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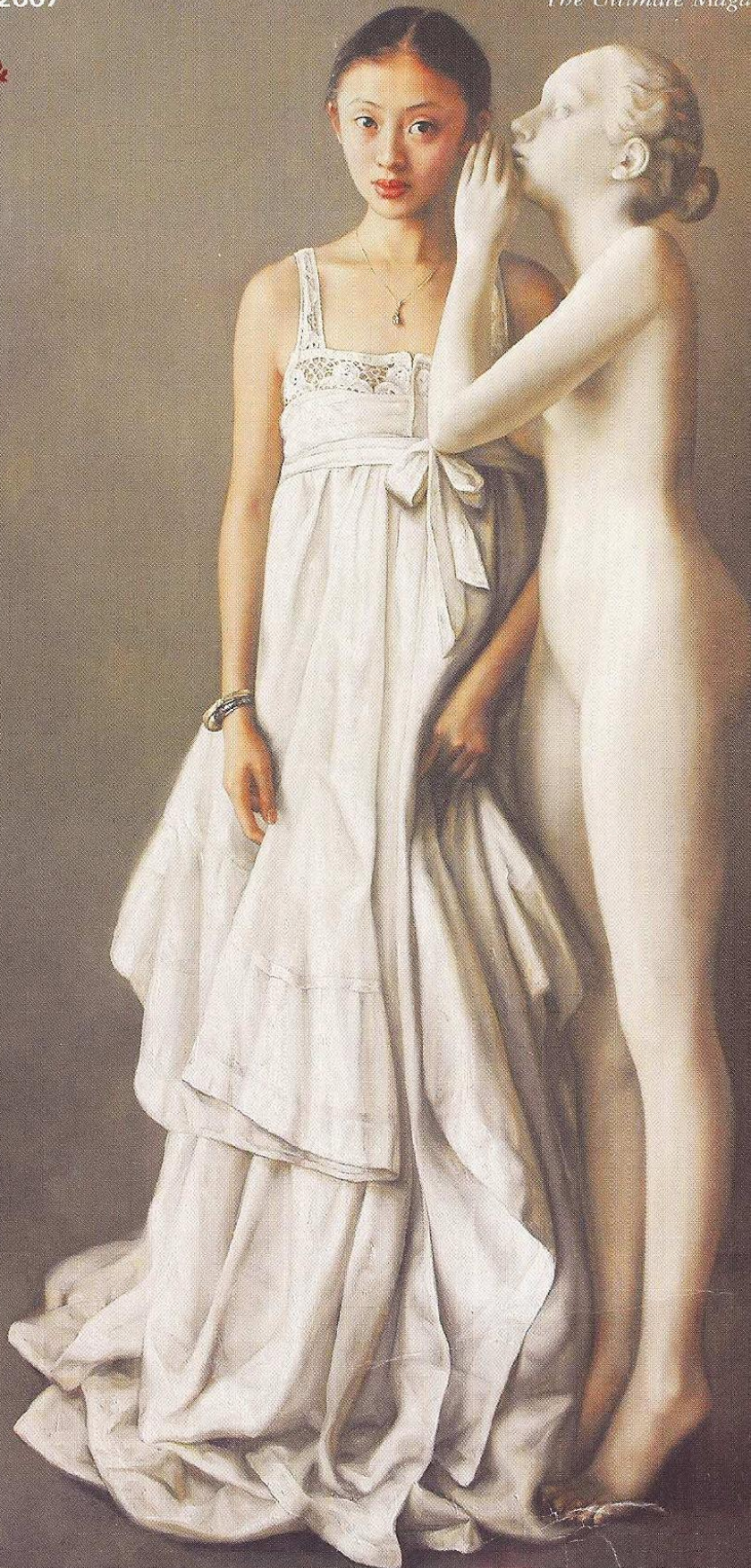
LUXURY HOMES
Alhambra Historic Estate

THE AFFLUENT PAGE

NOVEMBER 2007

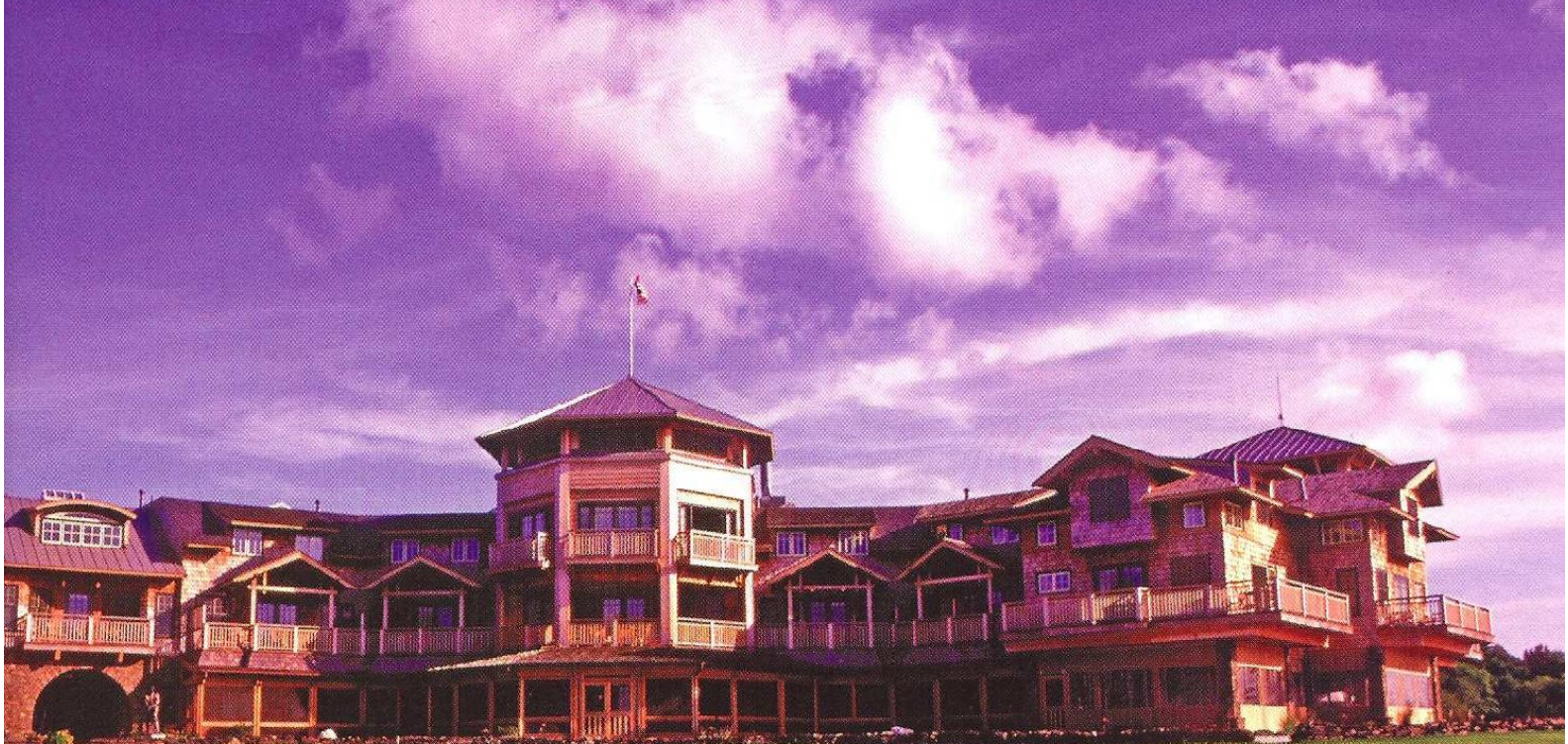
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**THE ARTS &
ANTIQUES
ISSUE**



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A Sporting Estate

The Carnegie Abbey Club offers golf, tennis, biking, swimming, yachting and horseback riding on the grounds of a Benedictine monastery. **BY PATRICK JONES**



(opposite page) The interior of the clubhouse offers its members a cozy, tranquil refuge; (this page) The clubhouse overlooks the the Narragansett Bay

A sense of tranquility washes over you while watching the sun steadily descend over the Narragansett Bay. This is the view from the 56,000-square-foot Adirondack-style clubhouse at the exclusive Carnegie Abbey Club, on Aquidneck Island, in Portsmouth, Rhode Island. The surrounding land once belonged to the Narragansett Indians; appropriately, “aquidneck” means “isle of peace” in their native language.



“The setting is idyllic. It is a beautiful peace of land,” said Stephen Downes, president and general manager of the Carnegie Abbey Club. “To be on the East Coast and sit on a porch here and watch a sunset like this is pretty spectacular.”

The feeling of serenity at the Carnegie Abbey Club also emanates from a spiritual source. The club’s approximately 350 acres are owned by a local Benedictine monastery, which remains the steward of the property and runs a boarding and day school for students in grades nine through 12. According to Downes, O’Neill Properties Group owns the club, and has rights to the land through a 100-year lease signed with the Portsmouth Abbey. “The monastery provides a good barometer to ensure that there isn’t any overdevelopment,” he said. “They don’t allow us to arbitrarily build just anything here; we have to look carefully at how it would affect the land in the future.”

The property is steeped in history. It was the site of the Battle of Rhode Island, in the

Revolutionary War. On August 29, 1778, the Continental Army attempted to recapture Aquidneck Island from British forces, to secure Narragansett Bay for American and French ship traffic. Historical sources say that the outcome of the battle was “inconclusive.”

Modern times have brought development to this prime piece of coastal real estate, but it has been accomplished with due reverence for the past in mind. Historical markers dot the Carnegie Abbey Club’s 18-hole Scottish golf course, which was designed by renowned English architect Donald Steel. He was hand picked, according to Downes, because of his minimalist design philosophy, especially his preference for routing courses into the existing topography. “The course was carved out of the existing topography,” said Downes. “Like most courses in the United Kingdom, the course was developed using the existing lay of the land.”

“The interesting and important fact is that, during the development of the club,

THE CARNEGIE ABBEY YACHT CLUB

will offer 41 slips in a fortified yacht basin carved into the rocky shoreline of the Narragansett Bay. Dock services will be available daily from 8 am to dusk with dock staff ready to assist with tying up, casting off, loading and unloading luggage. Amenities include an ice machine, coolers, basic yachting supplies; and on shore restrooms with showers. A Carnegie Abbey concierge will coordinate transportation needs, dining reservations, laundry and dry cleaning, and directions for land and water destinations;

24-hour security will be provided. Every slip will be fully-equipped with cable access, telephone hookup, fresh water connection, 50 – 100 amp power connection; and hardwood decking on all floats.

the school, the monks, and Peter de Savary (the original developer) worked with the local Narragansett Indian tribe, which has been an integral part of the history of this island,” said Downes. “They cooperated to ensure that everything was maintained in a manner befitting the historic landmarks and the overall feel of the place. The club gives the impression of having been here forever, even though it is only a few years old.” (It opened in 2000.) Local Narragansett Indians helped to rebuild the stone walls that once marked the property lines, and they built much of the new stonework around the estate, including chimneys and archways. The Carnegie Abbey Club is not only an important historic site, but a natural preserve as well. The grounds are maintained as a wildlife habitat shared by ospreys, hawks, and coyotes. And the club is working to have the habitat certified by the Audubon Society.

The Carnegie Abbey Club bills itself as a “private sporting estate.” Along with golf, the club features a yacht club with 41 slips that can handle watercraft up to 74 feet in

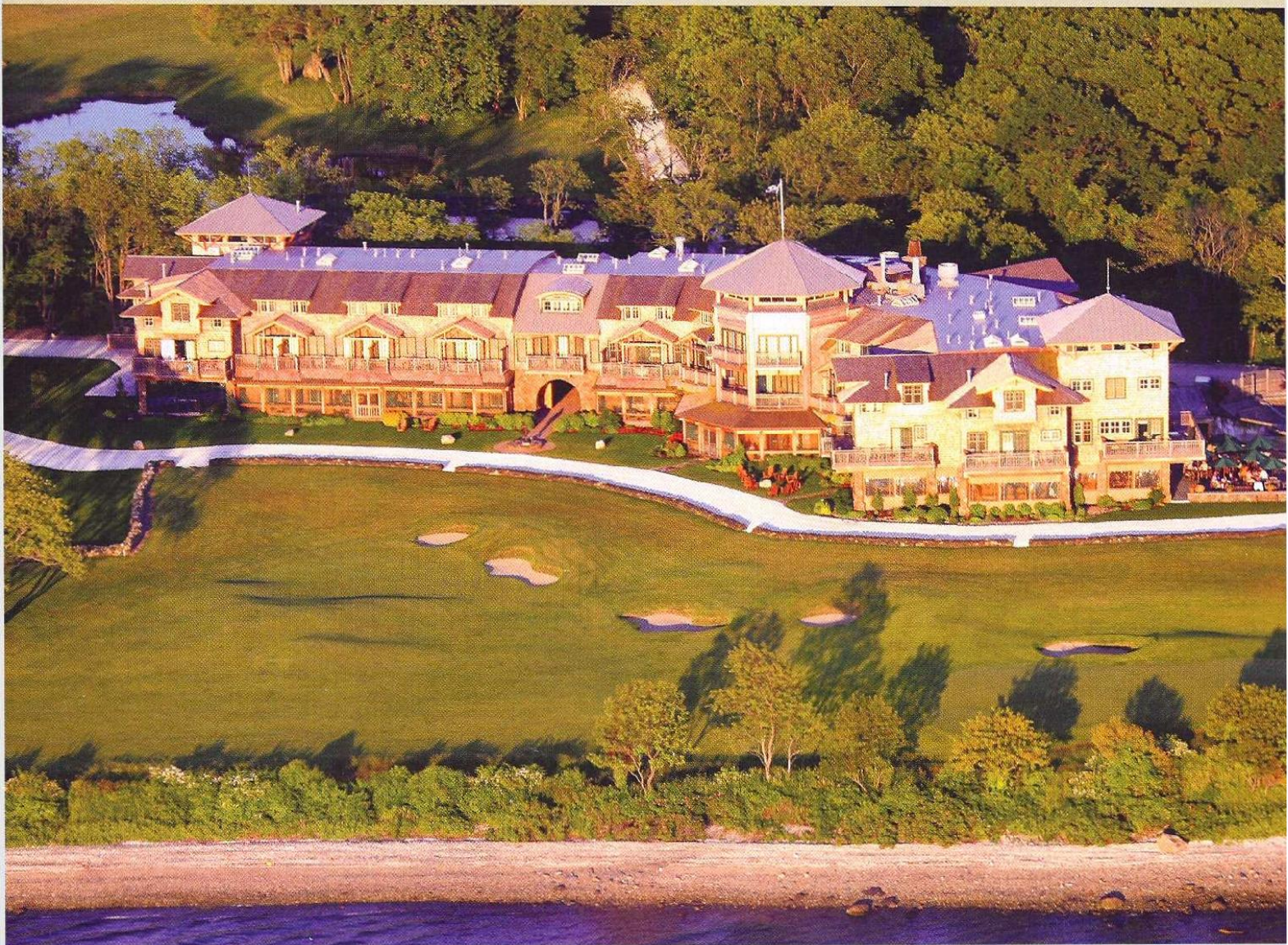
length, an equestrian center with seven miles of riding trails, a tennis center featuring Har-Tru courts, a European-style spa, and even a summer camp — Camp Carnegie — that keeps kids busy with a variety of activities.

“It is a very relaxed and unpretentious environment,” said Downes. “We are not a stuffy club by any means. We want the members to come to the club and relax and enjoy themselves. We are very much a family club. Members can share the club with their grandparents, children, and grandchildren. But we are also very cognizant of the need to create a space for those members without children, who might wish to get away to a more tranquil environment.

“And we really focus on service,” said Downes. “You have the best of every possible amenity available to you, from a spectacular golf course to a world-class restaurant with a master chef at the helm. Owner and club chairman Brian O’Neill, who purchased the club in July, 2005, has been very instrumental in creating this new attitude toward service, and in ensuring that members are happy here. He’s worked hard to establish member

THE CARNEGIE ABBEY CLUBHOUSE

The 88,000-square-foot, shingle and fieldstone Clubhouse is a place for dining, socializing, and relaxing. The Great Hall of the Clubhouse offers a hand-built, 35-foot fieldstone fireplace. There is an octagonal mahogany bar in the Members’ Lounge with snooker and billiards available. The dining lounges and sweeping verandahs take advantage of spectacular views of the Club’s signature 18th hole and its beautiful Narragansett Bay backdrop. Members and guests enjoy generous locker rooms, steam and sauna facilities, rain showerheads and side body spray jets to soothe and rejuvenate after a day on the golf course, tennis court, or boat deck.





advisory committees. We receive a lot of feedback from the members regarding what services we should be offering, whether or not we are hitting the mark, how well we're adjusting, and if we are delivering the best club experience available."

The Carnegie Abbey Club is at the forefront of the newest trends in private club service, including offering a member services desk. "Anything that you want, we can get for you. It is one-stop shopping," says Downes. "With our concierge service, we can pick you up from the airport or take you there. You can even arrive by boat at our marina with your golf clubs, play for the day, and avoid the traffic. There isn't anything that we can't make happen for you."

Such spectacular service requires admittance, however. The Carnegie Abbey Club is an invitation-only club with about 300 golf memberships, and a smaller number of non-golfing social memberships. Two

well-known members of the club are PGA Tour veterans Billy Andrade and Brad Faxon. Downes said the club prefers to guard the privacy of its members, but revealed that its rolls are filled with corporate leaders, entrepreneurs, and "our share of personalities and celebrities," many of whom travel in from New York, Boston and from abroad, particularly Europe.

A testimony to the clout of its membership is the Carnegie Abbey Club's World Leadership Guest Series, which attracts many of the world's most influential people to this 37.8-square-mile island. Mikhail Gorbachev, Prince Albert II of Monaco, the Dalai Lama, Bill Clinton, and former President George Bush have all addressed — and mingled with — the club's membership. Several leading 2008 presidential candidates have already been guests at the club this year.

Prime residential sites are the newest addition to the Carnegie Abbey Club's

offerings. O'Neill Properties Group purchased an adjacent tract of land that was formerly the site of an aluminum plant. The Carnegie Tower, a 21-story building with 79 condominium units, is currently under development there, and on track to open in December, 2008. Prices will range from \$850,000 to more than \$7 million. Living areas will run from 1,000 to 4,000 square feet, with the exception of a single 6,735-square-foot penthouse suite.

"The tower offers unparalleled views of Narragansett Bay," said Ed Lopes, senior vice president of development for New England at O'Neill Properties Group. "I don't think you are ever going to be able to duplicate these views anywhere else on this part of the East Coast."

Standard features in the units include granite kitchen countertops, French limestone kitchen floors, Brazilian cherry hard-



granite kitchen countertops, French limestone kitchen floors, Brazilian cherry hardwood floors, seven-foot windows, and private balconies and terraces. Tower amenities include covered parking, a 25-meter lap pool, a fitness center, and private beach cabanas.

Detached single family homes are also available on the club grounds. The Royal Cottages at Carnegie Abbey feature 21 cottages designed in New England and Low Country styles. The three-bedroom homes surround Sunset Lake. The living areas range from 2,500 to 3,100 square feet. Prices start at \$1.6 million.

"One of the great things about this project is that we are taking a defunct factory site, land that was blighted and environmentally challenged, and we're putting it back on the tax rolls," said Lopes. "From our standpoint, we think we are a tremendous benefit to the community, as a source of jobs and tax revenues." The club employs up to 150 people during the height

of the summer season. "We took property that was not very productive, and we've revitalized it with very little strain on local public services."

The Carnegie Abbey Club continues to strive to blend in with the rich historical heritage of Rhode Island's picturesque Narragansett Bay. At the same time, the club is intent on adding its own mark to this unique area.

"On Fridays and Saturdays, we have a Scottish piper walk onto the fairway at the 18th hole at sunset to play the bagpipes before we fire a cannon and lower the flag," said Downes. "Although this is a new club, we have worked hard to create a sense of tradition here, because we feel that it is all about tradition and creating special memories." ❖

For information, contact Kathy Schmidt, Sales Director, 866.308.2224, kschmidt@carnegieabbeyclub.com

THE EQUESTRIAN CENTER

features an outdoor ring with show-quality jumps, a grass ring, and seven miles of trails. During the summer, riding camps for younger members are offered, featuring stable management, horse care and riding instruction.

For adult riders, clinics in Dressage, Jumping and Eventing are offered each month by guest trainers from the United States and United Kingdom.