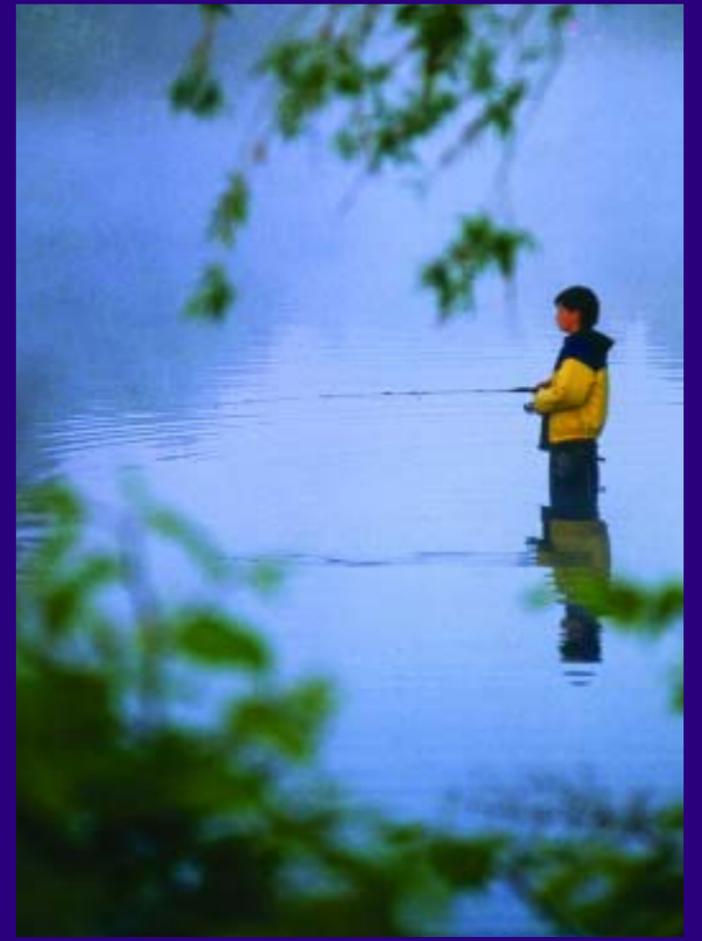




Wildly Wonderful

***Martha's
Vineyard***



*If you could only see
I know you would agree
There ain't nowhere else to be
But Massachusetts*

– Arlo Guthrie

It was Bartholomew Gosnold's mother-in-law, Martha, who had the bucks. So in 1602 when the English navigator happened upon the wild grapevine-laced island downcoast from Maine, where sea grasses grew splendid on the dunes, the fish were fat and the light was strangely, amazingly, milky, what else could he do? He had to name for her the fabulous find she financed: Martha's Vineyard.

A separate serenity in the midst of civilization.



Martha's Vineyard.

From Woods Hole, MA it looks like only a swim away, but New England's largest island at 20 miles long by 9 miles wide – accessible solely by air or sea – is more than merely eight miles from the Massachusetts mainland. "The Vineyard" is charming villages and vistas; busy harbors and beaches; the legacy of prosperity; and the place where even if you never were a tycoon made rich trading whale oil, you can feel at home amidst the splendor that is the island's greatest treasure.

What do I mean? I mean nature, fellow flyers. Birds, bees and endangered piping plovers. Wetlands, streambeds, fields and forests galore. Yes, from shorelines rich in shellfish beds to Ice Age bluffs of ancient fossils – flowers, sharks, camels, horses – Martha's Vineyard is a nature-lover's eco-happening date with the great outdoors.

Take it from me, Pilot Michael: you may think this neighbor of Cape Code and Nantucket has succumbed to its press as a celeb-infested island where tourist-tacky shops offer kitsch this way and that. After all, Stephen Spielberg's *Jaws* was filmed here in the oh-so-picturesque fishing village of Menemsha. John Belushi is buried at Abel's Hill Burying Ground in Chilmark. And Chappaquiddick? Yep, that's here, too – a featured site on the "Ghosts, Gossip and Downright Scandal" tour offered by Vineyard History Tours. But you'd be wrong. A stunning 1,000 acres of nature preserves and trails make the island a cyclist's delight, an outdoor explorer's thrill, and a conservationist's true blue, hot-blooded fantasy.

Not bad for the land acquired for 40 pounds and a beaver hat (three times the purchase price of Manhattan 15 years earlier). This is what 17th c. missionary Thomas Mayhew, Jr. and his merchant father paid England's Earl of Stirling for the patents to all islands off Cape Cod's south shore, desirable for their location



The Vineyard's Wild Kingdom

To connect with the nature preserves and conservation ponds, wetlands, beaches, woodlands, grasslands and other splendors of Martha's Vineyard, contact those-in-the-know below:

Cape Poge Natural History Tours
Provides tours and information on the Cape Poge Wildlife Refuge
(508) 627-3599

Cape Poge Wildlife Refuge and the Wasque Reservation
A universe of wildflowers and birds on Chappaquiddick
(508) 627-3599

Felix Neck Wildlife Sanctuary
Audubon Society sanctuary of woodland, meadow, salt marsh and barrier beach (508) 627-4850

Long Point Wildlife Refuge
This freshwater marsh is a birdwatcher's dream
(508) 693-2540

Manuel F. Cornelius State Forest
Martha's Vineyard's pitch pine and scrub oak hidden gem
(508) 693-2540

Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission
Offers an excellent map of conservation properties
(508) 627-7141

Mytoi
Japanese-style garden of conservationist Mary Wakeman
(508) 627-7689

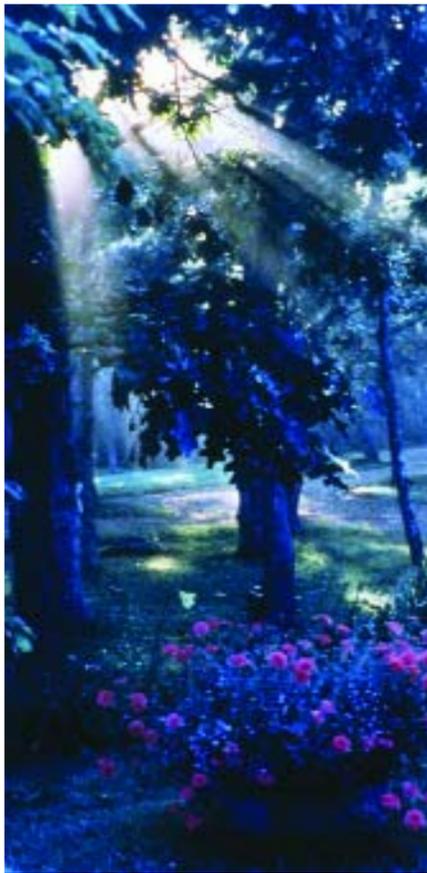
Peaked Hill Reservation
Prime hawk-watching among dramatic glacial erratics (granite chunks gouged out of mountains)
(508) 627-7141

Sepiessa Point Reservation
Horseback riding among some of the planet's last remaining acres of sandplain grasslands
(508) 627-7141

Vineyard Conservation Society
Provides maps of extensive walking tours (508) 693-9588

Vineyard History Tours
Purveyors of historical walks
(508) 627-8619

Waskosim's Rock Reservation
200 acres of 19th c. farmland whose brooks waters are so clean the endangered brook lamprey thrives
(508) 627-7141



beyond the boundaries of existing Pilgrim and Puritan colonies. Mayhew and his English ilk has Big Plans for their Martha's Vineyard. First: convert the resident Wampanoag natives to Christianity.

My goals are not so lofty. I'll just touch down at either Martha's Vineyard Airport (MVY) or on the still-grass strips of Katama Airpark (1B2), score a map from one of the island's purveyors (see accompanying box), and undertake my self-guided, eco-trek adventure. Oh, sure. I'm bound to bump into civilization. The hundreds and hundreds of cozy and ornately-woodworked cottages of the Oak Bluffs community, for instance, remind one and all of this island's past as meeting central for religious revivals of the 1800s; in those days the cottages were tents. The impressive Methodist Tabernacle of Wesleyan Grove bears witness to the witnessing so big back then. The sexy, sleek sloops moored off Edgartown's shore hint of one local dress

code – tennis whites or brass-buttoned blue blazer – as expressed by the omnipresent yachting set. And the grand sea captains' mansions lining Edgartown's Main Street contain today's version of the bigwig whalers of yore: celebrity A-listers like Diane Sawyer, Spike Lee, Dan Ackroyd.

Still, a pilot will be hard pressed not to lose himself in the bewitching natural world of Martha's Vineyard. On Chappaquiddick island alone, there is the 516-acre Cape Poge Wildlife Refuge, a splendor of sand, water, hummock and marsh that teems with hawks, tern, plovers, ducks and songbirds; there is also the sprawling Wasque Reservation, where bluffs sweep out of Katama Bay in an awesome drama of grassland and wildflowers. Elsewhere on the island, the 633-acre Long Point Wildlife Refuge of West Tisbury is a saltwater inlet and magnificence of ponds in which otters, muskrat, ospreys, harriers – even swans – are found to frolic.

On Sengekontacket Pond in the Felix Neck Wildlife Sanctuary, where canoe trips, stargazing, snorkeling and windsurfing also entertain, you can spy on the spring nesting of the fast-diving ospreys atop their poles in the pine groves. At exquisite Mytoi, the cherished Japanese-style garden of local conservationist Mary Wakeman, the windswept beachgrass dunes just outside seem a world away from this Zen-serene retreat where, come spring, daffodils, dogwood, azaleas, roses and other glorious flora burst forth.

Whether it's great blue herons stalking crabs through the tidal pools, oystercatchers foraging with their flashy orange bills or sea otters bobbing in the water in the direction of an historic lighthouse, the wild and wonderful world of creatures great and small feeding, nesting, playing, migrating and otherwise at home on The Vineyard makes your Pilot Michael, for one, very glad to be alive.

Should I desire I can pack a picnic and bicycle the swooping, twisting road between West Tisbury and Gay Head, past wildflower meadows and bucolic sheep pastures. Savor crabcakes and lobster in the working fishing village of Menemsha. Shop for artisan weathervanes and sunlit seascapes in the shops and galleries of Vineyard Haven. Should I desire. But since Martha's Vineyard for me is a rare and precious treat – a chance to befriend endangered species, thrill to up-close encounters with nature's marvels thriving in their natural habitat, and, not least, escape the need to don my brass-button blue blazer by cocktail hour, I'll put this on the agenda for today: A lazy canoe cruise of Poucha Pond. After all, I have come all this way to meet them: I don't want to keep the great blue heron waiting.

For more information on what's happening in Martha's Vineyard, contact www.mvy.com or call 508.693.0085

Shellfish, the seashore and thou: bliss as easily found



MARTHA'S VINEYARD AIRPORT (MVY)

AIRPORT DATA

Elevation: 43'
Runways: 15-33 3,297' 6-24 5,500
Approaches: GPS RNAV ILS VOR
ATIS / ASOS: 877.ANY.AWOS (269.2967)

FIXED BASE OPERATIONS / FUEL / SERVICES

Martha's Vineyard Airport 508.693.7022

TRANSPORTATION

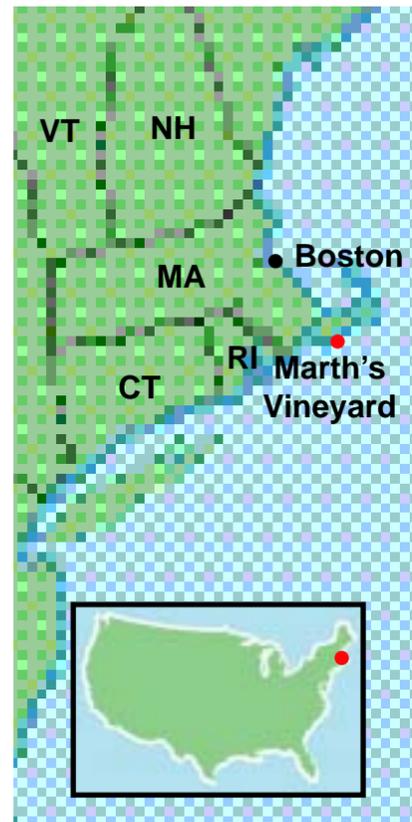
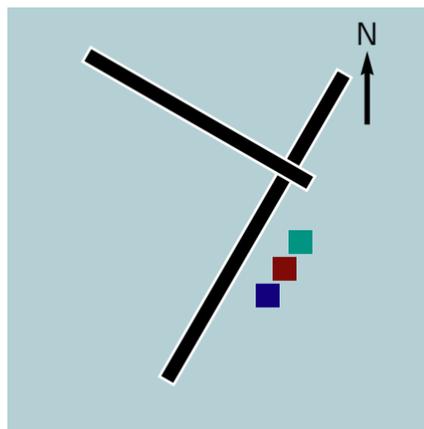
Taxi – All Island 508.693.2929
Taxi – Bluefish 508.627.7373
Taxi – Marlene's 508.693.0037
Taxi – Stagecoach 508.637.8573
Rental Cars – Budges 508.693.7322
Rental Cars – Hertz 508.693.2402

AIRPORT RESTAURANTS

Plane View Restaurant (at airport) 508.693.1886

AIRPORT LODGING

Harbor View Hotel 5.5 mi 508.627.7000
Colonial Inn 5.3 mi. 800.627.4701
Wesley Hotel 7.5 mi. 508.693.6611
Surfside Hotel 5.5 mi. 800.537.3007



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