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Forty 1° North, a new standard for Newport

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Forty 1° North, a new standard for Newport destinations

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The word "elegant" is defined as, "Pleasingly graceful and stylish in appearance and manner."



Forty 1° North Hotel and Marina

It should be hard for a single venue to stand out from all the elegance in Newport. Being "pleasingly graceful and stylish in appearance and manner," Forty 1° North stands out very well.

The title Forty 1° North is a relative newcomer to the waterfront. Long-time residents know it better as Christie's Restaurant and Marina.

After Bill and Margaret "Peg" Christie married in the 50s, they moved from New York to Rhode Island. The couple took over

operations from Bill's father, Steve "Pop" Christie when he retired. With the help of a loyal staff, Christie's became a landmark for the colorful local characters and visitors that came together for a meal, a laugh and a good time.

Christie's décor has been updated, but the spirit was retained. It's still a lively fun place to meet old friends or to make new ones. Swing seating, Neptune chairs and a 20 person communal table keep that atmosphere alive. It's pretty hard to remain strangers at a table with 20 other people.

One of the considerations behind Forty 1° North was to pay homage to the history and feel while enhancing the memories with a more modern style and décor. The boutique hotel and marina have accomplished that feat with splendid success.



Forty 1° North hotel and The Grill restaurant

Elegance is often defined by material enhancements. You can gold plate a doorknob and call it elegant. Hang some masterpiece paintings on a plain wall and it becomes a gallery.

Changing the décor certainly adds to the elegance of a setting, but as was pointed out in our last election, putting lipstick on a pig doesn't change it from being a pig.

Achievement of true elegance requires something much more intangible. Elegance is not in the material; it's in the attitude.

For three years, I reviewed marinas. I've walked the docks of 176 marinas in and around Rhode Island. I've held thousands of interviews with employees and customers of marinas and destinations. I feel comfortable assuming the mantle of "expert" when it comes to marinas.

The people I interviewed and interacted with at Forty 1st North while doing those reviews were the most impressive staff I had the privilege of meeting. From Mark, the dock master, to the gentleman sweeping the outdoor deck, the courtesy and professionalism never skipped a beat.

As a marina, Forty 1st North is a world class facility. The ipê floating docks are state of the art with all the items you expect from a quality marina such as power, water, telephone and cable. In case you're not familiar with ipê, it's a Brazilian hardwood that is extremely resilient and uniquely attractive.

The marina can accommodate smaller yachts from 45' in double load slips to 250' mega yachts on a linear dock. A separate dock can take your dinghy or tender up to 22'. If this were a stand alone marina, it would rate very high.

What sets this boutique marina apart is not in the physical structure. What makes it extra-ordinary is the high level of service. Every luxury offered on shore is available to the docks. There's a 24-hour concierge, room service with dining on board, maid, laundry and a wash down service.

The trend in hotels since the beginning of the 21st century has been to build large chain hotels. There's a certain comfort a traveler takes in being able to make a reservation and know ahead of time, exactly what to expect.

There is also a large population who enjoys being surprised, in a pleasant way.

The boutique hotel concept appeared during the 1980s in major cities in the UK and North America. They typically have between 3 and 50 rooms. Some of them are quirky and almost all have themes. The majority fit into the luxury status. Exceptional service is the main goal in all of them.

Forty 1° North fits in the middle of the room range with 28 rooms. A theme is a bit hard to detect but the luxury is not. Service is definitely a rule. The surprise is sure to be a pleasant one and the accommodations are anything but chain-sameness.

The difference between chain and boutique is much like the difference between boarding a cruise ship and chartering a mega-yacht.

A cruise with any of the major carriers can be an exciting and cost effective adventure. The cabins range from plain to luxurious but rather generic. The restaurants are plentiful and offer variety. Service is good and they keep a reasonable crew / passenger ratio.

Cruise ships are more of a numbers game. You know what to expect ahead of booking. I'm not complaining, just explaining the obvious.

Chartering a crewed mega-yacht is another story. The crew to passenger ratio is usually one-to-one. You are the master and commander onboard. They're both ships at sea headed to exotic ports, but that's as far as the comparison goes.

Newport has some excellent chain hotels. You know what to expect before you check in. Many people enjoy knowing what to expect. Your port-of-call, Newport, is still the same and it's own attraction.

Forty 1° North is the chartered mega yacht experience. The personal services, elegant settings and smaller size give you a far more intimate feeling and a much higher level of personal service.

Staying at the docks or in one of the rooms is the best way to visit but there is another option. They offer two programs with the Forty 1° North card for those who drive in, take a mooring or anchor. They also have a high-performance tender to pick you up or take you anywhere in the harbor.

You may occasionally hear the sound bite, "Forty 1° North is not just a location, it's a destination." It makes no difference whether you travel by land, sea or sky. Once you're here, there's little doubt that you have arrived.

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