfest, Sinatra Night, bourbon and spirit dinners, and live music on Friday afternoons. In the original Tavern Room, grab a table by the fire, as Longfellow did, to warm a cold winter night.

Ten guest rooms in the main building offer comfortable accommodations. Not lavish by today's standards, the guest wing nonetheless is rich in colonial-era character.

In 1716, when David Howe doubled his two-room home to establish a tavern on the Old Post Road, he never could have known that business would help support four successive generations of his family including Ezekiel Howe, who on April 19, 1775 led the Sudbury militia to Concord. We know what happened there.

In 1862, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was dining at Howe Tavern where its cozy atmosphere and stories he heard from fellow guests inspired him to write *Tales of the Wayside Inn*. The series of poems, including “The Landlord's Tale: Paul Revere's Ride,” brought the poet and the place (as well as Revere) to national attention, and led the tavern's next owner, a wool merchant named Edward Lemon, to officially change his inn's name. Auto manufacturer Henry Ford bought the inn from Lemon's widow in 1923, becoming its last private owner. Then



COURTESY OF THE INN AT HASTINGS PARK / PHOTO BY ANDY RYAN

excursions “old-style hospitality”

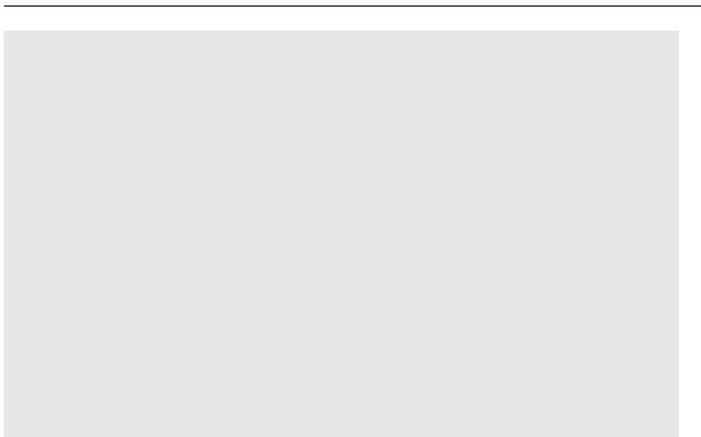
### The Inn at Hastings Park, Lexington

When my son and daughter-in-law from New York left their toddler with us overnight, they chose the new Inn at Hastings Park for a luxurious getaway weekend. They loved the thoughtful details, the warm welcome, and meals they rated “superb.” Owner Tricia Pérez Kennealy will be pleased to know her vision has come to fruition. Several years

*The Inn at Hastings Park has 22 guest rooms and is among the newest members of Relais & Chateaux*

ago, the Lexington resident bought and renovated a gracious Victorian built in 1888, and two adjacent historic buildings including a barn rumored to be a former casket factory. She created an inn with 22 guest rooms blending original architectural details with deluxe appointments, and focusing on old-style hospitality tailored to individual guests. A graduate of Harvard Business School and Le Cordon Bleu in London, Kennealy opened the boutique hotel and its fine dining restaurant, Artistry on the Green, in 2014. It is among the newest members of Relais & Chateaux.

Traditional Americana gets a sophisticated, modern twist here, beginning in the main house where the front hall wallpaper is patterned with bold silhouettes. The living room’s multiple seating areas feature inviting arm chairs, leather banquettes, muted colors, and pat-



termed fabrics that make a pleasing contrast to the original fireplace mantle and a piano visitors remember from when this was the music room of the Dana Home for the Aged, from 1916 to 2010. Each guest room is different. Many have handmade wallpapers, non-working fireplaces, and contemporary four-poster beds. Amenities include Frette towels and robes, custom bed linens, and blanket throws hand-loomed in Maine.

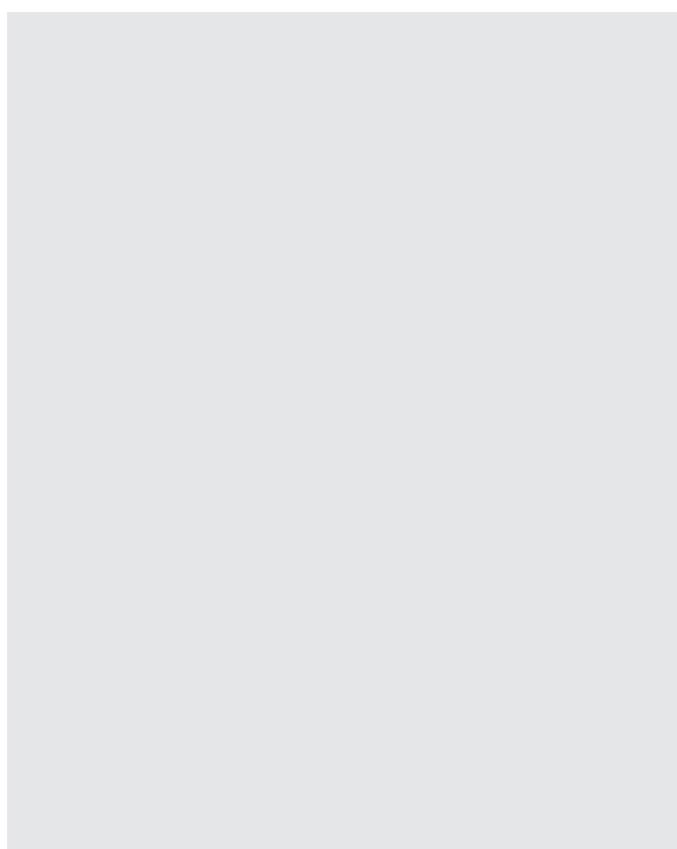
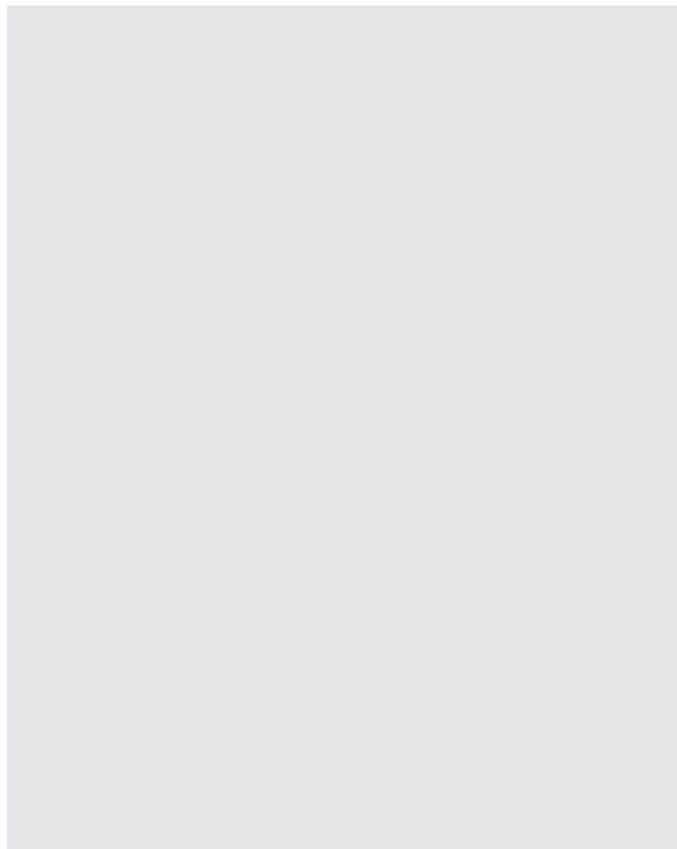
Artistry on the Green seats 54 for breakfast, lunch, or dinner daily in a spacious room that's open to the public except on Mondays when it's breakfast only. Field-to-fork is the guiding principle here as the chef works with New England farmers and brewers to elevate comfort foods. Last August, The Boston Globe declared Artistry "sets the gold standard for creamy clam chowder." Chocolate pave is a favorite dessert.

Take a five minute walk from the inn to see the iconic statue of a Minuteman on Lexington Battle Green. Tour Buckman Tavern where the militia gathered early on April 19, 1775, and Munroe Tavern, used by the British during their retreat. Explore the town's array of small shops. Or head for Minuteman Bikeway, an 11-mile paved rail trail from Bedford to Cambridge that's also great for walking or cross-country skiing, in season. No bicycle? Ask to borrow one from the inn.

It's a short ride along the Battle Road to Minuteman National Historic Park where walking and cycling trails roll past farm fields. In season, park rangers give history talks at historic buildings and the new Visitor's Center features an interesting multi-media retelling of how the Revolutionary War began. Or head towards Concord and Walden Pond where walking trails lead from a small beach to the site of Thoreau's cabin in the woods. A full-size replica is close to the parking lot and book shop. Parking lots fill early on summer weekends.

### **Concord's Colonial Inn**

Walk up to the inn's front desk and look around. In April 1775, the room you're standing in was where the local militia stored arms and supplies. When British soldiers marched from Boston to Lexington and Concord, their mission was to seize and destroy those munitions.



excursions “thoughtful details”



COURTESY OF THE INN AT HASTINGS PARK / PHOTO BY MICHAEL J. LEE

Forewarned of their approach, the Minutemen gathered half a mile away at the North Bridge where the “Shot Heard ’Round the World” was fired, and the War for Independence began. The former storeroom now connects two adjacent historic homes, making a single inn. One was a residence built in 1716 for the Minot family. During the war, it was a hospital after Dr. Timothy Minot converted a first-floor bedroom (Room 24) into an operating room and used another downstairs (Room 27) as the morgue. To this day, Inn staff and guests claim Room 24, among others, is haunted. Minot sold the other house to his son-in-law. In 1799, it was bought by John Thoreau whose extended family occupied the home for four decades. John’s grandson, Henry David, was a Harvard student when he lived upstairs from 1835-1837. One can only imagine what the Transcendentalist-environmentalist would think of the Thoreau Suite for honeymooners, with a king-sized bed and en

*Each guest room at the Inn at Hastings Park is different and many have non-working fireplaces and contemporary four-poster beds*

suite with Jacuzzi. Most rooms in this section have original wide plank pine floors, wood beams, and antique and reproduction furniture.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places and a member of the Historic Hotels of America, Concord’s Colonial Inn has a total of 56 guest rooms and suites. The Prescott Wing, a 32-room addition in 1960, is more modern. A separate Cottage has two, two-bedroom suites. Around the corner is Rebecca’s Guest House with six one-, two- and three-bedroom suites with kitchens for large families or extended stay.

Much of Minot’s residence now is Liberty, a three-part “gastropub” that serves excellent burgers and fries. Tables in the front room surround the fireplace that once warmed patients. The Forge Tavern, in a back corner, has a welcoming bar and live entertainment several nights a week. Between them is the small, dark Tap Bar, reserved for men only, until the 1950s. In summer, Liberty expands outdoors with tables on the long front porch overlooking Concord’s Monument Square.

For fine dining, Sunday brunch, and special occasions, Merchant’s Row serves American classics like Yankee pot roast and chicken under a brick. Afternoon tea with finger sandwiches and sweets is served twice monthly.

Famous guests have stayed here, too. John Wayne, Shirley Temple, Sandra Day O’Connor, Queen Noor of Jordan, and, more recently, actors Jason Sudeikis and Olivia Wilde who were filming in town. Hopefully they had time to walk to Concord’s shops and galleries or visit the Concord Museum and the homes of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Louisa May Alcott who are buried nearby on Authors Ridge in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery. **WW**

- **LONGFELLOW’S WAYSIDE INN**  
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[www.wayside.org](http://www.wayside.org)
- **THE INN AT HASTINGS PARK**  
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