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Artist Haven

WRITTEN BY COURTNEY GOODRICH
PHOTOGRAPHED BY DAN CUTRONA

Interior designer Heather Wells and her business manager, Barry DeCosta, have worked together for 18 years. For inspiration outside their daily lives at Heather Wells Inc. in Boston, they head to **PROVINCETOWN, MASSACHUSETTS** — a beautiful coastal haven where artists thrive — to visit its shops, galleries, and museums. “It’s so rich in history, and there are so many wonderful things to do,” says Wells. Here, they share six of their favorite places.

ABOVE Heather Wells and Barry DeCosta visit Provincetown’s Fine Arts Work Center with Wells’s labradoodle, Henry.

Room 68
377 Commercial Street
774-538-6470
room68.com

1 For Wells and DeCosta, Room 68 is a one-stop shop. Relocated from Boston in 2014 (it still participates in city pop-ups), the store carries clean-lined modern furniture, accessories, and artwork. “Our followers come from all over the world,” says Eric Portnoy, who owns the store with Brent Refsland. “They are looking to discover fresh and innovative work from both emerging and established artists and designers to create personal spaces they are passionate about,” says Portnoy. “It’s such an interesting place full of bespoke objects,” says Wells, whose favorite purchase is a one-of-a-kind ceramic stool by Venezuelan artist Reinaldo Sanguino. Among paintings, prints, and collages there are everyday items such as sleek French coffee presses, artsy power cords, and funky speakers. “There’s a little bit of everything,” says DeCosta, “but the common thread is cool and modern.” 1. Lockneesters puzzle/sculpture Bears and Gamine glasses sit on a side table by John Greiner. 2. Artwork made with cut sandpaper pieces by owner Brent Refsland is above a display of blankets and pillows by Tina Ratzler and a lamp by Seth West. 3. Wells holds a sculptural vessel by Kim Markel.

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2 Provincetown Art Association and Museum (PAAM) has an expanding collection of art made by artists who are influenced by the town's "rich history and beautiful, natural setting," says DeCosta. It's hard not to be inspired by a visit.

"The building mimics our mission," says executive director Christine McCarthy about the 1820s captain's house that's "coupled with a modern structure built in 2014/2015." Inside are more than 4,000 works of art that have a connection to Provincetown and other parts of Cape Cod and the islands. The museum hosts more than 20 exhibitions each year. *Abstract Climates: Helen Frankenthaler in Provincetown*, on view July 6 through

September 2, focuses on work created by the abstract expressionist artist between 1950 and 1969.

"Provincetown has always been a draw for artists," says McCarthy. That creativity still exists with people taking classes at PAAM, touring the galleries, or taking their canvases and paintbrushes out to the beaches.

Provincetown Art Association and Museum

460 Commercial Street
508-487-1750
paam.org



DECOSTA AND WELLS study the collection of local art (ABOVE), including a painting by Provincetown painter Salvatore Del Deo, at the Provincetown Art Association and Museum. On the museum's lawn (LEFT) is a 1972 bronze sculpture by Joseph Kurhajec.



3 A trip to The Schoolhouse Gallery is a must whenever Wells and DeCosta are in town. "We have known Mike for a number of years," says DeCosta about gallery owner Mike Carroll. "He has a great eye."

"We present quality fine art with a focus on innovation from our roster of over 50 artists and connected artists' studios," says Carroll about his gallery, which Wells often recommends to her clients. It represents local as well as emerging artists, some of whom work in exciting media, among them Vermont's Clark Derbes, who specializes in carved wood and paint. Open since 1998, the gallery also participates in "a variety of fairs and outside exhibition projects," says Carroll.

The Schoolhouse Gallery

494 Commercial Street
508-487-4800
gallerieschoolhouse.com



MIKE CARROLL CHATS with Wells in his Schoolhouse Gallery (NEAR LEFT). Behind them are a standing wood sculpture by Clark Derbes and a painting by Paul Stopforth. Wells stands in front of an acrylic painting by Donald Traver (FAR LEFT). The sculpture in the foreground is by Derbes.

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LISA VENTRE'S HATS ARE crafted from rice paper straw. Wells checks out Ventre's shop (ABOVE RIGHT) for a new hat to add to her collection.

Lisa Ventre Hats
357 Commercial Street
508-487-6490
lisaventrehats.com



"Every summer, I buy a hat," says Wells, a tradition started when DeCosta gave her a gift of one from Lisa Ventre Hats, a charming store across from the public library. "I have five or six at this point."

The hats are made by artist Lisa Ventre, who uses a material called toyo straw, a quarter-inch braid of rice paper. "It is lightweight and flexible," Ventre says. "I begin each hat by stitching row upon row of the braid together, creating shape as I build the piece up." Not only are the hats "all really beautiful," says Wells, but they also are easy to pack and practical when spending hot summer days outside.

Sophisticated yet casual, they are perfect for a laid-back summer wardrobe.

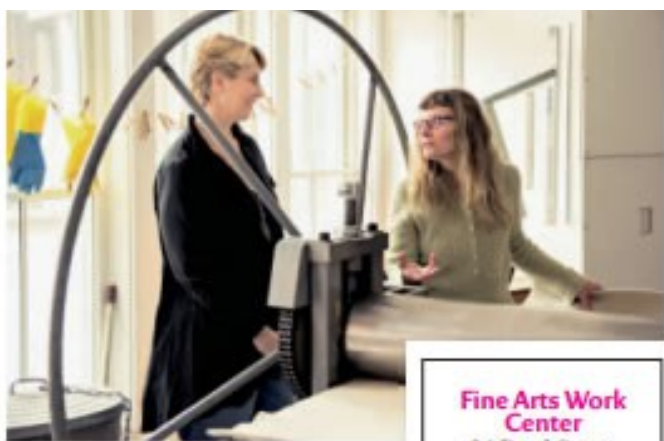
"The attention to detail is phenomenal," says DeCosta. "She's taken this craft to a new level."

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Fine Arts Work Center

24 Pearl Street
508-487-9060

fawc.org

Each year, 10 artists and 10 writers are granted fellowships from the Fine Arts Work Center (FAWC) to gather in Provincetown for a seven-month residency from October to May. "It's a modern-day artistic incubator," says DeCosta about the nonprofit that is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. "It allows artists to live and work at the center with no other expectation but they focus on their craft." For the summer, FAWC offers 12 weeklong creative writing and visual arts workshops, such as printmaking, sculpture, photography,

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collage, fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Wells, who stands at a press (above) with printmaker Vicky Tomayko, a past fellow and FAWC's print shop manager (her work is represented by The Schoolhouse Gallery), and DeCosta are passionate about supporting FAWC, which is hosting a summer awards ceremony July 21 as well as *Ai Weiwei: Rebar and Case*, an exhibit of work by Chinese artist and activist Ai Weiwei on view in its gallery July 22 through August 30.



The Canteen

225 Commercial Street
508-487-3800

thecanteentown.com

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After a day of strolling Commercial Street, viewing art, and shopping for themselves or design clients, Wells and DeCosta relax at The Canteen, a fun restaurant with tables on the beach.

"It's beach food, but there is a twist on traditional seaside fare," says DeCosta about their favorite menu items — fried oyster rolls, fish sandwiches, and roasted Brussels sprouts

(above). Plus, "In the summer, they make this drink called a 'frosé,'" says DeCosta. "It's a frozen slushie of rosé wine. And it is good." 🍷

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