

ForbesLife

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Surfing's New Blade Runners



P.J. O'Rourke
Tours Hong Kong—
With The Kids

Ten Great
Summer Lagers

Madras Makes
A Return

One CEO's
Fireworks Fixation

MASSACHUSETTS

Edgartown: Summer. You've always loved Martha's Vineyard and cling to those memories of rental houses on the beach. Of course, that was before you had three kids and a cockapoo. Today, that one-week affordable rental—now a ten-minute drive from the water—requires arriving in a station wagon laden with coolers, bicycles, linens, Super Soakers and chow enough for the 10th Mountain Division. You will spend your week cleaning, cooking and planning minute-by-minute entertainment.

Or not. We recently rolled off the ferry at Oak Bluffs, carrying little more than overnight bags, and turned south toward the quiet end of the island and an inn in the dunes called **WINNETU OCEANSIDE RESORT**. Now in its eighth year, the 11-acre Winnetu, in the Katama region of Edgartown, offers about the best deal parents, and kids, could ask for in a no-hassles summer vacation: good food, loads of activities when you want them and a wide expanse of Atlantic Ocean to just stare out at when you don't.

The resort has 53 suites and studios, and one large private cottage often used for extended family stays and reunions. (There are also town houses for rent nearby.) Most rooms have ocean-facing decks and kitchens if, for some

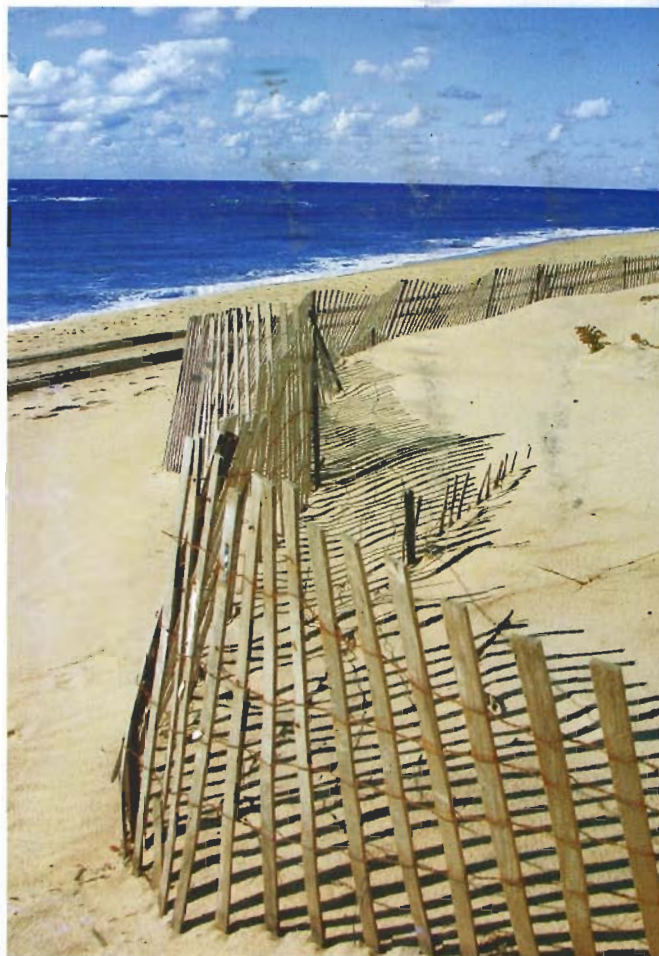
reason, you want to cook, but are otherwise convenient for breakfasts and snacks.

Once settled in, kids can join any of the dozens of activities ongoing throughout the day into evening. (Age ranges from 3 years to 12.) For starters, there's tennis, kayaking, hiking, biking—the road along the 21-mile-long South Beach is blessedly flat—and visits to a nearby working farm. There's ball-playing on the wide, grassy lawn that leads to the dunes.

If Winnetu is decidedly kid-oriented, that's because its founder, Mark Snider, is pretty much a big kid himself. He loves foosball and popcorn machines and chess—there's a life-size chessboard set up in the middle of the property. A few years ago he began buying up antique vehicles, and in summer an old fire engine and woody buses and trucks crisscross the property full of kids laughing and hanging on.

While some families no doubt dump their kids into Winnetu's activities all week, most didn't regard it as an entitlement program when we were there. Many dropped their kids off long enough to hit the gym and spa or have a meal together at the resort's excellent casual restaurant, Lure. But they also went on daily family outings. My wife and eight-year-old son, for example, spent two afternoons fishing for stripers with a guide, leaving dad to carry on his quest for Martha's Vineyard's perfect lobster roll. (Hands-down winner: Lookout Tavern, Oak Bluffs.)

On our final evening we went for a sunset bike ride along the water with a couple of Winnetu's counselors.



From top: What summer looks like: beachside at the Winnetu Oceanside Resort. Back on the lawn, time for your big move.

(Personalities among the young summer help at Winnetu appear to range from cheerful to dazzling.) Along the way we crossed a small bridge where, we were told, a scene from *Jaws* was filmed.

"Dad, this is exactly where the giant great white came in and ate all those people!" my son said, gleefully.

"No, that was a movie." I said. "This is just the place where they filmed it."

"Oh, right, Dad, you'll believe anything."

Soon we turned around and slowly pedaled back to the inn for the family-night clambake, happily arguing the finer points of make-believe along the way.

—PATRICK COOKE

THE SETUP

Winnetu Oceanside Resort is open from April 18 to October 26. (866) 335-1133. www.winnetu.com. Rates range from \$225-\$2,520.