

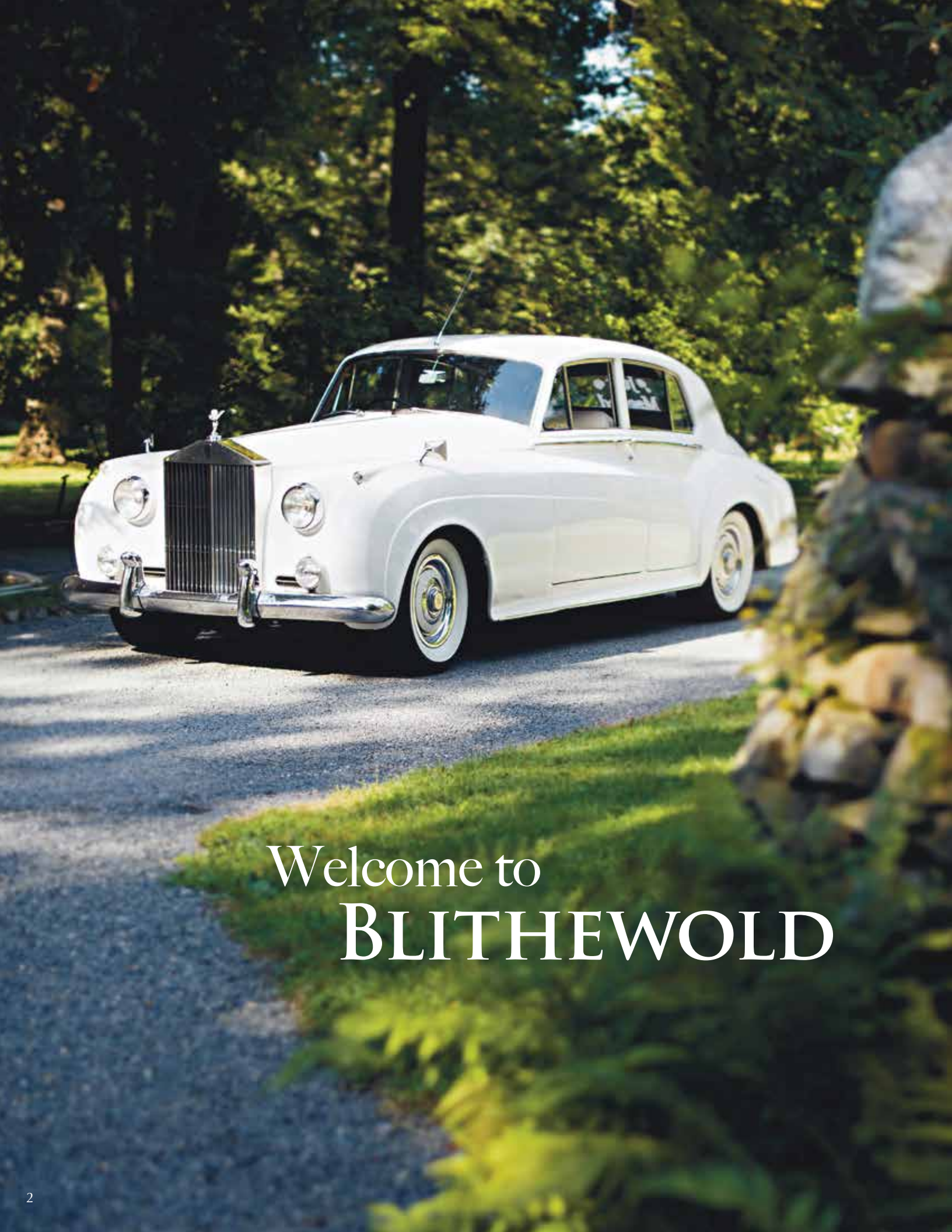


# BLITHEWOLD

Weddings & Special Events







Welcome to  
**BLITHEWOLD**





As you begin the planning of your wedding day, special event, or corporate function, we invite you to consider Blithewold Mansion, Gardens and Arboretum, in historic seaside Bristol, Rhode Island.

For the wedding of your dreams, you may be envisioning a day that begins with an intimate ceremony in front of our stately living room fireplace. Or maybe you prefer a grand celebration where you say "I do" in a garden of colorful perennials, with rows and rows of white garden chairs and Narragansett Bay as your backdrop. Following your ceremony, cocktails are served from the mansion's gracious terrace overlooking a 10-acre lawn that sweeps down to the water. Then round out the evening with dinner and dancing in our beautiful white Century® tent under the stars.

The understated elegance of Blithewold makes it the perfect choice for all types of celebrations from a Fundraising Gala, to a Bridal Tea, to a traditional New England style clambake on our 10-acre Great Lawn.

The staff at Blithewold is committed to providing the utmost in personal service to ensure that your celebration is a complete success. For further information on reserving Blithewold Mansion, Gardens and Arboretum for your next event, please contact the Special Events Department at **401.253.2707, ext. 11**. We look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

**Karen Bellavance**

*Director of Special Events*

*Blithewold Mansion, Gardens and Arboretum*







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## Blithewold Mansion, Gardens and Arboretum

is a beautifully landscaped 33-acre estate situated on Bristol Harbor with sweeping views of Narragansett Bay. The forty-five-room mansion, trees, lawns, flowers, and the sea combine to produce an aesthetic experience that is both exciting and refreshing. The original mansion built in 1896 in the Queen Anne style was destroyed by fire in 1906. Plans to rebuild Blithewold began immediately and the new English Manor style home was completed in 1908.



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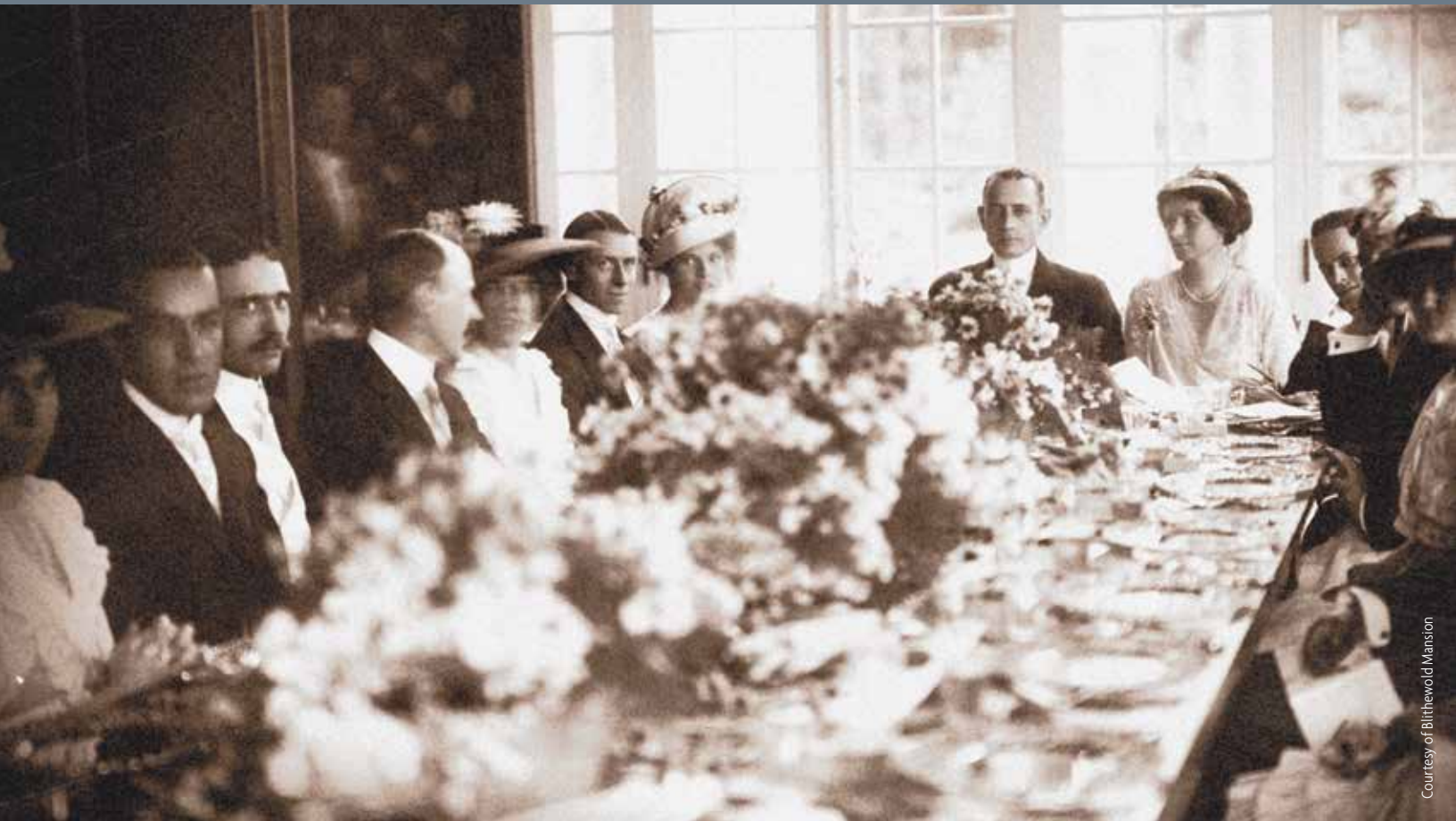


Completely immersed in nature.





# The History of BLITHEWOLD



Courtesy of Blithewold Mansion

Augustus Van Winkle was in the coal mining business in Hazelton, Pennsylvania. He attended Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island and came to love the Ocean State. In 1895 he purchased a 72' steam yacht from the Herreshoff boat building company in Bristol and immediately began the search for a suitable property to build a summer home for his family. Augustus and his wife, Bessie Pardee Van Winkle, purchased 70 acres of waterfront land in Bristol, RI and named it Blithewold (Old English for "happy woodland").

Bessie VanWickle was a very accomplished horticulturist and her heart's desire was to have enough good land to establish gardens and

an arboretum. Their daughter, Marjorie, born in 1883, was to inherit her mother's considerable talent for horticulture and Bessie and Marjorie would spend the rest of their lives developing this beautiful property.

The family was known for their gracious hospitality and carefully orchestrated parties for family and friends. They would reside at Blithewold from May until November, often returning for holidays and family occasions. Blithewold is currently managed by Blithewold Inc, a nonprofit organization dedicated to keeping the property open to the public, in accordance with Marjorie's wishes.



Images © Sabrina Scolari Photography







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Blithewold's sweeping 10-acre Great Lawn rolls down to the water's edge and boasts more than 1,500 trees and shrubs that grow along its borders. There are nearly 250 different kinds of woody plant in the collection, which contains both native and exotic species. Guests enter the grounds through the Rose Garden where 100-year-old climbing roses grow on the fence that encloses the garden. Original shrub roses grow along side the newer hybrids.

The century-old Chestnut Rose dominates the garden especially when covered with thousands of single pink blossoms in early June. Passing through the moon gate in the Rose Garden to the rest of the property affords the visitor the first glimpse of the Great Lawn and Narragansett Bay.

Tradition has it that newly-married couples who walk through the moon gate hand-in-hand will share a long, happy life together. Why not prove the legend yourself?

The North Garden is an extension of the house and was originally designed with formal pathways and parterres. The family called it the Sunken Garden and began construction on it in 1910. The pathways and box hedges are gone but long borders of blue, yellow, and white flowers have taken their place. This garden is the site for outdoor wedding ceremonies. It is also the perfect place to sit and watch the boats on the Bay.



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The small summerhouse where the family enjoyed afternoon tea and in 1914 celebrated a family wedding sits on the edge of the garden. The Bosquet or woodland is to the west of the enclosed garden and is a breathtaking place to walk in April when more than 50,000 daffodils are in bloom. The rest of the season it is a cool green glade providing a breezy respite from the hot summer sun.



# GROUNDS & GARDENS

A path from the Bosquet leads down to the Water Garden where visitors cross over the ponds by way of a small stone bridge that leads to the Rock Garden that Bessie designed in the early 1920s.

The garden sits just a few years away from the Bay. Blithewold's Bamboo Grove is a magnet for adults and children alike. It covers an area nearly the size of a tennis court and is 30 feet tall. Everyone is intrigued by the fast growing stalks in late spring when you can almost watch them grow.



© Blueflash Photography



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Blithewold's landscape provides a glimpse of life as it was lived in another era when a dozen people worked on the grounds every day. The family and their guest could enjoy daily outing to catch butterflies in the Water Garden or have tea on the summerhouse porch after walking through the flower gardens. Guests could simply stroll along the gravel paths and find a shady spot where they could read or paint. Blithewold offers its visitors the same kind of experience today. The entire property reveals stunning evidence of the family's great love of plants, gardens, and this special place by the bay.



© Blueflash Photography





# CEREMONIES

© Sabrina Scolari Photography



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© Sabrina Scolari Photography





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Blithewold Mansion, Gardens & Arboretum offers a particularly beautiful and gracious setting for wedding ceremonies and receptions. Ceremonies are held in the exquisite North Garden adjacent to the mansion. Cocktails are enjoyed in this gracious turn-of-the-century home, on the terrace and porches, and on the 10-acre Great Lawn.

For dinner and dancing, guests move into our 40x100 white Century Tent, which accommodates approximately 225. The permanent tent, with beautiful bluestone patterned flooring, is situated on the lawn overlooking unsurpassed sunsets and Narragansett Bay. Guests may stroll through the gardens and watch the sailboat races just as guests at Blithewold have done for the past 100 years.



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# RECEPTIONS



© Eloquent Images



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Memorable wedding pictures become treasured heirlooms. Couples stroll the water's edge, embrace in our bamboo grove, or pause at the lily pond for unforgettable photographs of their special day. Exuberant wedding party photos on the Great Lawn are treasured equally with formal portraits in our enchanting perennial garden.

Whether you are planning a traditional ceremony, the joining of two cultures, or an informal but elegant wedding celebration, Blithewold can accommodate your every wish. We do one wedding a day, thereby allowing us to focus on your all important event and personalize it to exceed your expectations.



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© Sabrina Cohen Photography



© Allan Millora Photography

## The Wedding Package Includes:

- Exclusive use of the mansion, terraces, and grounds
- White Century tent with clear sides, hard surface floor and lighting
- Bride's dressing room available one hour before the event
- Private bridal rest area facilities for stress-free prep
- Photo opportunities on the grounds one hour before the event
- Coordination of deliveries and services
- Wedding specialist available to assist with the planning process
- Wedding staff on duty throughout the event





© Ludwig Photography



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Blithewold is the perfect location for celebrating all of life's special events! Consider us when planning a small intimate gathering for your husband's 50th birthday, a fun and fancy cocktail reception with dancing under the stars to introduce everyone to your new fiancé, or bring the entire family for that big reunion you have always dreamed of throwing with a New England style clambake and games on our 10-acre great lawn.

With its air of sophistication, exclusivity, and casual elegance, Blithewold is a wonderful choice for a stand-up cocktail party with passed hors d'oeuvre, a buffet with multiple food stations, or a more formal sit-down multi-course dinner. Use the rooms in the mansion to add excitement to your gathering by staging a jazz singer in the Dining Room, a sing-a-long piano player in the Living Room, and a wine-tasting on the enclosed Breakfast Porch.

The mansion can accommodate up to 80 for a seated dinner or up to 125 for a cocktail reception. For larger groups, host your cocktail reception using the mansion, terrace, porches, and Great Lawn. Then guests move to our beautiful Century® tent for dinner and dancing.

With the superb support of our preferred caterers and on-site event management, we can provide the expertise and execution to make your next social affair a smashing success. Contact the Special Events Department at 401.253.2707 ext. 11 to start planning your celebration now!



# BRISTOL

Historic Bristol is a beautiful community with breathtaking water views from almost everywhere you look. Surrounded by Mount Hope Bay to the east and Narragansett Bay to the south and west, Bristol is indeed the quintessential New England waterfront town. Rich in history, sailing and ship-building have played an important role in the life of Bristol. Having launched several America's Cup yachts, we are proud to be the home of the America's Cup Hall of Fame.

Bristol remains a center of history with many handsome homes built in the 1700s and 1800s. Your guests will enjoy the relaxed atmosphere of Bristol, savoring the history, strolling along its waterfront, shopping in a variety of stores, and dining in its many fine restaurants. The Bristol Harbor Inn as well as a number of fine bed and breakfast establishments are within walking distance to downtown.

## DIRECTIONS

Located on a peninsula between Narragansett and Mount Hope Bays, Bristol is about 12 miles southeast of Providence and 12 miles north of Newport.

### From Newport:

Take Rt. 114 North through Middletown and Portsmouth. Cross the Mt. Hope Bridge to enter Bristol, and bear left at fork onto Rt. 114 (Ferry Road). Blithewold is ¼ mile on the left.

### From Providence:

Take Interstate 195 East through Fall River, MA and take exit 8, Rt. 24 South (Newport). After approximately seven miles, cross the Sakonnet River Bridge, and then take Rhode Island exit 2 (Bristol/Mt.Hope Bridge). Go right at the end of the ramp and cross the Mount Hope Bridge. Bear left at fork to Rt. 114 (Ferry Road), and Blithewold is ¼ mile on the left.

### From Boston, MA:

Take Interstate 93 South (Avoid I-95 South to Providence) to Rt. 24 South. In Fall River, MA, exit onto I-195 West for one exit (approximately ¼ mile), then return to Rt. 24 South, following signs towards Newport, RI. After approximately seven miles, cross the Sakonnet River Bridge, and then take Rhode Island exit 2 (Bristol/Mt.Hope Bridge). Go right at the end of the ramp and cross the Mount Hope Bridge. Bear left at fork to Rt. 114 (Ferry Road), and Blithewold is ¼ mile on the left.



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**BLITHEWOLD MANSION, GARDENS & ARBORETUM**

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