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Tel: 401.474.0404

Email: DonahueNoble@kw.com

Web: www.DonahueNoble.com

more than you expect

Bristol, Rhode Island
2009 Named to the National Trust for Historic Preservations
Distinctive Destinations

BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND 2009 - Steeped in a rich history that spans three centuries Bristol, Rhode Island is a quintessential New England waterfront town. This coastal community, conveniently located only one hour south of Boston, seamlessly blends outdoor beauty with cultural pleasures. Bristol is studded with parks featuring recreational opportunities and stunning vistas, along with a treasure trove of stately historic homes, museums, one-of-a-kind boutiques and seafood eateries. Together, they create a storybook experience that serves as an ideal retreat.

Architecture & History

With its unwavering commitment to preservation, Bristol continues to maintain the picture-perfect charm of a historic port town. The town center is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is a comfortable pedestrian haven offering shaded walks in a veritable urban arboretum of mature trees. The well-preserved waterfront district contains the commercial enterprises, civic buildings, churches, mills, sailor shacks and slave-trader mansions that tell the history of Bristol's development since its founding in 1680.

The network of Bristol's historic sites extends well beyond the central village. To the north, Coggeshall Farm interprets traditional agricultural practices in a series of historic buildings on the grounds of Colt State park, a 400-acre recreational area that boasts what is considered to be the very best view of Narragansett Bay. Southern Bristol is the place to discover important cultural landscapes, including the 45-room English-style manor, Blithewold, considered New England's finest garden estate.

Maritime Heritage & Activities

Sailing and shipbuilding have always played a significant role in Bristol. Visitors can enjoy the town's maritime heritage by touring the Herreshoff Marine Museum, and learn the story of America's finest yachts from construction to competition at the America's Cup Hall of Fame. Bound by Narragansett Bay and Mount Hope Bay, Bristol also offers many waterfront recreational areas, including beaches and parks.

Keller Williams Realty
Thames Street Landing 259 Thames Street
401.474.0404 | DonahueNoble@kw.com
www.DonahueNoble.com