

Patriot's Paradise

Part 3: You will find so much of America in all these places, but you won't find any food or service on par with what *Sovereign* offers.

Story and Photography by Kim Kavin

Not until three years ago did Massachusetts clear the remaining names of the witch trial victims, posthumously restoring their civil rights. The story is a powerful reminder not only of how quickly a society can get swept into the mania of fear, but of just how long the consequences endure.

The American spirit has survived such episodes throughout its existence, and in no place is this more evident than Gloucester. *Sovereign* ties up right next to the commercial fishing fleet, smack in the middle of the Rocky Neck Artists Colony, reportedly the nation's oldest. It's a few blocks' worth of true individualism where any hint of repression is drowned out by colorful oils, watercolors, and sculpture.

The proprietors are just as cool as their offerings. I asked the owner of Ken's Art Shop about some carvings, and he walked me onto his back deck to meet the 87-year-old artist who'd made them. Up the street, Elynn Kroger has an impressive gallery of works in the style of American greats Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollack, and Arthur Dove. "This place has changed my life," she said. "After 35 years as an artist, I'm finally self-sufficient. People come here and buy art."

A 20-minute cab ride away is Bearskin Neck—less earthy but just as



Photo: Kim Kavin

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crammed with interesting works by regional artists. The owner of Gentile Gallery summed up the decisive lack of tourist junk: "You can go to the mall for that." Quite a jab, I thought, at the commerce that has replaced religion as a dominating force in modern culture.

You will find so much of America in all these places, but you won't find any food or service on par with what *Sovereign* offers. "When [guests] go to get off the boat, my goal is to have them disappointed wherever they go," chef Christopher Wear says. "I want them comparing every other chef to me."

Wear cooks with creativity. Every dish is a delicious amalgam of flavors you'd never think to combine: red wine and cranberry vinaigrette atop pole beans and peaches; a ground filet mignon hamburger topped with a jam of roasted red peppers, champagne, and red onions. Each presentation is unique, and the service by chief stewardess Kelly Collins and second stew Courtney Kane is impeccable. Kelly's brother is first mate Sean Collins, who keeps things lively with deckhand Ben Cole. All four came of age together in Michigan and genuinely enjoy working as a team to create a memorable charter experience.

I suppose that's the spirit of America in and of itself—four kids from the Midwest growing up to work aboard a fabulous charter yacht with a New England captain whose ancestors predate the *Mayflower* by two full years.

If past is prologue, *Sovereign* has a wonderful future of chartering ahead. Whoever wins the election in November might think about booking a week to wind down and stay focused for the years to come.

Sovereign takes 12 guests. She charters for \$55,000 per week, plus expenses, in New England and the Bahamas.

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