

# VALOUR

Fall 2017 | Issue #101



90 VALOUR Fall 2017

## STAYCATION

**Location:** Long Branch, NJ  
**Our favorite time to go:** May-September  
**Distance from NYC:** 56.3 miles 1hr 30 min  
**To pack:** Light summer clothes & a sweater for at night

Lifestyle 91



rooms divided into five categories ranging from 465 sq ft to over 1,100 sq ft. Each one boasts a fireplace, Apple TV, fresh flowers and a kitchenette in addition to the standard hotel amenities. We stayed in the Aloha, the baby of the bunch with a parking lot view. As soon as the suitcases were unceremoniously pushed to a corner, shoes and makeup came off, I attempted to turn on the fireplace without success. The next morning, Julian came to our room to fix the fireplace. Then he came up another dozen times to help us technologically challenged people turn on the TV. While he is the general manager at the hotel, Julian is really so much more, always has something good to say and truly made our stay exponentially more enjoyable.

Long Branch, NJ used to be a hot-spot for celebrities and presidents in the late 1800's. In the mid 1900's the glamour wore off and the town started its decline. Recent years have seen developers create an area called Pier City which is a cluster of condos, restaurants and shops right on the boardwalk and

### STAYCATION WHERE TO STAY

The only thing cliché about The Bungalow is the adage "good things come in small packages". A true boutique hotel with an upscale beachy vibe seems, it seems like the hotel would be more at home in the Hamptons. But it's not and we love it that the expected is not what you can expect. While there are fireplaces in every room, the posh is balanced by the whimsical chalkboards and metal buckets of colored chalk. There's a sign in the lobby with neon colored letters spelling Bungalow in random fonts; on the other end of the lobby, there's a big black canvas with the image of a Queen Elizabeth stamp made of what seems to be fragmented mother-of-pearl. There are board games for the kids and pool, backgammon and a bar for the adults. Courtney and Robert Novogratz of Six design did a phenomenal job creating an identity for the hotel.

Set in a compact building, the Bungalow is comprised of 24



**n Brooklyn**  
*othman on life,*  
*earing blinders.*



successfully revive the vacationing. The Bungalow is located just one block away from the beach and we took some complementary bikes for a spin to check out Pier Village. Feeling completely conspicuous riding a vintage-esque bright red bike, we zigged and zagged our way to the boardwalk. The atmosphere immediately surrounds you as if the air is different than anywhere else. Suits, laptops and concrete are replaced by swimsuits, cameras and sand. It's a place where everyone decided to take a beach day just hanging out with drinks in hand. It's almost an insult to the vibe not to stop at a tiki bar for a drink and a touristy chat. Freshly rehydrated, you can ride your bike (or sandals) along the crescent of shops including stores like Rocky Mountain Chocolate and even a Gold's Gym (Bungalow guests get a \$10 day pass)! Intoxicated with the enchantment of the day, you can get your sugar fix at the ice cream parlor next door to the hotel. If ice cream is not your thing, Gracie and the Dudes is worth a visit just for the giant sprinkle spread extravaganza. You can adult again (like we did) with a game of pool in the amazing lobby. When



the game was over, drinks were once again in order so we sat down at the industrial style bar where a bar tender (keeping up with the no-fuss surroundings) wearing a flat cap and shorts served up a perfect martini. The elevator took us to our room and then it's 10:30 in the morning and I don't want to leave the sea of blankets to open the blackout curtains and convince myself it is, in fact, time to leave. Things were flying into suitcases and so our stay came to an end full of sun, sand and an overall fabulous time.





## WHAT TO DO.

It's a funny thing, our state of mind. We constantly need to be connected to people through spending time together or getting carpal tunnel from Instagram and WhatsApp. Despite that, however, never has a person said "I want to go on a relaxing vacation. Preferably with people I know but I'll settle for just having lots of people around." Instead, it's the constant hunt for the most secluded beaches and the most far-out safaris. That's why when I went to Long Branch, I didn't expect to find much seclusion only an hour away from the city. Upon a recommendation from The Bungalow's Julian, however, we found a stretch of secluded paradise.