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# Porthole **Cruise** and Travel

02.2023

*Delicious Turkey  
in hip Kadıköy*

*Sailing on  
Maine's windjammers*

*Costa Rica's  
sloth lessons*

## **PRIMED FOR PRIMA**

Norwegian's latest  
delivers delightful differences

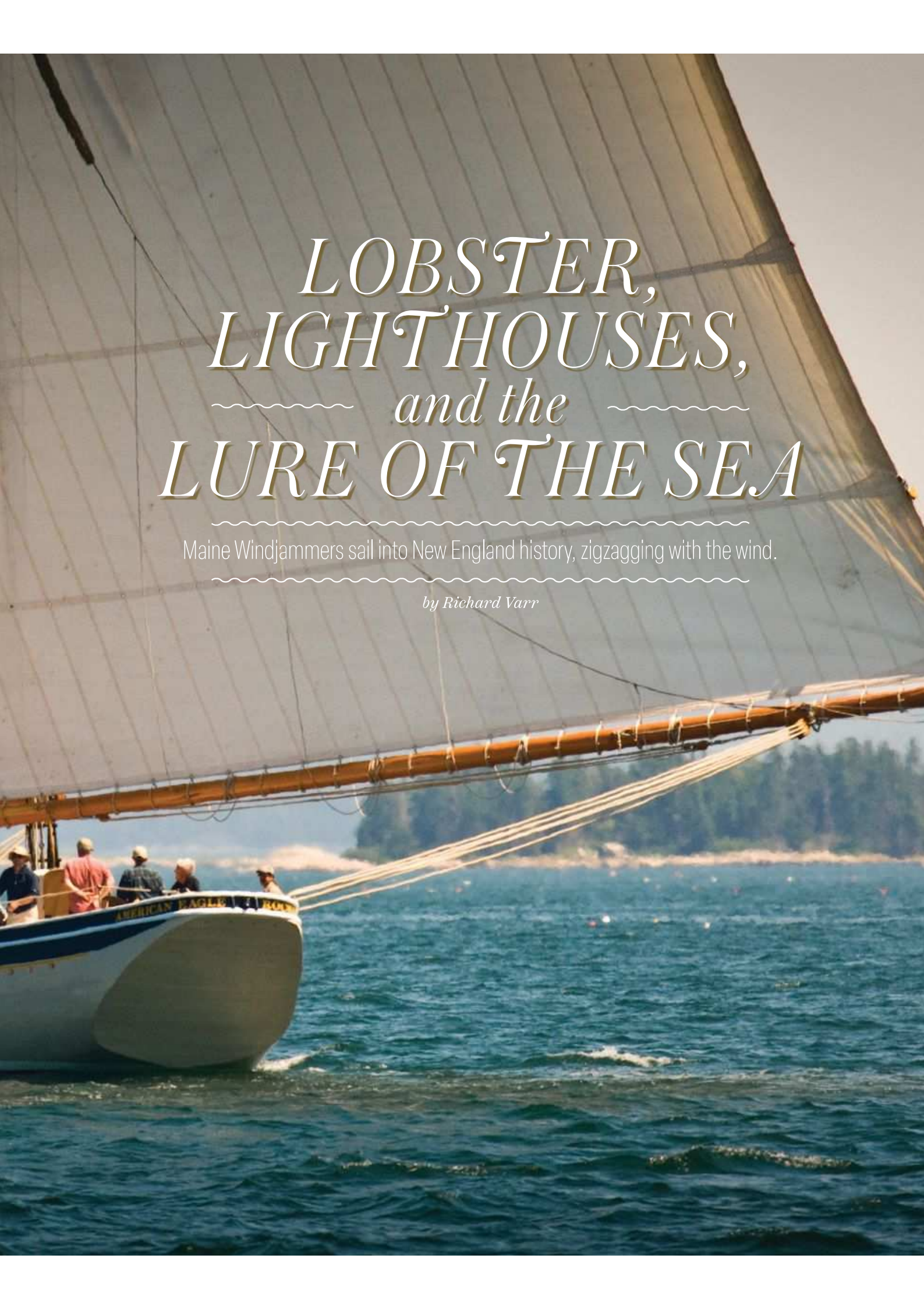


+ 2023's  
Newest Ships!









*LOBSTER,  
LIGHTHOUSES,  
and the  
LURE OF THE SEA*

Maine Windjammers sail into New England history, zigzagging with the wind.

*by Richard Varr*





Stonington



**HOSPITABLE TRADITIONS:**  
You see (and taste) a different side of New England from the deck of one of Maine Windjammers' sailing vessels, following an itinerary written by the wind and tides.



I never quite realized the true meaning of "sea legs" until I stepped aboard the *American Eagle*. Powerful winds gorged the sails of this nearly century-old schooner, heeling the vessel to one side as it sliced through choppy surf. I hobbled across the slanted deck, cautiously taking every step as I looked out at Penobscot Bay toward the island of North Haven. We'd been sailing for a couple of hours, but it seemed our destination wasn't getting any closer. The crew shifted the sails and I soon found out why.

"That's the wonderful mystery of sailing," admits *American Eagle* Captain Tyler King. "When you have to get right to where the wind is coming from, you have to kind of zigzag your way there."

It was the second day of a 3-day Windjammer sail, an adventure exploring seaside villages and quiet coves, and passing several lighthouses in and around coastal Maine's craggy islands. Each sail is different, with captains determining destinations and activities often at the mercy of the fickle New England weather. "There's no itinerary and there's no place we have to be," asserts King.

The Maine Windjammer Association's working fleet of nine schooners berthed

in Rockland and Camden are all that remain of the 19th- and early 20th-century vessels that once commanded the fishing and trade routes along the East Coast and beyond. Today, the schooners' cargo is human — adventurers seeking a true sailing experience on either 3- or 6-day voyages.

Built in 1930, the two-masted *American Eagle* trawled for fish until 1983, joining the Maine Windjammer fleet and then being recognized as a National Historic Landmark soon after. "She's the last Gloucester swordfish schooner in existence," notes King. "She could carry 100,000 pounds of ice per trip. During her first 12 or so years of operation, she caught more than eight million pounds of fish."

## DAY ONE

For our cruise, 18 passengers and six crew members actually boarded the night before. In fact, that Friday night of our late September sail was at the precise time Hurricane Fiona ripped through the North Atlantic toward Nova Scotia, a few hundred miles to the east. Although secured snugly, the ship creaked and groaned throughout the night from the wind and subsequent rough tide flowing into Rockland harbor. "That's just the way wooden boats are constructed," explained first mate Asher Heaney. "They're supposed to be flexible to absorb all the shocks and strain."



**LIVING HISTORY:**  
National Historic  
Landmarks can be found  
on shore and sailing in New  
England's waterways as  
they have done for years.



The two-masted schooner *J. & E. Riggan*

## Atop a hill, an odd, standalone window over- looked the neighborhood, serving as a frame for the harbor.



Hilltop art in Stonington

A strong coffee aroma awakened me around 7 a.m. and the breakfast bell chimed just an hour later. Under brilliant sunshine, chilly gusts stalled our journey, but by early afternoon the crew finally yanked the ropes tethering us to shore. The diesel engine rumbled as we chugged past the harbor's breakwater, a nearly mile-long sliver of land capped with the red-brick Rockland Breakwater Lighthouse. As we crossed West Penobscot Bay, swells of up to four feet hammered the hull, but the schooner steadfastly glided through them, as I'm sure it had through far worse surf over her more than 90 years at sea.

We welcomed calmer waters when arriving at Fox Island Thoroughfare, a pas-

sageway between North Haven and Vinalhaven islands. We passed Browns Head Lighthouse, its whitewashed façade contrasting sharply with the year-round green conifers — pine, fir, and spruce trees — so typical of these islands.

Come evening, I heard the roar of clanking chains as the anchor dropped in Carver Cove off Vinalhaven. The two-masted Windjammer *J. & E. Riggan* also anchored nearby, finding refuge in this calm inlet for the night. It was here that our chefs fired up Maine's traditional lobster feast with melted butter and corn on the cob. They generously cooked extra, with some passengers eating two lobsters and one crew member boasting he downed seven!

Retiring for the night, it was back to our cabins — tiny and cramped — with tight-fitted bunk beds. But what else can be expected below the schooner's 92-foot-long deck? While uncomfortable at first, I admit I got used to it by the second and third nights.

"We found the best way to deal with this is to just be honest. If people are interested, they'll come," King explains. "I grew up on boats so I'm the wrong person to ask." Each cabin has a sink with hot water heated by the kitchen's wood-burning stove. It also took some getting used to having only two bathrooms and one shower on board, the latter hardly used during our 3-day sail.

## DAY TWO

We traversed East Penobscot Bay to the small town of Stonington at the southern edge of Deer Isle, passing the Mark Island Lighthouse with its fog horn sounding every 10-15 seconds. Over glassy waters, we rowed ourselves ashore where a statue of a stone cutter honored the town's heritage. "All these islands had big quarries. A lot of the granite in New York City and Boston was shipped out from this area," noted Heaney.

I visited a book store and a souvenir shop, but dominating the townscape is the blue-green Stonington Opera House, listed on









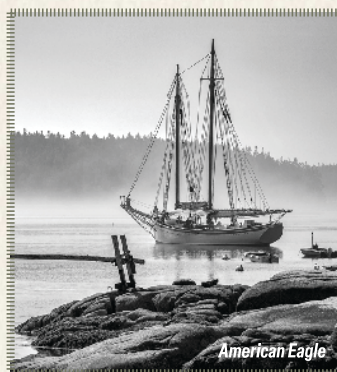


*American Eagle,*  
built in 1930, is the last  
Gloucester swordfish schooner in existence.





**EFFICIENT AND FLEXIBLE:**  
Windjammers like *American Eagle* and *J.&E. Riggin* were designed to work with the wind and the weather.



the National Register of Historic Places. Atop a hill, a odd, standalone window overlooked the neighborhood, serving as a frame for the harbor. "It's a piece of art," a local told me.

Back on the *American Eagle*, the crew hoisted the sails for our afternoon journey past the Eagle Island Lighthouse, around Butter and Great Spruce Head islands, and back across East Penobscot Bay. That's where we zigzagged into North Haven's calm Pulpit Harbor for the night, its name stemming from the osprey nest at the cove's entrance, perched atop Pulpit Rock.

In the evening tranquility, we gathered on deck after dinner as Captain King plucked his guitar and read us tales of the solitary lifestyles of Maine's islanders.

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**"When you have to get right to where the wind is coming from, you have to kind of zigzag your way there."**

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### **DAY THREE**

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After overnight rain and morning fog, we sailed across West Penobscot Bay under fair skies, arriving back in Rockland before noon. During our adventure, the crew's husband-and-wife chef team prepared hearty meals served on deck buffet-style, including beef stew, curry chicken, and a lasagna feast. Passengers often helped out with raising the sails and cleaning up after meals. And although I cherished the peacefulness, most locations we visited have cell phone service.

"It's great to see people come forward with some trepidation or questions, and then see them ease into the shipboard routine," King observed. "I love that we get to do this and keep these old vessels working."●

Left to right: Ben Krebs; Marc Hensauer; Don Seymour; Mikael Carstamjen





