

Gift Guide: Presents for everyone on your list

# Cape Cod

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## RESTAURANT PROFILE



## 'A Round for Eli'

Newly renovated Eli's Tavern in Falmouth offers special twists on Cape Cod classics and a selection of tasty new additions.

BY MARJORIE NAYLOR PITTS

The Coonamessett, a historic 29-room inn and event venue overlooking Jones Pond in Falmouth, has been given a contemporary makeover that maintains the property's unique character while enhancing its comfort and charm. Also newly renovated is **Eli's Tavern**, located inside the inn's main building, where a tradition of culinary excellence continues with an enticingly refreshed menu served in its updated bar and dining areas.

Entering the main lobby, the bright colonial interior offers guests a warm welcome. Eli's Tavern is a short

meander to the left, where dining room manager Diane Cornaglia, who has been on staff at the inn for 20 years, is often on hand to greet guests before seating them in one of the cozy dining areas. Cornaglia recounts the history of the inn and its connection to the Lilly family. In a Coonamessett tradition, those who prefer to dine at the 15-seat bar are welcome (though never obligated) to join in the convivial tradition of buying "a round for Eli"—a generous pre-purchase of a beverage for a future bar patron who may be in need of a boost. Legend has

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it that Eli Lilly started paying it forward in this way, an early example of the hospitality and community-minded ethos that continues at Eli's Tavern today.

Joining the Eli team after an eight-year stint with Walt Disney World, Chef John Norton, a South Shore native, returned north to bring his fresh approach to the table with locally sourced ingredients and an inspiring enthusiasm for his craft. "We're constantly evolving," says Norton. "It's a lot of fun introducing new things, while keeping old favorites." With special twists on Cape Cod classics, as well as a wide selection of tasty new additions, Chef Norton hopes to appeal to a new generation of Eli patrons, while maintaining menu items that have enjoyed a loyal following.

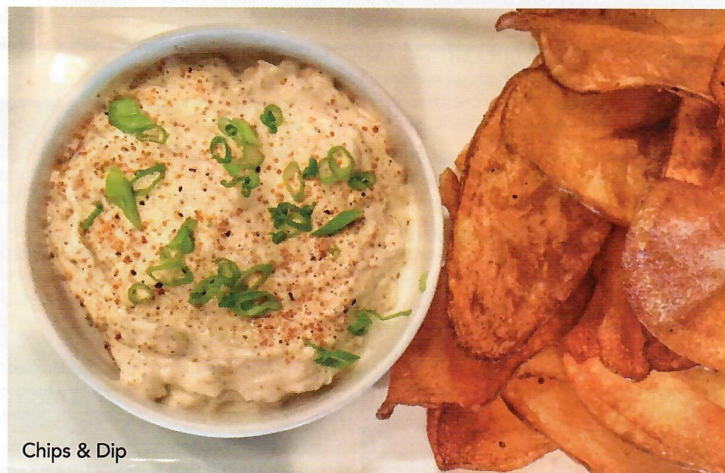
On the evening of our visit, my companion and I sat in a warm nook in the bar area: perfect. Though tempted by the \$1 oysters and littleneck clams (every day 4-6 p.m.), we opted to start with chips & dip (house-spiced chips, French onion dip), steam buns (Korean braised short rib, hoisin and pickled cucumber) and lobster toast (avocado, greens, radishes and lobster knuckle salad on sourdough): Winners, all! For our entrées, we

chose the lobster with sweet corn and bacon ravioli (roasted corn, asparagus tips, pernod, chili oil and cotija) and the pan-seared scallops (sea scallops, grilled corn, pepper and legume succotash). Both dishes were perfectly seasoned and generously portioned (we lunched well the next day, too!).

Though there was truly no room left for dessert, the menu tempted us with an Earl Grey crème brûlée, hazelnut fudge crème and Eli's signature Jones Pond ice cream swan (pâte à choux, vanilla ice cream, creamy hot fudge and walnuts). How about a round of desserts for Eli?!

### ELI'S TAVERN

The Coonamessett,  
311 Gifford St.,  
Falmouth,  
elistavernfalmouth.com,  
508-548-2300



Chips & Dip



Lobster with  
sweet corn and  
bacon ravioli



Pan-seared  
scallops