

Emerson Inn By The Sea Sells The First Drink In Rockport, MA Since 1933

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Restored Grand Hotel Makes History Again After Almost 150 Years of Temperance

It's been just over 149 years since that July 8, 1856 morning when two hundred wives, mothers, daughters and assorted supporters gathered in Rockport's Dock Square to take part in an event that would have repercussions to this day. Brandishing hatchets, and led by seventy-five year old Hannah Jumper, the women began their raid and soon destroyed every drop of alcohol located in places they had marked (under cover of darkness) with small white crosses. The raid wiped out the supply of alcohol in Rockport, and initiated an attitude toward temperance that has remained, except for a brief period after Prohibition was repealed, for close to 150 years. At the time of the raid the popular tavern in Pigeon Cove, with a legacy tied to today's Emerson Inn by the Sea, closed its doors for the sale of alcohol.

How appropriate that after the repeal of the ban on alcohol, Bruce Coates, owner of the Emerson Inn by the Sea, was the first in line for the new liquor license applications, and then the first to serve a legal drink in Rockport for the past 150 years.

'Rockport's status as a 'dry town' began with a crash and a thud over 149 years ago when those two hundred women followed the early suffragette and herbalist Hannah Jumper on her ax-wielding rampage in their 'revolt against rum' said Coates. 'This hotel's legacy was changed then, as it is changed today as we are the first to pour and serve drinks legally for the first time in Rockport since the early 1930s,' finished Coates.

The ban on alcohol sales in Rockport was repealed in April, 2005. The day after the license applications were first available in June, 2005, Bruce Coates was the first in line with a completed application for the historic initial Rockport liquor license. Following the stringent guidelines, the Emerson Inn by the Sea lead the way for Rockport's tourism community to once again serve alcohol in restaurants. Today, residents and visitors to Rockport can finally enjoy their favorite drinks and libations while dining at Emerson Inn by the Sea's Grand Cafe, serving New England fare with flair and overlooking a dramatic vista of the Atlantic Ocean.

Rockport Selectmen are allowed to issue up to ten year-round and twenty seasonal all-alcohol licenses to restaurants, and an unlimited number of one-day licenses. After receiving each application, selectmen have twenty days to hold a public hearing and conduct a vote on the license. In addition to local approval, any new liquor licenses must also be approved by the Massachusetts Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission. Under Rockport's newly formed liquor regulations, no bars and liquor stores will be allowed in town. Alcohol may be served only at licensed restaurants, when accompanied by a meal. To insure this regulation, the laws specifically forbid alcohol to be purchased solely with potato chips, corn chips, nuts, or pretzels.

Emerson Inn by the Sea plans to offer wine tasting dinners and a fine selection of popular wines and drinks to guests of the Grand Cafe from Monday, July 11, 2005 forward. Holidays will feature champagne brunches and a full wine and liquor selection will be available for those who wish to partake from now on.

The Emerson Inn by the Sea is Cape Ann's only grand bed and breakfast hotel. Overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, this lovely historic resort offers amenities for the perfect vacation, conference or function. Appealing to everyone from romantic couples to families and corporate travelers, the inn offers 36 lovely guest rooms, fine dining in The Grand Cafe, and with Rockport's first liquor license, full-service function capabilities. Adjacent cottages reveal ocean-view accommodations with amenities for families, small corporate groups or reunions.

Today, Emerson Inn by the Sea offers vacationers and business travelers a respite with the quality and legacy of America's finest philosopher.

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