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A Shore Thing: Long Island's North Coast

November 17, 2006

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A Shore Thing: Long Island's North Coast

From the Gold Coast to Wine Country

By Sandra Scott



Head to the Orient

To travel East,

East to the Orient - Orient Point that is. Following Long Island's North Shore is to recall the lifestyle from the era of the "Great Gatsby," to rediscover Main Streets of times long past, and to end up on the North Fork sipping wine. One of the most amazing aspect of driving the Island's North Shore is that it is so close to New York City, and while portions of Long Island are heavily populated there are also beautiful shore drives, Gilded Age mansions, beaches, quaint villages, museums, and wineries.

Exit the Long Island Expressway at the Roslyn exit. Travel Route 25A making detours to explore the less-traveled roads. Parts of Route 25A and divergent highways are lovely, winding roads, often under a canopy of trees that wind through small villages with occasional views of Long Island Sound.

McMansions



Today the talk is of the

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new housing phenomena, "The McMansion," but there is nothing new about it. Since the Gilded Age the North Shore of Long Island has been the refuge of the rich where they built their castle-like mansions. Many are still around and open to the public. Pick a mansion! Pick any mansion, or even a castle. Consider Sands Point Preserve home to Falaise. Falaise was built for Harry F. Guggenheim and his wife in 1923 with details that will make visitors think they are in Europe. This 216-acre preserve actually includes two mansions; Falaise, a Normandy-style manor house; and Hempstead House, an imposing castle. The beautiful grounds feature walking paths and gardens

In Oyster Bay stop at Planting Field Arboretum and tour the Coe Hall Tudor revival house. Stroll the grounds of the Planting Fields Arboretum, visit the green houses featuring many rare and beautiful species, and take a mansion tour to see all the wonderful things money can buy. With a little luck you will be in time for one of the regularly scheduled presentations on nature or the arts.



While not in the McMansion category, east of Oyster Bay, is Sagamore Hill, a National Historical Site. Visitors will immediately sense the different ambiance. It reflects the owner and his lifestyle. Sagamore Hill was the home of President Theodore Roosevelt. From 1902 to 1908 it was the Summer White House. It reflects Roosevelt's "bully" life style from the African trophies to the large nursery. Sitting on the porch in one of Roosevelt's rockers it is easy to envision the Roosevelt children roughhousing on the lawn.

East of Cold Spring Harbor stop in Centerport for a glimpse of Moorish architecture of the William K. Vanderbilt II estate, and enjoy the eclectic mix of activities. The property is now a museum complex, but don't miss the marine museum, natural history habitats, curator's cottage, planetarium, seaplane hangar, and boathouse. Plan time to enjoy the gardens.



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Main streets

Urban sprawl has connected many of the small towns and villages that use to dot the island. Many localities have preserved a section of their Main Streets. Wander Main Street in Cold Spring Harbor, once a major whaling port, and explore the area's whaling heritage at the Whaling Museum.



To visit the center of Stony Brook is to slow down and enter the days before housing developments became part of island life. The Stony Brook Grist Mill, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is a fully equipped working grist mill, that stands on the edge of the stream. After learning about the milling process, feed the ducks in the mill pond, then wander over to the Long Island Museum of Art, History and Carriages to see remnants of the past including gypsy caravans.



In Mattituck what was once a canoe path became a Lover's Lane and is now a short tree-lined street lined with quaint shops including the Love Lane Sweet Shop.

Wine country

The North Fork of Long Island may be far more laid back than the more famous South Fork. But the rolling vineyards and the port towns create a special charm of its own that make visitors want to return time and time again, which is easy to understand considering there are

60 vineyard. Stop at the largest winery, Pindar, and then visit one owned by royalty, Castello Borghese. The North Fork is a place to slow down, taste the wine, and savor the moment. There are plenty wines to sample: cabernet franc, cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay, chenin blanc, dolcetto, gewurztraminer, lemlberger, malbec, merlot, petit verdot, pinot blanc, pinot gris, pinot noir, and riesling.



Take shelter

Greenport, a seaside village and homeport to The Bounty, featured in the films, "Mutiny on the Bounty," and "Pirates of the Caribbean II," is also the place to catch the ferry to Shelter Island. Nestled in the calm waters between the North and South Forks the island is a tree-covered island of tranquility. Do not miss Mashomack NatureCenter with over 2000 acres of one of the richest natural habitats in the Northeast including osprey nests. There is a small nature center and several trails. Head to Sunset Beach for swimming, eating and enjoying the sunset before catching the ferry back to Greenport.

A ferry good idea



Orient Beach State Park has several miles of frontage on Gardiner's Bay and a rare maritime forest. Visitors can swim in the bay, fish, picnic, go hiking or biking, or

walk a nature trail before taking the Cross Sound Ferry to New London, CT.

So much to do so little time! There are more mansions to visit, more parks to explore, more wines to sample, more places to shop, and unique sites to enjoy such as the Camera Obscura in Centerport, the 1649 Old House in Cutchogue, the goat farm in Peconic, and the many state parks. The North Shore is a place to discover the past, enjoy nature, and return to time and again to make new discoveries,



If you go, all you need



to know will be found on the Long Island CVB Web site, www.licvb.com, and for connections to Connecticut, check the Cross Sound Ferry Web

site, www.longislandferry.com, where tickets can be purchased on line.

Recommended accommodations:

Woodbury: Inn at Fox Hollow, www.theinnatfoxhollow.com

Stony Brook: Three Village Inn, www.threevillageinn.com

Southold: Heron Harbor Suites, www.heronharborsuites.com



Posted by **Sandra Scott** at November 17, 2006 06:31 PM

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