

BLUE, THE INN ON THE BEACH

BY CICILY CORBETT

“b quiet,” says the sign hung on the door.

Inside, the room is tranquil, serene, calm. White beadboard walls, filmy white curtains, sumptuously soft wide couches and chaises upholstered in white, a downy capacious bed heaped with pillows and coverlets, all in white, are bathed in filtered light streaming through slatted blinds. A fleecy azure throw is tossed over the cushions; candles glimmer in deep blue votives. A pair of slender cobalt glasses awaits the wine chilling in a cooler. French doors open onto a weathered deck with an unbroken view of sky, sea, and sand.

This is blue, The Inn on the Beach. It could be somewhere in the South Seas—it’s that secluded. It could be on Miami’s South Beach—it’s that chic. But in fact, it’s off the coast of Massachusetts, less than an hour from Boston, on secluded Plum Island.

Plum Island is a barrier island about eleven miles long, accessed by a causeway and a drawbridge from the town of Newburyport. Over 150 years ago, a local historian called it “a wild and fantastical sand beach...thrown up by the joint power of winds and waves into the thousand wanton figures of a snow drift.” Not much has changed. A small settlement of homes is clustered on the northern end of the island. All the rest is wildlife and bird sanctuary.

blue is oceanfront, almost at the edge of the small settlement. The main inn itself and several small cottages, all a snowy white, nestle together on the path, unobtrusive except for a swath of brilliant blue glass pebbles leading to each doorway. Across the way, the shimmering blue path meanders through a secret garden, where a hot tub waits to be discovered.

As a honeymoon haven or a romantic getaway, blue is unsurpassed. Anything from a continental breakfast, waiting outside your door at the hour you desire in a rustic picnic hamper, to a private chef catering a gourmet meal in your penthouse, can be arranged. A gas fireplace or wood-burning stove in each suite, outdoor hot tubs overlooking the beach, plasma TVs, multijet marble showers, and luxurious spa robes and toiletries are standard. Couples massages, champagne, Godiva truffles, and fresh flowers in your room, a private dinner cruise, a meal atop a lighthouse, or anything else you can think of to request, can be arranged.

The quaint town of Newburyport, with its cobblestone streets and enticing shops, is only a few minutes away. Fine restaurants abound. Joseph’s Winter Street Café, an old stagecoach tavern turned into an elegant bistro, has a charming piazza, an elegant bar, live piano music, and outstanding service and food. Andaman Thai Restaurant, on the waterfront, is exotic yet friendly, with a good selection of Thai wines and beers, and food served attractively with a profusion of fresh flowers and fruits. If money is no object, reserve the single table at the top of the Newburyport Rear Range Light in Newburyport, Massachusetts. It’ll cost you a \$350 donation to the Lighthouse Preservation Society,

plus the cost of your dinner ordered from one of several nearby restaurants, but the view—not to mention the privacy and uniqueness—makes it worthwhile.

Take the rest of your champagne with you and head back to blue. Cuddle on the deck or walk along the deserted beach, listening to the steady rush and pull of the surf. Can you spell unforgettable romance? It's b...l...u...e....