

DAZZLING IMPRESSIONS RHODE ISLAND'S GILDED MANSIONS

TUESDAY 6 – TUESDAY 13 OCTOBER 2020 (8 DAYS)

TOUR DIRECTOR: JAMES HILL

£3835

- Enjoy the astonishing *Gilded Age* mansions at Newport, Rhode Island
- Visits to Colonial houses & art collections in nearby Connecticut
- A full day at Yale University's two superb art galleries
- Focus on Architecture, American Art & American Impressionist Art
- Historic hotel in the centre of Colonial Newport close to its delightful 'Old Quarter', the harbour & Wharf



Newport, Rhode Island, Marble House

OVERVIEW

Piety and property were *the* driving forces behind the history of Newport, Rhode Island. French and Italian fur-traders had already explored this rugged line of coastal New England, followed by Puritan dissidents who settled at what was a 'new port' in 1639, on the southern tip of Aquidneck Island. A Charter of Government and an ingrained commitment to religious freedom embodied the American ideal, long before the creation of 'America'.

Traders of all creeds flocked to Rhode Island dealing in sugar, molasses and slaves, making eighteenth century Newport one of Colonial America's wealthiest port towns. In the mid nineteenth century the moneyed rich came to holiday in and around Newport, opening a new chapter in its history. From the planters of the South to the nation's newly-minted Vanderbilts, Astors and Wideners, the denizens of America's new summer playground sought to out-build, out-staff, out-dress and out-party their social peers.

Lavish patronage fostered the innovative designs of America's most prolific architects such as Richard Morris Hunt and the firm McKim, Mead and White. Their eclectic designs blended local with European and Oriental influences bringing Gothic Revival, Shingle, Neo-Renaissance and Beaux-Arts classicism to the old port colony. Newport's mansions, ironically described as "cottages", reflected not only the owners' social aspirations, but also a growing sense of the promise of America's cultural maturity, as family fortunes went on to found America's great metropolitan museums and finance its universities. This is the gilded world we shall discover in Newport.

Connecticut is not far away, so we shall explore the superb art collections at Yale University, and in and around Farmington. Founded in 1701, Yale is one of the most distinguished universities in the world, and a beneficiary of extraordinary philanthropy from alumni and benefactors alike. We shall also visit America's first gallery dedicated to its own art at New Britain, and two colonial houses with exquisite collections of Impressionist art.

We stay in Newport at the **4* Hotel Viking**. Opened in 1926, this historic hotel could not be better located at the edge of the 'Old Quarter' and within walking distance of Newport's Wharf, shops and restaurants. The hotel also has a restaurant and spa. The tour will be managed and co-led by James Hill with most of the guiding provided by experts from The Preservation Society of Newport County.

ITINERARY OUTLINE

Day 1: Tuesday 6 October – We fly from London Heathrow to Boston Logan Airport, arriving early-afternoon. We continue by coach southwards to Newport, Rhode Island. There will be an early group dinner in our hotel. Wine or alternative drinks, water and tea/coffee are included with all group lunches and dinners.

Day 2: Wednesday 7 October – We begin with a walk around Newport's 'Old Quarter' where there are Colonial buildings of great charm in and around **Washington Square**. We visit the Episcopal **Trinity Church**, completed in 1726 and based on Wren's designs for St Paul's. Designed by Peter Harrison in 1750, **The Redwood Library**

building was the first pure example of English inspired Neo-Palladianism in the Colonies, and we shall see some exquisite reading rooms in its Athenaeum. After lunch, not included, we visit our first Newport mansion. The Gothic Revival **Kingscote** was built in 1841 and triggered Newport's 'cottage boom'. We also visit **Isaac House**, one of the best surviving Shingle houses in America. We return to our hotel and the evening will be free.

Day 3: Thursday 8 October – An early start as we drive westwards into **Connecticut** to **New Haven**. The focus of our visit is to explore **Yale University's Art Collections** in its two public art galleries, also an integral aspect of teaching and research at the University. A stroll through **Ye Olde Yard** will reveal Yale's oldest spaces and impressive faculty buildings. We then visit the **Yale University Art Gallery** - though encyclopaedic, the collection's accent is on European Old Masters and American Art. Following a group lunch we visit the **Yale Center for British Art**. Personally acquired and bequeathed by Paul Mellon, it is the largest of its kind outside Britain with art from Elizabethan times to the present day. We return to Newport where the evening will be free.

Day 4: Friday 9 October – Today we visit the most opulent of Newport's mansions, beginning at the summer home of Cornelius Vanderbilt II, **The Breakers**. Utterly ambitious in intent, The Breakers is modelled on the merchant-prince palaces of Italy, its spaces awash with the finest European marbles, tapestries and furnishings. Richard Morris Hunt's classical designs continue at **Marble House**, built for William K Vanderbilt and modelled on Versailles' Petit Trianon, both externally and internally. We have a group lunch in the estate's charming **Chinese Tea House** and the remainder of the day will be free to explore Newport at leisure.

Day 5: Saturday 10 October – This morning we shall visit **The Elms**, modelled on the exquisite mid eighteenth century French Château d'Asnières. The interiors have wonderful Louis XVI period decorative arts set within dazzling room settings. **Château sur Mer** is one of the most complete Victorian revival houses in Newport, with Hunt's additions to this grand house rooted in French, Italian and Chinese sources. After lunch, not included, we visit the eighteenth century merchant's home, **Hunter House**. An important statement from Newport's commercial might of the 1740s, a notable collection of period furnishings is displayed. We end with a visit to **Sanford-Covell House**. This late Victorian villa is a rare survival along the seafront where the owner will receive us for drinks and a private visit. The evening will be free.

Day 6: Sunday 11 October – We return to Connecticut and drive to **Old Lyme**, located close to the Connecticut River, to visit the **Florence Griswold Museum**. One of New England's most vibrant Impressionist art colonies, today the collections are divided between a small museum and the late Georgian house where the Lyme Art Colony boarded. We continue northwards to **Hill-Stead House** at **Farmington**. Designed by America's first female architect, Theodate Pope Riddle, this Colonial Revival home retains a small collection of Impressionist works of great quality. A sunken garden designed by the renowned Beatrix Farrand is but one of the estate's many charms. We pause for lunch, not included, at nearby **New Britain** and the **Museum of American Art**. America's first museum is dedicated to American art with all the major schools and movements engagingly displayed. We return to Newport where later in the evening we have dinner in an excellent local restaurant.

Day 7 & Day 8: Monday 12 & Tuesday 13 October – On our final day we visit **Rough Point**. This spectacular manor lies in grounds designed by Fredrick Law Olmsted and is forever linked to the heiress Doris Duke who spent most of her summers here. Superb decorative arts and paintings fill the grand rooms in what is today a house museum. Weather permitting, we plan to take a **boat trip** in a restored 1920's 'Rum Runner' around Newport's harbour and Narragansett Bay. After a final group lunch on the Wharf and some free time, we return to Boston Logan airport for our flight back to the UK, arriving at Heathrow on Tuesday morning.

PRACTICALITIES

Price £3835 **Price without flights** £3385 **Deposit** £550

Single Supplement £795 (Double for Sole Use)

Optional Supplements Upgrade with BA World Traveller Plus & Club World on request

Hotel 6 nights with breakfast at the 4* Hotel Viking, located at the edge of the Newport's 'Old Quarter'

Flights British Airways

Outward: **BA213** Depart London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **1115** Arrive Boston Logan **1335**

Return: **BA202** Depart Boston Logan **2140** Arrive London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **0910**

Price includes 2 dinners & 3 lunches with water, wine & coffee, all local transfers, entry fees & gratuities

Not included Travel to/from Heathrow, 4 dinners & 3 lunches



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