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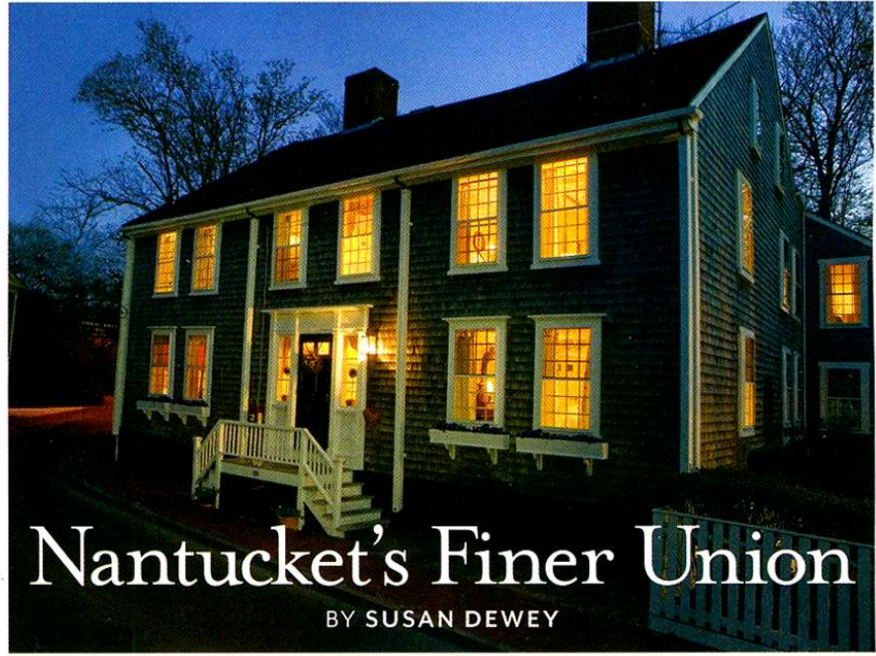
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Nantucket's Finer Union

BY SUSAN DEWEY

WHEN YOU MEET INNKEEPER Ken Withrow at his highly regarded bed and breakfast, Nantucket's Union Street Inn, it is obvious that this is a guy who loves his job—which is probably the reason why Union Street is a perennial award-winner in travel and lifestyle magazines from coast to coast.

On a warm June morning, Ken welcomes guests to Union Street's outdoor dining patio nestled beneath a green hillside of ivy and sheltering trees in one of the island's elegant neighborhoods right off Main Street. While guests start off their day with heaping plates of pancakes bursting with blueberries or fresh salmon cool with cucumbers on fresh bagels (Union Street is the only B&B to offer complete gourmet breakfasts on Nantucket) Ken walks from table to table.

"What would you like to do today," this urbane, former Manhattanite says to guests who look rested and happy having slept in one of Union Street's 12 rooms in this painstakingly restored 1770s antique residence. Each room here is a masterpiece of carefully selected furnishings and amenities, ultra-comfortable beds beside fireplaces piled high with Frette linens, baths gleaming with imported Italian marble.

Union Street's sophisticated décor with refined antique details is a reflection of the successful collaboration between Ken, who has decades of hotel management experience in some top quality places, and his wife, Deb, whose background in retail management includes such

names as Fiorucci and Henri Bendel. Combined with the couple's famed attention to detail and Ken's relaxed charm, it's easy to see why Union Street is a Fodor Gold Choice Award winner described as "One of the most romantic inns in the U.S."

Stopping a moment to help cheerful staff serve breakfasts made to order, Ken helps one customer with a route to the island's picturesque Steps Beach. He sits down and carefully pencils in the quickest route to the beach. "Be sure to stop here and see the whaling museum first—then if you're hungry, this place has terrific sandwiches—have fun," he says before moving on to the next guest.

"I think that's what sets Union Street apart is that we take the time to make every guest's experience unique," says Ken. "We want each visit to be memorable—so we will sit and draw maps, share the ins and outs of dining, shopping—help them pick the best beach or restaurant to go to."

As the ferry boat's horn sounds, signaling the arrival of more island visitors, Union Street's guests climb on bikes to explore Sconset and head off on foot for Main Street ambles. Fortified with first-rate breakfast fare—and with a carefully planned guide in hand—you can see why Union Street is known worldwide for offering Nantucket visitors a fine union of first rate dining, deluxe accommodations—and personal hands-on care.

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