

WITH: NEW ENGLAND DESTINATIONS

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TRENDSPOTTING



DEFENDING THEIR GROUND

YVONNE GORDON

Some destinations, faced with becoming too popular for their own good, are confronting overtourism

NANTUCKET — On the first Friday of each December, this little island is transformed into a Currier and Ives vision of the holidays for its festive Christmas Stroll.

A stylishly decorated 20-foot tree already is awaiting next week's crowds of visitors, who will squeeze into bright, warm stores that serve them hot mulled cider and sugar cookies. There will be caroling and other entertainment, craft shows, and holiday-themed specials at packed island restaurants. Even Santa and Mrs. Claus are expected, delivered to Straight Wharf at midday by Coast Guard cutter.

It's a welcome off-season boost for local businesses, and a singularly New England holiday experience.

But there's one other thing the wildly popular Nantucket Christmas Stroll will bring that's much less welcome: cars.

Just 14 miles long and famous for having not a single traffic signal, Nantucket sinks beneath an estimated 25,000 vehicles at the peak of its summer season, a gridlock-inducing scourge Selectman Matt Fee says "is now bleeding into Stroll and other times of the year."

It's a close-to-home example of the tightrope being walked by popular travel destinations as

BY JON MARCUS
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

they try to balance the charms that attract visitors in the first place with the damage that results when too many people come.

Worldwide worries about overtourism are in-

tensifying as it starts to trigger local antagonism in, and curbs on access to, some of the world's most popular places.

"If you constantly talk about sustainable tourism but don't do anything and the growth continues, at some point you tip over into a crisis," said

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Dubrovnik's Old Town (above), which doubles as King's Landing on TV's "Game of Thrones," has been overrun with visits from the show's fans.

Crowds and traffic are a common summer issue on Nantucket, but they are now affecting the island's Christmas Stroll (right).



MICHAEL GALVIN



CLAUDIA CAPOS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

An trumpeting angel at Bronner's CHRISTmas Wonderland.

Christmas emporium in Michigan supersizes holiday fun all year

By Claudia Capos
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

FRANKENMUTH, Mich. — The holiday spirit swirls like pixie dust as we drive through the lighted archways of Christmas Lane to Bronner's CHRISTmas Wonderland in Frankenmuth.

The family-run emporium has been a perennial favorite in this Bavarian-themed mid-Michigan town for more than 70 years. Today, it lays claim to being the world's largest Christmas store and attracts 2 million visitors annually.

Musical strains of familiar childhood carols, such as "We Wish You a Merry

Christmas" and "Deck the Halls," float over the jam-packed parking lot where we follow a long line of cars searching for an empty space. A 17-foot-high Santa Claus and larger-than-life snowmen, nutcrackers, angels and wise men on camels adorn the 27 acres of manicured grounds around the sprawling red-roof complex and create countless Instagram moments for parents with awestruck toddlers. In a nod to the religious origins of the season and the Bronner family's strong traditions, a replica of the original Silent Night Memorial Chapel in Oberndorf, Austria, stands on a grassy

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