

For Friendliness & Fun: Nantucket

The Flying Nonny Knows: This Tiny Isle Offers Outsize Joy

When the little ones clamor for ice cream, The Flying Nonny knows just where to go.

The Nantuckie place.

"That's how my grandchildren always refer to the island," laughs Kathy McDonald of the family favorite that often finds her bundling the wee ones screaming *ice cream!* into her 1987 Piper Dakota for the 35-minute flight from Mansfield, MA to a town that makes for happiness: Nantucket. If it's one thing that Nonny – the kids' term of endearment – can count on, it's that this tiny isle 30 miles off the coast of Cape Cod will amuse and delight not only the tykes, but anyone else winging there as well.

"Nantucket offers so many reasons to fly over whatever the season," says the 53-year-old partner of Mansfield Oil Company, Inc., a Mansfield-based home heating retail fuel company. "The airport (ACK) is user-friendly to pilots and their planes, which I feel is important; there are endless beaches, lots of little shops to roam around in, and between the golf courses, spas and restaurants, there is always a lot to do. Also," she adds, clearly smitten with all the fun to be found on the petite 3.5-by-14-mile island, "let's not forget the whaling history there. Nantucket holds its own with a historic past."

Once the whaling capital of the world, this splendor of 19th c. prosperity today retains the feel of a time when wealthy whaling merchants erected grand mansions in the manner of **Hadwen House**, an 1845 beauty that in its day so scandalized the local Quakers with its opulence that their outrage merely spurred its owner to make it even more a testament to excess. Though the streets may be cobblestone, Nantucket Town architecture quaint, and the atmosphere such that one feels the whalers only recently moved on, everything *now* about the place is fly-in fabulous – especially according to Kathy, a self-described long



distance pilot and passionate competitor in the Air Race Classic, the all-women transcontinental air race begun in 1929 by Amelia Earhart.

"**The Brothers Grimm** is the best!" she says of her favorite restaurant. **The Whaling Museum** with its exceptional collection of scrimshaw and nautical art is always a kick, as is the classic Nantucket joy of biking the flat, paved roads that offer fresh-air, open-sea vistas among the country's most stunning. A magical mile upon mile of open coast (thanks to stringent preservation laws) make Nantucket's beach life a thrill of strolling, kayaking, sailing, fishing, birding and otherwise outdoors-delighting. Kathy, for one, loves nothing more than to escape to the island "cozy enough and private enough to enjoy some quiet time with a special person," especially off-season. Ah, to sip hot cocoa by the fire ("with lots of whipped cream") at an

intimate B&B like **Seven Sea Street Inn**, to browse the many artisan's jewelry shops, to visit such historical sites as the **Jethro Coffin House**, a 1686 saltbox that is the town's oldest home...these are merely a few of Kathy's favorite pursuits when winging-in to Nantucket. Whether it's the tranquil village of **Siasconset** – 'Sconset to locals – with its rose-covered cottages, or the utterly stunning sunsets to enjoy over wine in the village of **Madaket**, the rolling moors and cranberry bogs of this picturesque isle ever call. Says Kathy: "As a pilot I'm so lucky to have seen so much of this country, literally sea to shining sea. Every place has its own unique flavor and from the sky is a fantastic patchwork quilt, all pieces fitting together so beautifully." Especially the patch that means *ice cream!*

For more that's nifty about Nantucket (and to inquire about accommodations), call the Visitor's Service (508) 228-0925. ✕